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## A bill to be entitled

An act relating to the protection of wild and aquatic life; amending s. 253.03, F.S.; requiring the Board of Trustees of the Internal Improvement Trust Fund to provide for the establishment of seagrass mitigation banks for specified purposes; amending s. 253.04, F.S.; providing that careless operation of a vessel outside a marked channel that causes seagrass scarring within certain aquatic preserves is a civil infraction; defining the terms "seagrass scarring" and "seagrasses"; providing that refusal to post bond or sign a boating citation is a second degree misdemeanor; providing criminal penalties; requiring that civil penalties collected for the careless operation of a vessel causing seagrass scarring be deposited into the Internal Improvement Trust Fund and used for specified purposes; amending s. 253.034, F.S.; creating a monitoring team for the purposes of reviewing management plans of state-owned lands; providing review procedures; amending s. 259.037, F.S.; requiring agencies to report additional information to the Division of State Lands; amending s. 327.73, F.S.; providing civil penalties for seagrass scarring; amending s. 372.73, F.S.; providing for the forfeiture of illegally taken wildlife, freshwater fish, and saltwater fish to investigating law enforcement agencies; authorizing investigating law enforcement agencies to dispose of such wildlife, freshwater fish, and saltwater fish in a specified manner; requiring certain documentation; requiring the release of certain wildlife,

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freshwater fish, and saltwater fish to native habitats; providing for release of nonnative species by rule; revising provisions for the deposit of certain proceeds relating to the confiscation and disposition of illegally taken wildlife, freshwater fish, and saltwater fish; authorizing certain law enforcement agencies to receive specified portions of forfeited property; creating s. 372.731, F.S.; providing for photographs of illegally taken wildlife, freshwater fish, or saltwater fish to be admissible as evidence in the prosecution of certain violations; specifying requirements and procedures for such photographs; amending ss. 370.021, 370.061, 372.9901, 372.9904, and 932.7055, F.S.; conforming cross-references; repealing s. 327.803, F.S., relating to the Boating Advisory Council; repealing s. 372.107, F.S., relating to the Federal Law Enforcement Trust Fund within the Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission; providing an effective date.

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

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- Section 1. Subsection (18) is added to section 253.03, Florida Statutes, to read:
- 253.03 Board of trustees to administer state lands; lands enumerated.--
- (18) The Board of Trustees of the Internal Improvement

  Trust Fund shall ensure the preservation and regeneration of

  seagrass, as defined in s. 253.04(4)(b)2., by providing for the

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establishment of seagrass mitigation banks, pursuant to s.

373.4136, to offset the unavoidable impacts of projects where
such banks meet the applicable public interest test of chapters

253 and 258. This subsection shall not prohibit mitigation for
impacts to seagrass or other habitats on sovereignty submerged
lands for other types of projects, or for projects occurring on
nonsovereign submerged lands, upon applicable approval of the
board of trustees.

Section 2. Subsections (4) through (7) of section 253.04, Florida Statutes, are renumbered as subsections (5) through (8), respectively, and a new subsection (4) is added to that section to read:

- 253.04 Duty of board to protect, etc., state lands; state may join in any action brought.--
- (4) (a) The duty to conserve and improve state-owned lands and the products thereof shall include the preservation and regeneration of seagrass, which is deemed essential to the oceans, gulfs, estuaries, and shorelines of the state.
- (b) Any person operating a vessel outside a lawfully marked channel in a careless manner that causes seagrass scarring within an aquatic preserve established in ss. 258.39-258.399 with the exception of the Lake Jackson, Wekiva River, and Rainbow River aquatic preserves, commits a civil infraction, punishable as provided in s. 327.73. Each violation is a separate offense. As used in this subsection, the term:
- 1. "Seagrass scarring" means the destruction of roots, shoots, or stems of seagrass plants that results in tracks on the substrate caused by the operation of a motorized vessel in

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85 waters supporting seagrasses, commonly known as prop-scars or propeller scars.

- 2. "Seagrasses" means Cuban shoal grass (Halodule wrightii), turtle grass (Thalassia testudinum), manatee grass (Syringodium filiforme), star grass (Halophila engelmannii), paddle grass (Halophila decipiens), Johnson's seagrass (Halophila johnsonii), or widgeon grass (Ruppia maritima).
- (c) Any violation of this subsection is a violation of the boating laws of this state and shall be charged on a uniform boating citation as provided in s. 327.74. Any person who refuses to post a bond or accept and sign a uniform boating citation commits a misdemeanor of the second degree as provided in s. 327.73(3), punishable as provided in s. 775.082 or s. 775.083.
- (d) All civil penalties imposed and collected pursuant to this subsection shall be deposited into the Internal Improvement Trust Fund and used solely to implement, administer, and enforce this subsection; provide for seagrass restoration; conduct a program to educate vessel operators about the need to protect seagrasses from damage caused by the operation of vessels; and fund the marking of seagrass.
- Section 3. Paragraph (c) is added to subsection (5) of section 259.034, Florida Statutes, to read:
  - 253.034 State-owned lands; uses.--
- (5) Each manager of conservation lands shall submit to the Division of State Lands a land management plan at least every 10 years in a form and manner prescribed by rule by the board and in accordance with the provisions of s. 259.032. Each manager of

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conservation lands shall also update a land management plan whenever the manager proposes to add new facilities or make substantive land use or management changes that were not addressed in the approved plan, or within 1 year of the addition of significant new lands. Each manager of nonconservation lands shall submit to the Division of State Lands a land use plan at least every 10 years in a form and manner prescribed by rule by the board. The division shall review each plan for compliance with the requirements of this subsection and the requirements of the rules established by the board pursuant to this section. All land use plans, whether for single-use or multiple-use properties, shall include an analysis of the property to determine if any significant natural or cultural resources are located on the property. Such resources include archaeological and historic sites, state and federally listed plant and animal species, and imperiled natural communities and unique natural features. If such resources occur on the property, the manager shall consult with the Division of State Lands and other appropriate agencies to develop management strategies to protect such resources. Land use plans shall also provide for the control of invasive nonnative plants and conservation of soil and water resources, including a description of how the manager plans to control and prevent soil erosion and soil or water contamination. Land use plans submitted by a manager shall include reference to appropriate statutory authority for such use or uses and shall conform to the appropriate policies and quidelines of the state land management plan. Plans for managed areas larger than 1,000 acres shall contain an analysis of the

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multiple-use potential of the property, which analysis shall include the potential of the property to generate revenues to enhance the management of the property. Additionally, the plan shall contain an analysis of the potential use of private land managers to facilitate the restoration or management of these lands. In those cases where a newly acquired property has a valid conservation plan that was developed by a soil and conservation district, such plan shall be used to guide management of the property until a formal land use plan is completed.

Beginning July 1, 2010, and every 3 years thereafter, (C) state-owned lands with an approved land management plan shall be monitored for land management activities by a monitoring team. The Division of State Lands shall coordinate the activities of the monitoring team, which shall consist of three members. One member shall be selected by the Executive Director of the Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission or a designee, and shall have experience with applied habitat management. One member shall be selected by the Secretary of the Department of Environmental Protection or a designee, and shall have experience with public recreation or use administration. One member shall be selected by the Commissioner of Agriculture or a designee, and shall have experience with applied land management. The Division of State Lands shall provide the monitoring team with the operational report prepared pursuant to s. 259.037(6). The monitoring team shall prepare a monitoring report that assesses the progress towards achieving short-term and long-term land management goals, as identified in the

operational report, and shall propose corrective actions for identified deficiencies in management activities. The monitoring report shall be submitted to the Acquisition and Restoration Council and the managing agency. The Acquisition and Restoration Council shall review the monitoring report and determine whether the deficiencies warrant a corrective action plan or revisions to the management plan. Significant and recurring deficiencies shall be brought to the Board of Trustees, which shall determine whether the corrective actions being proposed by the land manager and the Acquisition and Restoration Council sufficiently address the deficiencies. Corrective actions plans shall be prepared and submitted in the same manner as land management plans.

Section 4. Subsection (6) is added to section 259.037, Florida Statutes, to read:

259.037 Land Management Uniform Accounting Council. --

(6) Beginning July 1, 2010, and every 3 years thereafter, each reporting agency shall also submit an operational report for each management area along with an approved management plan. The report should assess the progress toward achieving short-term and long-term management goals of the approved management plan, including all land management activities, and identify any deficiencies in management and corrective actions to address identified deficiencies as appropriate. This report shall be submitted to the Division of State Lands for inclusion in its annual report required pursuant to s. 259.036.

Section 5. Paragraph (x) is added to subsection (1) of section 327.73, Florida Statutes, and subsection (8) of that section is amended, to read:

327.73 Noncriminal infractions.--

- (1) Violations of the following provisions of the vessel laws of this state are noncriminal infractions:
- (x) Section 253.04(4)(a), relating to carelessly causing seagrass scarring, for which the civil penalty is:
  - 1. Fifty dollars upon conviction for a first offense.
- 2. Two hundred and fifty dollars upon conviction for a second offense occurring within 12 months after a prior conviction.
- 3. Five hundred dollars upon conviction for a third offense occurring within 36 months after a prior conviction.
- 4. One thousand dollars upon conviction for a fourth or subsequent offense.

Any person cited for a violation of any such provision shall be deemed to be charged with a noncriminal infraction, shall be cited for such an infraction, and shall be cited to appear before the county court. The civil penalty for any such infraction is \$50, except as otherwise provided in this section. Any person who fails to appear or otherwise properly respond to a uniform boating citation shall, in addition to the charge relating to the violation of the boating laws of this state, be charged with the offense of failing to respond to such citation and, upon conviction, be guilty of a misdemeanor of the second degree, punishable as provided in s. 775.082 or s. 775.083. A

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written warning to this effect shall be provided at the time such uniform boating citation is issued.

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- (8) Except as otherwise provided by s. 253.04(4)(c), all fees and civil penalties assessed and collected pursuant to this section shall be remitted by the clerk of the court to the Department of Revenue to be deposited into the Marine Resources Conservation Trust Fund for boating safety education purposes.
- Section 6. Section 372.73, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:
- 372.73 Confiscation and disposition of illegally taken wildlife, freshwater fish, and saltwater fish game.--
- (1)(a) All wildlife, game and freshwater fish, and saltwater fish seized under the authority of this chapter, any other chapter, or rules of the commission shall, upon conviction of the offender or sooner in accordance with a court order if the court so orders, be forfeited to the investigating law enforcement agency. The law enforcement agency may elect to retain the wildlife, freshwater fish, or saltwater fish for the agency's official use; transfer the wildlife, freshwater fish, or saltwater fish to another unit of state or local government for official use; donate the wildlife, freshwater fish, or saltwater fish to a charitable organization; sell the wildlife, freshwater fish, or saltwater fish at a public sale, pursuant to the provisions of s. 705.103; or destroy the wildlife, freshwater fish, or saltwater fish if none of the other options are practicable or if the wildlife, freshwater fish, or saltwater fish is unwholesome or otherwise not of appreciable value.

(b) All live wildlife, freshwater fish, or saltwater fish, the possession of which is unlawful, shall be properly documented as evidence under s. 372.731 and returned to the habitat unharmed, except that nonnative species may be released only as allowed by rules of the commission. Any unclaimed wildlife, freshwater fish, or saltwater fish shall be retained by the investigating law enforcement agency and disposed of in accordance with the provisions of this subsection and given to some hospital or charitable institution and receipt therefor sent to the Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission.

- (2) All furs or hides or fur-bearing animals seized under the authority of this chapter shall, upon conviction of the offender, be forfeited and sent to the commission, which shall sell such hides and furs the same and deposit the proceeds of such sale to the credit of the State Game Trust Fund or into the commission's Federal Law Enforcement Trust Fund as provided in s. 372.107, as applicable. If any such hides or furs are seized and the offender is unknown, the court shall order such hides or furs sent to the Fish and Wildlife Conservation commission, which shall sell such hides and furs.
- (3) Except as otherwise provided in subsection (4), and deposit the proceeds of any such sale pursuant to this section shall be remitted to the Department of Revenue for deposit to the credit of the State Game Trust Fund or the Marine Resources Conservation Trust Fund into the commission's Federal Law Enforcement Trust Fund as provided in s. 372.107, as applicable.
- (4) Any state, municipal, or county law enforcement agency that enforces or assists the commission in enforcing the

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279 provisions of this chapter, which enforcement or assistance 280 results in a forfeiture of property as provided in this section, 281 shall be entitled to receive all or a share of any property 282 based upon the agency's participation in such enforcement. 283 Section 7. Section 372.731, Florida Statutes, is created 284 to read: 285 372.731 Photographs of illegally taken wildlife, freshwater fish, and saltwater fish. -- In any prosecution for a 286 287 violation of this chapter, chapter 370, or rules of the 288 commission, a photograph of the illegally taken wildlife, 289 freshwater fish, or saltwater fish may be deemed competent evidence of such property and may be admissible in the 290 291 prosecution to the same extent as if such wildlife, freshwater 292 fish, or saltwater fish were introduced as evidence. Such photograph shall bear a written description of the wildlife, 293 freshwater fish, or saltwater fish alleged to have been 294 295 illegally taken, the name of the violator, the location where 296 the alleged wrongful taking occurred, the name of the 297 investigating law enforcement officer, the date the photograph 298 was taken, and the name of the photographer. Such writing shall 299 be made under oath by the investigating law enforcement officer, 300 and the photograph shall be identified by the signature of the photographer. 301 Section 8. Subsection (2) of section 370.021, Florida 302 303 Statutes, is amended to read: 370.021 Administration; rules, publications, records; 304 305 penalties; injunctions. --

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(2) MAJOR VIOLATIONS.--In addition to the penalties provided in paragraphs (1)(a) and (b), the court shall assess additional penalties against any commercial harvester convicted of major violations as follows:

- (a) For a violation involving more than 100 illegal blue crabs, spiny lobster, or stone crabs, an additional penalty of \$10 for each illegal blue crab, spiny lobster, stone crab, or part thereof.
- (b) For a violation involving the taking or harvesting of shrimp from a nursery or other prohibited area, or any two violations within a 12-month period involving shrimping gear, minimum size (count), or season, an additional penalty of \$10 for each pound of illegal shrimp or part thereof.
- (c) For a violation involving the taking or harvesting of oysters from nonapproved areas or the taking or possession of unculled oysters, an additional penalty of \$10 for each bushel of illegal oysters.
- (d) For a violation involving the taking or harvesting of clams from nonapproved areas, an additional penalty of \$100 for each 500 count bag of illegal clams.
- (e) For a violation involving the taking, harvesting, or possession of any of the following species, which are endangered, threatened, or of special concern:
  - 1. Shortnose sturgeon (Acipenser brevirostrum);
  - 2. Atlantic sturgeon (Acipenser oxyrhynchus);
  - 3. Common snook (Centropomus undecimalis);
  - 4. Atlantic loggerhead turtle (Caretta caretta caretta);
    - 5. Atlantic green turtle (Chelonia mydas mydas);

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- 6. Leatherback turtle (Dermochelys coriacea);
- 7. Atlantic hawksbill turtle (Eretmochelys imbricata imbracata);
  - 8. Atlantic ridley turtle (Lepidochelys kempi); or
  - 9. West Indian manatee (Trichechus manatus latirostris),

- an additional penalty of \$100 for each unit of marine life or part thereof.
- (f) For a second or subsequent conviction within 24 months for any violation of the same law or rule involving the taking or harvesting of more than 100 pounds of any finfish, an additional penalty of \$5 for each pound of illegal finfish.
- (g) For any violation involving the taking, harvesting, or possession of more than 1,000 pounds of any illegal finfish, an additional penalty equivalent to the wholesale value of the illegal finfish.
- (h) Permits issued to any commercial harvester by the commission to take or harvest saltwater products, or any license issued pursuant to s. 370.06 or s. 370.07 may be suspended or revoked by the commission, pursuant to the provisions and procedures of s. 120.60, for any major violation prescribed in this subsection:
  - 1. Upon a first conviction, for up to 30 calendar days.
- 2. Upon a second conviction which occurs within 12 months after a prior violation, for up to 90 calendar days.
- 3. Upon a third conviction which occurs within 24 months after a prior conviction, for up to 180 calendar days.

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4. Upon a fourth conviction which occurs within 36 months after a prior conviction, for a period of 6 months to 3 years.

- (i) Upon the arrest and conviction for a major violation involving stone crabs, the licenseholder must show just cause why his or her license should not be suspended or revoked. For the purposes of this paragraph, a "major violation" means a major violation as prescribed for illegal stone crabs; any single violation involving possession of more than 25 stone crabs during the closed season or possession of 25 or more whole-bodied or egg-bearing stone crabs; any violation for trap molestation, trap robbing, or pulling traps at night; or any combination of violations in any 3-consecutive-year period wherein more than 75 illegal stone crabs in the aggregate are involved.
- (j) Upon the arrest and conviction for a major violation involving spiny lobster, the licenseholder must show just cause why his or her license should not be suspended or revoked. For the purposes of this paragraph, a "major violation" means a major violation as prescribed for illegal spiny lobster; any single violation involving possession of more than 25 spiny lobster during the closed season or possession of more than 25 wrung spiny lobster tails or more than 25 egg-bearing or stripped spiny lobster; any violation for trap molestation, trap robbing, or pulling traps at night; or any combination of violations in any 3-consecutive-year period wherein more than 75 illegal spiny lobster in the aggregate are involved.
- (k) Upon the arrest and conviction for a major violation involving blue crabs, the licenseholder shall show just cause

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why his or her saltwater products license should not be suspended or revoked. This paragraph shall not apply to an individual fishing with no more than five traps. For the purposes of this paragraph, a "major violation" means a major violation as prescribed for illegal blue crabs, any single violation wherein 50 or more illegal blue crabs are involved; any violation for trap molestation, trap robbing, or pulling traps at night; or any combination of violations in any 3-consecutive-year period wherein more than 100 illegal blue crabs in the aggregate are involved.

- (1) Upon the conviction for a major violation involving finfish, the licenseholder must show just cause why his or her saltwater products license should not be suspended or revoked. For the purposes of this paragraph, a major violation is prescribed for the taking and harvesting of illegal finfish, any single violation involving the possession of more than 100 pounds of illegal finfish, or any combination of violations in any 3-consecutive-year period wherein more than 200 pounds of illegal finfish in the aggregate are involved.
- (m) For a violation involving the taking or harvesting of any marine life species, as those species are defined by rule of the commission, the harvest of which is prohibited, or the taking or harvesting of such a species out of season, or with an illegal gear or chemical, or any violation involving the possession of 25 or more individual specimens of marine life species, or any combination of violations in any 3-year period involving more than 70 such specimens in the aggregate, the

suspension or revocation of the licenseholder's marine life endorsement as provided in paragraph (h).

- The penalty provisions of this subsection apply to commercial harvesters and wholesale and retail dealers as defined in s. 370.07. Any other person who commits a major violation under this subsection commits a Level Three violation under s. 372.83. Notwithstanding the provisions of s. 948.01, no court may suspend, defer, or withhold adjudication of guilt or imposition of sentence for any major violation prescribed in this subsection. The proceeds from the penalties assessed pursuant to this subsection shall be deposited into the Marine Resources Conservation Trust Fund to be used for marine fisheries research
- Section 9. Subsection (4) and paragraph (c) of subsection (5) of section 370.061, Florida Statutes, are amended to read:
  370.061 Confiscation, seizure, and forfeiture of property and products.--

or into the commission's Federal Law Enforcement Trust Fund as

(4) DESTRUCTION OR DISPOSITION OF PROPERTY.--All property forfeited under this section may be destroyed, used by the commission, disposed of by gift to charitable or state institutions, or sold, with the proceeds derived from the sale deposited into the Marine Resources Conservation Trust Fund to be used for law enforcement purposes, or into the commission's Federal Law Enforcement Trust Fund as provided in s. 372.107, as applicable.

provided in s. 372.107, as applicable.

(5) CONFISCATION AND SALE OF PERISHABLE SALTWATER PRODUCTS; PROCEDURE.--

(c) In the event of acquittal, the proceeds of a sale or the bond or cash deposit required by this subsection shall be returned to the defendant. In the event of a conviction, the proceeds of a sale or the bond or cash deposit required by this subsection shall be deposited into the Marine Resources Conservation Trust Fund to be used for law enforcement purposes or into the commission's Federal Law Enforcement Trust Fund as provided in s. 372.107, as applicable. Such deposit into the Marine Resources Conservation Trust Fund or the Federal Law Enforcement Trust Fund shall constitute confiscation.

Section 10. Subsection (5) of section 372.9901, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

372.9901 Seizure of illegal hunting devices; disposition; notice; forfeiture.--In order to protect the state's wildlife resources, any vehicle, vessel, animal, gun, light, or other hunting device used or attempted to be used in connection with, as an instrumentality of, or in aiding and abetting in the commission of an offense prohibited by s. 372.99 is subject to seizure and forfeiture. The provisions of chapter 932 do not apply to any seizure or forfeiture under this section. For purposes of this section, a conviction is any disposition other than acquittal or dismissal.

(5) All amounts received from the sale or other disposition of the property shall be paid into the State Game Trust Fund or into the commission's Federal Law Enforcement Trust Fund as provided in s. 372.107, as applicable. If the

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property is not sold or converted, it shall be delivered to the executive director of the commission.

Section 11. Subsection (3) of section 372.9904, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

372.9904 Seizure of illegal transportation devices; disposition; appraisal; forfeiture.--

- (3) Upon conviction of the violator, the property, if owned by the person convicted, shall be forfeited to the state under the procedure set forth in ss. 370.061 and 370.07, when not inconsistent with this section. All amounts received from the sale or other disposition of the property shall be paid into the State Game Trust Fund or into the commission's Federal Law Enforcement Trust Fund as provided in s. 372.107, as applicable. If the property is not sold or converted, it shall be delivered to the director of the Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission.
- Section 12. Paragraph (e) of subsection (6) of section 932.7055, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:
  - 932.7055 Disposition of liens and forfeited property.--
- (6) If the seizing agency is a state agency, all remaining proceeds shall be deposited into the General Revenue Fund. However, if the seizing agency is:
- (e) The Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, the proceeds accrued pursuant to the provisions of the Florida Contraband Forfeiture Act shall be deposited into the State Game Trust Fund as provided in ss. 372.73, 372.9901, and 372.9904, into the Marine Resources Conservation Trust Fund as provided in

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Section 14. This act shall take effect October 1, 2008.

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s. 370.061<del>, or into the commission's Federal Law Enforcement</del>

Trust Fund as provided in s. 372.107, as applicable.

Section 13. Sections 327.803 and 372.107, Florida

Statutes, are repealed.

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