

By: Creighton

H.C.R. No. 136

CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

1           WHEREAS, The State of Texas has designated a select group of  
2 official symbols as tangible representations of the state's culture  
3 and natural history; and

4           WHEREAS, The pecan tree, the bluebonnet, the Guadalupe bass,  
5 and the mockingbird are examples of some of the natural specimens  
6 that help denote the great beauty and diversity of our vast state;  
7 and

8           WHEREAS, In keeping with this custom, the designation of the  
9 tarpon as the official State Saltwater Fish of Texas will provide  
10 suitable recognition of the aquatic life that inhabits the rich  
11 ecosystem of the Gulf of Mexico and the coastal estuaries of our  
12 state; and

13           WHEREAS, Given the scientific name *Megalops atlanticus*,  
14 tarpon can live for more than 60 years and vary in size from  
15 juveniles that are as tiny as baitfish to adults that can grow to  
16 eight feet in length and exceed 200 pounds; the species is a  
17 longtime Texas resident, having lived in the region since the  
18 prehistoric era; and

19           WHEREAS, The tarpon, fondly known by anglers as the "silver  
20 king," is found in the open waters of the Gulf to a distance of more  
21 than 50 miles offshore, and it also inhabits inland estuaries along  
22 the coast and will depart its saltwater home to swim up rivers; this  
23 diverse range makes the tarpon uniquely accessible to a wide range  
24 of fishing enthusiasts, including those pursuing the species on

1 seagoing boats and those casting lines from the shore or fishing  
2 piers; tarpon are not often eaten in the United States, but the  
3 spirited fight they put up when hooked makes them a popular quarry  
4 for anglers, many of whom employ catch-and-release methods to help  
5 preserve the population; and

6 WHEREAS, A rich history surrounds tarpon fishing in the Lone  
7 Star State; in the first half of the 1900s, the Gulf Coast waters  
8 were world famous for their abundance of the fish, with dignitaries  
9 such as President Franklin D. Roosevelt traveling to Texas to try  
10 their luck at landing a tarpon; and

11 WHEREAS, Today, this prized sport fish remains capable of  
12 drawing large numbers of anglers and generating significant  
13 recreational revenue to boost the state's economy; moreover, Texas  
14 is playing a central role in efforts to insure the longevity of the  
15 species; the work of several state conservation organizations,  
16 ongoing scientific research by The University of Texas Marine  
17 Science Institute, and funding from the Texas Parks and Wildlife  
18 Department are providing marine biologists with a better  
19 understanding of the ecology of the tarpon population in the Gulf of  
20 Mexico and the Atlantic Ocean; and

21 WHEREAS, A majestic fish that has played a prominent role in  
22 the development of the Gulf Coast sport fishing industry, the  
23 tarpon continues to remind us of the grandeur of our undersea world,  
24 and it is indeed a fitting addition to the notable roster of  
25 official state symbols; now, therefore, be it

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1           RESOLVED, That the 81st Legislature of the State of Texas  
2 hereby designate the tarpon as the official State Saltwater Fish of  
3 Texas.