By:  Kacal (Senate Sponsor - Kolkhorst) H.B. No. 1333

(In the Senate - Received from the House April 17, 2023; May 2, 2023, read first time and referred to Committee on Water, Agriculture & Rural Affairs; May 4, 2023, reported favorably by the following vote: Yeas 9, Nays 0; May 4, 2023, sent to printer.)

COMMITTEE VOTE

               Yea Nay Absent  PNV

Perry           X

Hancock         X

Blanco          X

Flores          X

Gutierrez       X

Johnson         X

Kolkhorst       X

Sparks          X

Springer        X

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

relating to the sale and purchase of certain fish.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF TEXAS:

SECTION 1.  Sections 66.020(b) and (c), Parks and Wildlife Code, are amended to read as follows:

(b)  This section applies to the possession, transportation, sale, or purchase of any fish described by Subsection (a) without regard to where the fish was taken, caught, or raised, but does not apply to:

(1)  the transportation or possession of fish taken, caught, or raised outside this state and transported by common carrier without being unloaded from outside this state to a point of delivery outside this state;

(2)  fish raised by being continuously fed a prepared feed and sold by an operator of a Texas commercial aquaculture facility, as defined by Section 134.001, Agriculture Code; [~~or~~]

(3)  the sale of fish described by Subdivision (2) by:

(A)  a licensed wholesale fish dealer;

(B)  a licensed retail fish dealer; or

(C)  a restaurant;

(4)  bass of the genus Micropterus and crappie if the fish are:

(A)  reared in private water; and

(B)  sold by an operator of a Texas commercial aquaculture facility for the purpose of stocking:

(i)  water of the state under a permit required under Section 66.015(b); or

(ii)  private water with the documentation required under Section 134.018, Agriculture Code; or

(5)  the lawful importation by the holder of a Texas finfish import license into this state from another state or foreign country or the exclusive economic zone of farm-raised red drum, bass of the genus Micropterus, crappie, flathead catfish, striped bass, white bass, or a hybrid of any of those fish that have been continuously fed a prepared feed as a primary food source or lawfully taken, caught, or raised blue marlin, jewfish, longbill spearfish, muskellunge, northern pike, sailfish, sauger, snook, spotted sea trout, tarpon, walleye, white marlin, yellow bass, or a hybrid of any of those fish, if the fish are [~~transported or sold when not alive and are~~] tagged, invoiced, packaged, and labeled under regulations of the commission and if the license holder complies with any requirements the commission may establish by proclamation that the fish enter the stream of commerce for sale in this state in a condition allowing ready identification of the species, including a requirement that the fish come into the state with the head and tail intact and tagged and a requirement that an invoice accompany all imported fish regulated by this section through each sales transaction, including transactions at the place of the final sale to the consumer.

(c)  Notwithstanding Subsection (b)(5) [~~(b)(3) of this section~~], the commission may allow subsequent sale of lawfully imported fish without the head and tail intact and without a tag if the fish are labeled in a manner prescribed by the commission and the tag when removed is destroyed. A tag, if required, must be of a type prescribed by the commission and shall be sold to an applicant at a cost as determined by the commission that is reasonable to defray the administrative costs incurred in connection with the tag requirement.

SECTION 2.  Sections 66.111(a) and (b), Parks and Wildlife Code, are amended to read as follows:

(a)  Except as provided by Subsection (b), no person may buy or offer to buy, sell or offer to sell, possess for the purpose of sale, transport or ship for the purpose of sale, or barter or exchange[~~:~~

[~~(1)  freshwater crappie, bass of the genus Micropterus, striped bass and hybrids of striped bass, white bass, walleye, sauger, northern pike, muskellunge, trout of the family Salmonidae, flathead catfish; or~~

[~~(2)~~]  any [~~other~~] fish taken from the public fresh water of this state.

(b)  Subsection (a) does not apply to:

(1)  [~~a fish, other than a bass of the genus Micropterus, reared in private water by an operator of a commercial aquaculture facility, as defined by Section 134.001, Agriculture Code;~~

[~~(2)  a fish possessed legally outside this state and transported into this state;~~

[~~(3)  bass of the genus Micropterus reared in private water by an operator of a commercial aquaculture facility, as defined by Section 134.001, Agriculture Code, and marketed for the purpose of stocking the water of this state;~~

[~~(4)~~]  nongame fish regulated under Chapter 67 [~~of this code~~]; or

(2) [~~(5)~~]  channel catfish of more than 14 inches in length or blue catfish of more than 14 inches in length taken from the public fresh water of Angelina, Bowie, Camp, Cass, Chambers, Franklin, Freestone, Gregg, Hardin, Harris, Harrison, Jasper, Jefferson, Lamar, Leon, Liberty, Madison, Marion, Montgomery, Morris, Nacogdoches, Navarro, Newton, Orange, Panola, Polk, Red River, Sabine, San Augustine, San Jacinto, Shelby, Titus, Trinity, Tyler, Upshur, or Walker County, the public fresh water of the Neches or Trinity River in Houston County, the public fresh water of the Colorado River in Bastrop, Colorado, Fayette, Matagorda, or Wharton County, or the public fresh water of Falcon Lake in Starr or Zapata County.

SECTION 3.  Section 66.2012(e), Parks and Wildlife Code, is amended to read as follows:

(e)  This section does not apply to activities that are regulated under the exceptions provided by Subdivisions (1), (2), and (5) [~~(3)~~] of Section 66.020(b) or under Subsections (f) and (g) of that section.

SECTION 4.  Section 66.111(c), Parks and Wildlife Code, is repealed.

SECTION 5.  This Act takes effect September 1, 2023.

\* \* \* \* \*