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SENATE BILL NO. 629

Senate Amendments in [] - January 28, 2022

A BILL to amend and reenact § 28.2-506 of the Code of Virginia, relating to season for taking oysters.

Patron Prior to Engrossment—Senator Stuart

Referred to Committee on Agriculture, Conservation and Natural Resources

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:

1. That § 28.2-506 of the Code of Virginia is amended and reenacted as follows:

§ 28.2-506. Season for taking oysters from public rocks; penalty.

A. The season for taking oysters by shaft tongs or by hand from the public oyster beds, rocks, or shoals shall be as follows:

1. James River seed area, from October 1 until July 1. The Commission may set an alternate date, no earlier than June 1, for the completion of this season in any year in which such an action can be expected to improve the quality of seed oysters.

2. All other areas, from October 1 until June 1.

B. The season for taking oysters by patent tongs from the public oyster beds, rocks, or shoals shall be from October 1 to March 31. The Commission may set an alternate opening date, no later than November 1, [or close the season] for any area in the Commonwealth where the use of patent tongs is permitted, when in its opinion the condition of the oysters warrants.

C. It shall be unlawful for any person to take or catch oysters from the public rocks or shoals of this Commonwealth at any time other than that provided in subsections A and B of this section except as set forth in Chapter 8 of this subtitle and except as provided in § 28.2-507.

D. The possession of patent tongs and oysters in a boat at any time other than the season for patent tongs as specified in subsections A and B of this section is prima facie evidence of a violation of this section.

E. Taking oysters or having patent tongs or any other device for taking or catching oysters on public rocks, beds, or shoals, except during the seasons specified in subsections A and B of this section, is prima facie evidence of a violation of this section.

F. The possession of oysters while taking or catching clams during the prohibited season to take or catch oysters from the public rocks, beds, or shoals, is prima facie evidence of a violation of this section.

A violation of this section is a Class 1 misdemeanor.

ENGROSSED

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