

ACT 223

S.B. NO. 1313

A Bill for an Act Relating to Sport Fish.

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

SECTION 1. The legislature finds that the northern largemouth bass and butterfly peacock bass, also known as tucunare, are some of the most popular gamefish in the United States, with northern largemouth bass existing in the State's artificial reservoirs since 1896, and butterfly peacock bass existing since 1957. More than 828,000 jobs nationally are directly supported in some way by bass fishing and more than \$48,000,000,000 in retail sales are directly attributed to bass fishing activities. Arkansas, Illinois, Kentucky, Michigan, Mississippi, Missouri, New Hampshire, and Vermont all recognize bass fishing as a high school sport.

The legislature further finds that based upon fishing licenses issued by the department of land and natural resources to fish for northern largemouth bass and butterfly peacock bass, bass fishing in the State is far less popular than in other states. One reason for the small number of anglers fishing for bass is the lack of a diverse population of these sport fish in Hawaii's artificial reservoirs. Restocking the reservoirs with new stocks of northern largemouth bass and butterfly peacock bass will refresh the genetic diversity of these fish populations. The legislature further finds that the board of agriculture can allow the importation of butterfly peacock bass and establish appropriate permit conditions, since it is already on the list of conditionally approved animals and is eligible for importation. The legislature also finds that the department of land and natural resources will need to request the board of agriculture to place the northern largemouth bass and butterfly peacock bass on the list of restricted animals that require a permit for both import into the State and possession, pursuant to section 150A-6.2, Hawaii Revised Statutes.

The purpose of this Act is to establish a pilot project in the department of land and natural resources to work with a public or private organization to import live northern largemouth bass and butterfly peacock bass for the purpose of enhancing and supporting the pre-existing populations for continued recreational fishing in Hawaii.

SECTION 2. No later than January 1, 2023, the division of aquatic resources of the department of land and natural resources shall establish a pilot project to restock northern largemouth bass, butterfly peacock bass, or both, in the Wahiawa public fishing area in central Oahu; provided that the board of agriculture has placed the northern largemouth bass and the butterfly peacock

bass on the list of restricted animals that require a permit for import into the State maintained pursuant to section 150A-6.2, Hawaii Revised Statutes. The division of aquatic resources shall apply to the board of agriculture for the permit to import the northern largemouth bass and butterfly peacock bass and may work with another public entity or partner with a private entity to accomplish the pilot project.

SECTION 3. This Act shall take effect on July 1, 2021.

(Approved July 6, 2021.)