

House Bill 491

By: Representatives Chastain of the 7th, Rhodes of the 124th, Howard of the 71st, Mathis of the 133rd, Ridley of the 6th, and others

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED
AN ACT

1 To amend Article 1 of Chapter 3 and Article 2 of Chapter 4 of Title 27 of the Official Code
2 of Georgia Annotated, relating to hunting and noncommercial fishing, respectively, so as to
3 remove an exception for the use of air guns to hunt wildlife; to revise provisions concerning
4 the taking of catfish by bow and arrow; to provide for related matters; to repeal conflicting
5 laws; and for other purposes.

6 BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF GEORGIA:

7 **SECTION 1.**

8 Article 1 of Chapter 3 of Title 27 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to
9 hunting, is amended in Code Section 27-3-4, relating to legal weapons for hunting wildlife
10 generally, use of silencers and suppressors prohibited, and penalty for violations, by revising
11 paragraph (9) of subsection (a) as follows:

12 "(9) For purposes of this subsection, the term 'air gun' means any pistol, handgun, or
13 shoulder-held device, each of not less than 0.30 caliber, or air bow that propels a
14 projectile in the form of a slug, shot, or arrow equipped with a broadhead utilizing
15 unignited compressed air or gas. Air guns are legal weapons for hunting big game only
16 during primitive weapon hunts, primitive weapon seasons, and firearm seasons. ~~This~~

17 ~~paragraph shall stand repealed effective July 1, 2025, unless continued in effect by the~~
18 ~~General Assembly prior to that date. At its 2025 regular session, the General Assembly~~
19 ~~shall review this paragraph to determine whether it should be continued in effect."~~

20

SECTION 2.

21 Article 2 of Chapter 4 of Title 27 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to
22 noncommercial fishing, is amended in Code Section 27-4-34, relating to fishing with bow
23 and arrow, by revising subsection (d) as follows:

24 "(d) It shall be unlawful to take ~~channel catfish and flathead~~ any catfish anywhere in the
25 ~~Savannah River, including its tributaries and impoundments within the Savannah River~~
26 ~~Basin, species from the waters of this state~~ by means of bow and arrow, except under the
27 following conditions:

28 (1) Each person using a bow and arrow shall have on his or her person a valid state
29 resident or nonresident fishing license;

30 (2) All arrows used pursuant to this subsection must be equipped with barbs or contain
31 devices on the point to act as a harpoon for recovering fish and must be attached to the
32 person or bow by a rope, line, or cord sufficient for recovering the arrow and channel
33 catfish or flathead catfish;

34 (3) Arrows with poisonous or exploding heads are illegal;

35 (4) It shall be unlawful to discharge arrows into waters nearer than 150 feet to anyone
36 engaged in any other means of recreation; and

37 (5) The taking of ~~channel catfish and flathead~~ any catfish ~~in the Savannah River,~~
38 ~~including its tributaries and impoundments within the Savannah River Basin, species~~
39 ~~from the waters of this state~~ by bow and arrow shall be legal at any time of the day and
40 at night by the use of a light."

41

SECTION 3.

42 All laws and parts of laws in conflict with this Act are repealed.