

House Bill 491 (AS PASSED HOUSE AND SENATE)

By: Representatives Chastain of the 7th, Rhodes of the 124th, Howard of the 71st, Mathis of the 133rd, Ridley of the 6th, and others

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED
AN ACT

1 To amend Article 1 of Chapter 3 and Article 2 of Chapter 4 of Title 27 of the Official Code
2 of Georgia Annotated, relating to hunting and noncommercial fishing, respectively, so as to
3 modify an exception for the use of air guns to hunt wildlife; to revise provisions concerning
4 the taking of catfish by bow and arrow; to provide for related matters; to repeal conflicting
5 laws; and for other purposes.

6 BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF GEORGIA:

7 **SECTION 1.**

8 Article 1 of Chapter 3 of Title 27 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to
9 hunting, is amended in Code Section 27-3-4, relating to legal weapons for hunting wildlife
10 generally, use of silencers and suppressors prohibited, and penalty for violations, by revising
11 paragraph (9) of subsection (a) as follows:

12 "(9) For purposes of this subsection, the term 'air gun' means any pistol, handgun, or
13 shoulder-held device, each of not less than 0.30 caliber, or air bow that propels a
14 projectile in the form of a slug, shot, or arrow equipped with a broadhead utilizing
15 unignited compressed air or gas. Air guns are legal weapons for hunting big game only
16 during primitive weapon hunts, primitive weapon seasons, and firearm seasons. This

paragraph shall stand repealed effective July 1, ~~2025~~ 2030, unless continued in effect by the General Assembly prior to that date. At its ~~2025~~ 2030 regular session, the General Assembly shall review this paragraph to determine whether it should be continued in effect."

SECTION 2.

Article 2 of Chapter 4 of Title 27 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to noncommercial fishing, is amended in Code Section 27-4-34, relating to fishing with bow and arrow, by revising subsection (d) as follows:

"(d) It shall be unlawful to take ~~channel catfish and flathead~~ any catfish ~~anywhere in the Savannah River, including its tributaries and impoundments within the Savannah River Basin,~~ species from the waters of this state by means of bow and arrow, except under the following conditions:

(1) Each person using a bow and arrow shall have on his or her person a valid state resident or nonresident fishing license;

(2) All arrows used pursuant to this subsection must be equipped with barbs or contain devices on the point to act as a harpoon for recovering fish and must be attached to the person or bow by a rope, line, or cord sufficient for recovering the arrow and channel catfish or flathead catfish;

(3) Arrows with poisonous or exploding heads are illegal;

(4) It shall be unlawful to discharge arrows into waters nearer than 150 feet to anyone engaged in any other means of recreation; and

(5) The taking of ~~channel catfish and flathead~~ any catfish ~~in the Savannah River, including its tributaries and impoundments within the Savannah River Basin,~~ species from the waters of this state by bow and arrow shall be legal at any time of the day and at night by the use of a light."

42

SECTION 3.

43 All laws and parts of laws in conflict with this Act are repealed.