

By Senator Latvala

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Senate Resolution

A resolution commending Captain Bill Smith for being the first to catch a bonefish (*albula vulpes*) on an artificial fly 75 years ago.

WHEREAS, the species *albula vulpes*, or "grey ghost," is a gorgeous fish, being generally the color of burnished silver with a slightly bluish olive back, fading to almost white below, and is referred to with reverence throughout the Florida Keys as the bonefish, and

WHEREAS, in addition to its beauty, the majestic bonefish is a wily adversary when hunted and a prodigious fighter when engaged, with estimates of its speed ranging from 25 to 40 miles per hour, which allows this speedy fish to cover the length of a football field in a matter of seconds, and

WHEREAS, the elusive bonefish was never known to have been intentionally taken on an artificial fly until one sunny afternoon in the summer of 1939 when, after having considered the problem for many months, Captain Bill Smith fastened an artificial fly of his own devising to the end of a leader attached to a tapered Ashaway GAF line wound on a Shakespeare #1891 single-action Russell reel, and

WHEREAS, among the mud flats near the Islamorada Little Basin, a deeply forked tail waving gently above the water revealed the presence of an 8-pound bonefish, and, under a bright blue sky with fleecy white clouds overhead, Captain Bill Smith used a 9 1/2-foot Orvis Battenkill rod to present the handmade fly to the fish, and

WHEREAS, some minutes later, that noble bonefish made

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30 history as the first of the species *albula vulpes* to be caught
31 on an artificial fly, and

32 WHEREAS, the accomplishment of Captain Bill Smith in taking
33 this historic fish in such a manner initiated what many claim to
34 be the most exciting form of sportfishing, pound for pound, on
35 the face of the globe and founded a multimillion-dollar
36 industry: fly fishing for bonefish, NOW, THEREFORE,

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38 Be It Resolved by the Senate of the State of Florida:

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40 That on the 75th anniversary of the unprecedented feat of
41 catching a bonefish on an artificial fly, Captain Bill Smith is
42 recognized and commended for contributing greatly to the name
43 and reputation of Islamorada and the Florida Keys as a
44 fisherman's paradise.