

HB434 INTRODUCED



1 HB434
2 6I5CZZZ-1
3 By Representative Shaw
4 RFD: State Government
5 First Read: 09-Apr-24



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SYNOPSIS:

This bill would designate the Alabama shad as the official state migratory fish of Alabama.

A BILL
TO BE ENTITLED
AN ACT

Relating to state symbols; to designate the Alabama shad as the official state migratory fish.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF ALABAMA:

Section 1. The Legislature finds and declares the following:

(a) *Alosa alabamae*, commonly known as the Alabama shad, is a clupeid fish native to the eastern United States and is found in medium and large river systems along the Gulf Coast from the Mississippi River to the Suwannee River.

(b) The Alabama shad was discovered in the Black Warrior River near Tuscaloosa in the late 18th Century and was historically present in the Mobile, Tombigbee, Alabama, Black Warrior, Cahaba, and Tennessee River Watersheds.

(c) The life cycle of the Alabama shad takes the fish from riverine to marine habitats and back again. The Alabama shad emerge in medium and large rivers, make the downstream



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29 journey to marine habitats to feed and mature, and return to
30 the river where they were spawned.

31 (d) The Alabama shad play a unique role in aquatic
32 ecosystems, transferring nutrients and biomass from saltwater
33 to freshwater during their life cycle.

34 (e) The Alabama shad act as host fish for numerous
35 freshwater mussels, allowing these mussels to complete their
36 life cycles, find new habitats, and provide critically
37 important ecosystem services like water filtration and
38 nutrient storage. Specifically, the Alabama shad is a host
39 fish for *Elliptio crassidens*, commonly known as the
40 elephant-ear mussel.

41 (f) Because of an inability to pass above instream
42 obstacles, the Alabama shad has been extirpated from much of
43 its habitat in Alabama and elsewhere. This extirpation also
44 threatens the survival of the elephant-ear mussel in the
45 Cahaba River.

46 (g) Efforts to reconnect the Alabama shad with its
47 habitat and improve its habitat through fish-passage
48 infrastructure and beneficial stewardship practices align with
49 existing aquatic restoration initiatives to promote the health
50 of other migratory fish, freshwater mussels, and Alabama
51 freshwater and marine ecosystems.

52 Section 2. The Alabama shad, *Alosa alabamae*, is hereby
53 designated and named the official state migratory fish of
54 Alabama.

55 Section 3. This act shall become effective on October
56 1, 2024.