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1                                   A bill to be entitled  
 2           An act relating to vessel licenses; amending s. 372.09,  
 3           F.S.; providing that revenues from the sale of freshwater  
 4           vessel licenses be deposited into the State Game Trust  
 5           Fund; amending s. 372.57, F.S.; providing identification  
 6           and transfer requirements for saltwater vessel licenses;  
 7           creating a Freshwater Vessel License Pilot Program within  
 8           the Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission;  
 9           establishing nonmandatory license fees and categories;  
 10          prohibiting the transfer of vessel licenses under certain  
 11          circumstances; providing for the expiration of the pilot  
 12          program; creating a Vessel License Task Force within the  
 13          commission; providing for membership of the task force;  
 14          providing responsibilities and duties of the task force;  
 15          requiring the task force to submit recommendations to the  
 16          commission and certain committees of the Legislature;  
 17          providing for expiration of the task force; amending s.  
 18          372.562, F.S.; providing exemptions from certain fees and  
 19          requirements for persons fishing from or operating a  
 20          freshwater vessel with a freshwater vessel license;  
 21          providing an effective date.

22  
 23   Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

24  
 25           Section 1.   Section 372.09, Florida Statutes, is amended to  
 26   read:

27           372.09   State Game Trust Fund.--The funds resulting from  
 28   the operation of the commission and from the administration of  
 29   the laws and regulations pertaining to birds, game, fur-bearing

CODING: Words ~~stricken~~ are deletions; words underlined are additions.

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30 animals, freshwater fish, reptiles, and amphibians, including  
 31 funds resulting from the sale of freshwater vessel licenses  
 32 authorized in this chapter, together with any other funds  
 33 specifically provided for such purposes shall constitute the  
 34 State Game Trust Fund and shall be used by the commission as it  
 35 shall deem fit in carrying out the provisions hereof and for no  
 36 other purposes. The commission may not obligate itself beyond  
 37 the current resources of the State Game Trust Fund unless  
 38 specifically so authorized by the Legislature.

39 Section 2. Subsection (7) of section 372.57, Florida  
 40 Statutes, is amended, and subsections (16) and (17) are added to  
 41 that section, to read:

42 372.57 Recreational licenses, permits, and authorization  
 43 numbers; fees established.--

44 (7) VESSEL LICENSES.--

45 (a) No person may operate any vessel wherein a fee is  
 46 paid, either directly or indirectly, for the purpose of taking,  
 47 attempting to take, or possessing any saltwater fish for  
 48 noncommercial purposes unless she or he has obtained a license  
 49 for each vessel for that purpose, and has paid the license fee  
 50 pursuant to paragraph (b), paragraph (c), or paragraph (d)  
 51 paragraphs (b) and (c) for such vessel. A saltwater vessel  
 52 license issued under this subsection must be identified as such  
 53 and may be transferred only to other saltwater vessels.

54 (b) A license for any person who operates any vessel  
 55 licensed to carry more than 10 customers, wherein a fee is paid,  
 56 either directly or indirectly, for the purpose of taking or  
 57 attempting to take saltwater fish, is \$800 per year. The license  
 58 must be kept aboard the vessel at all times.

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59           (c)~~1~~. A license for any person who operates any vessel  
 60 licensed to carry no more than 10 customers, or for any person  
 61 licensed to operate any vessel carrying 6 or fewer customers,  
 62 wherein a fee is paid, either directly or indirectly, for the  
 63 purpose of taking or attempting to take saltwater fish, is \$400  
 64 per year.

65           (d)~~2~~. A license for any person licensed to operate any  
 66 vessel carrying 6 or fewer customers but who operates a vessel  
 67 carrying 4 or fewer customers, wherein a fee is paid, either  
 68 directly or indirectly, for the purpose of taking or attempting  
 69 to take saltwater fish, is \$200 per year. The license must be  
 70 kept aboard the vessel at all times.

71           (e)~~3~~. A person who operates a vessel required to be  
 72 licensed pursuant to paragraph (b), paragraph (c), or ~~this~~  
 73 paragraph (d) may obtain a license in her or his own name, and  
 74 such license shall be transferable and apply to any vessel  
 75 operated by the purchaser, provided that the purchaser has paid  
 76 the appropriate license fee.

77           (f)~~(d)~~ A license for a recreational vessel not for hire  
 78 and for which no fee is paid, either directly or indirectly, by  
 79 guests for the purpose of taking or attempting to take saltwater  
 80 fish noncommercially is \$2,000 per year. The license may be  
 81 purchased at the option of the vessel owner and must be kept  
 82 aboard the vessel at all times. A log of species taken and the  
 83 date the species were taken shall be maintained and a copy of  
 84 the log filed with the commission at the time of renewal of the  
 85 license.

86           (g)~~(e)~~ The owner, operator, or custodian of a vessel the  
 87 operator of which has been licensed pursuant to paragraph (a)

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88 must maintain and report such statistical data as required by,  
 89 and in a manner set forth in, the rules of the commission.

90 (16) FRESHWATER VESSEL LICENSE PILOT PROGRAM.--The Fish  
 91 and Wildlife Conservation Commission shall establish a 1-year  
 92 nonmandatory freshwater vessel license program to be implemented  
 93 by July 1, 2004. Any person operating a vessel wherein a fee is  
 94 paid, either directly or indirectly, for the purpose of taking,  
 95 attempting to take, or possessing any freshwater fish for  
 96 noncommercial purposes may obtain a license for each vessel for  
 97 that purpose. The fees and categories for freshwater vessel  
 98 licenses shall be the same fees and categories as those  
 99 established for saltwater vessel licenses in subsection (7). A  
 100 freshwater vessel license issued under this subsection must be  
 101 identified as such and may be transferred only to other  
 102 freshwater vessels. A freshwater vessel license issued under  
 103 this subsection is nonrenewable and expires 1 year after the  
 104 date of issuance. This subsection expires July 1, 2005, unless  
 105 the Legislature establishes a new freshwater vessel licensing  
 106 program or extends this program.

107 (17) VESSEL LICENSE TASK FORCE.--

108 (a) The Vessel License Task Force is created within the  
 109 Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission for the purpose of  
 110 reviewing the commission's vessel license programs to determine  
 111 if vessel licenses for saltwater and freshwater vessels should  
 112 be mandatory or permissive licenses, if the vessel license  
 113 program should be repealed, and if vessel license fees are  
 114 sufficient to offset commission revenues lost from the sale of  
 115 nonresident individual saltwater and freshwater fishing licenses  
 116 and to determine a fair and equitable fee for vessel licenses if

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117 the task force determines that revenues do offset losses and  
 118 that the vessel license programs should not be repealed.

119 (b) The Vessel License Task Force shall be composed of  
 120 seven members and must include one member representing the  
 121 Florida Guides Association, two members licensed as captains by  
 122 the United States Coast Guard to represent full-time freshwater  
 123 fishing guides, one member representing part-time freshwater  
 124 fishing guides, one member licensed as a captain by the United  
 125 States Coast Guard to represent full-time saltwater fishing  
 126 guides, one member representing part-time saltwater fishing  
 127 guides, and one representative from the Fish and Wildlife  
 128 Conservation Commission, who is not a commissioner, with  
 129 knowledge of the commission's vessel licensing program who shall  
 130 serve as chair of the task force. Members of the task force  
 131 shall serve without compensation.

132 (c) The task force shall meet at the call of the chair or  
 133 at the request of a majority of its members. Staff of the  
 134 commission shall serve as staff to the task force.

135 (d) By February 1, 2005, the task force shall submit  
 136 written recommendations to the Fish and Wildlife Conservation  
 137 Commission so that the commission may consider including the  
 138 recommendations as part of the commission's 2005 legislative  
 139 agenda. Copies of the written recommendations shall also be  
 140 submitted to the staff of the natural resources committees and  
 141 the appropriations committees of the Senate and the House of  
 142 Representatives.

143 (e) This subsection expires July 1, 2005.

144 Section 3. Paragraphs (i) and (j) of subsection (2) of  
 145 section 372.562, Florida Statutes, are amended to read:

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146           372.562 Recreational licenses and permits; exemptions from  
 147 fees and requirements.--

148           (2) A hunting, freshwater fishing, or saltwater fishing  
 149 license or permit is not required for:

150           (i) Any person fishing from a vessel licensed pursuant to  
 151 s. 372.57(7) or (16).

152           (j) Any person fishing from a vessel the operator of which  
 153 is licensed pursuant to s. 372.57(7) or (16).

154           Section 4. This act shall take effect upon becoming a law.