

# SB3156



## 104TH GENERAL ASSEMBLY

State of Illinois

2025 and 2026

SB3156

Introduced 2/2/2026, by Sen. Neil Anderson

### SYNOPSIS AS INTRODUCED:

515 ILCS 5/20-45  
520 ILCS 5/3.2

from Ch. 56, par. 20-45  
from Ch. 61, par. 3.2

Amends the Fish and Aquatic Life Code and the Wildlife Code. Provides that there is no fee for an annual or 3-year fishing license, sportsmen's combination license, or hunting license for resident Gold Star Family members. Directs the Department of Natural Resources to adopt rules establishing who qualifies for Gold Star Family member status and what constitutes suitable verification of that status. Effective immediately.

LRB104 19133 TRT 32578 b

A BILL FOR

1 AN ACT concerning fishing and hunting.

2 **Be it enacted by the People of the State of Illinois,**  
3 **represented in the General Assembly:**

4 Section 5. The Fish and Aquatic Life Code is amended by  
5 changing Section 20-45 as follows:

6 (515 ILCS 5/20-45) (from Ch. 56, par. 20-45)

7 Sec. 20-45. License fees for residents. Fees for licenses  
8 for residents of the State of Illinois shall be as follows:

9 (a) Except as otherwise provided in this Section, for  
10 sport fishing devices as defined in Section 10-95 or  
11 spearing devices as defined in Section 10-110, the fee is  
12 \$14.50 for individuals 16 to 64 years old, one-half of the  
13 current fishing license fee for individuals age 65 or  
14 older, and, commencing with the 2012 license year,  
15 one-half of the current fishing license fee for resident  
16 veterans of the United States Armed Forces after returning  
17 from service abroad or mobilization by the President of  
18 the United States as an active duty member of the United  
19 States Armed Forces, the Illinois National Guard, or the  
20 Reserves of the United States Armed Forces. Veterans must  
21 provide to the Department acceptable verification of their  
22 service. The Department shall establish by administrative  
23 rule the procedure by which such verification of service

1 shall be made to the Department for the purpose of issuing  
2 fishing licenses to resident veterans at a reduced fee.

3 (a-3) Except as otherwise provided in this Section,  
4 for sport fishing devices as defined in Section 10-95 or  
5 spearing devices as defined in Section 10-110, residents  
6 of this State may obtain a 3-year fishing license. The fee  
7 for a 3-year fishing license is 3 times the annual fee. For  
8 residents age 65 or older, the fee is one half of the fee  
9 charged for a 3-year fishing license. For resident  
10 veterans of the United States Armed Forces after returning  
11 from service abroad or mobilization by the President of  
12 the United States, the fee is one-half of the fee charged  
13 for a 3-year fishing license. Veterans must provide to the  
14 Department, per administrative rule, verification of their  
15 service. The Department shall establish what constitutes  
16 suitable verification of service for the purpose of  
17 issuing 3-year fishing licenses to resident veterans at a  
18 reduced fee.

19 (a-5) The fee for all sport fishing licenses shall be  
20 \$1 for an annual license and 3 times the annual fee for a  
21 3-year license for residents over 75 years of age.

22 (a-6) There is no fee for an annual or 3-year fishing  
23 license for resident Gold Star Family members. A Gold Star  
24 Family member includes an immediate relative of a United  
25 States Armed Forces member who died in battle or in  
26 support of certain military activities, including a

1 parent, child, brother, sister, or other loved one. Gold  
2 Star Family members must provide verification to the  
3 Department at one of the Department's 5 regional offices.  
4 The Department shall, by rule, establish who qualifies for  
5 Gold Star Family member status and what constitutes  
6 suitable verification.

7 (b) All residents before using any commercial fishing  
8 device shall obtain a commercial fishing license, the fee  
9 for which shall be \$60, and a resident fishing license,  
10 the fee for which is \$14.50. Each and every commercial  
11 device used shall be licensed by a resident commercial  
12 fisherman as follows:

13 (1) For each 100 lineal yards, or fraction  
14 thereof, of seine the fee is \$18. For each minnow  
15 seine, minnow trap, or net for commercial purposes the  
16 fee is \$20.

17 (2) For each device to fish with a 100 hook trot  
18 line device, basket trap, hoop net, or dip net the fee  
19 is \$3.

20 (3) When used in the waters of Lake Michigan, for  
21 the first 2000 lineal feet, or fraction thereof, of  
22 gill net the fee is \$10; and for each 1000 additional  
23 lineal feet, or fraction thereof, the fee is \$10.  
24 These fees shall apply to all gill nets in use in the  
25 water or on drying reels on the shore.

26 (4) For each 100 lineal yards, or fraction

1           thereof, of gill net or trammel net the fee is \$18.

2           (c) Residents of this State may obtain a sportsmen's  
3 combination license that shall entitle the holder to the  
4 same non-commercial fishing privileges as residents  
5 holding a license as described in subsection (a) of this  
6 Section and to the same hunting privileges as residents  
7 holding a license to hunt all species as described in  
8 Section 3.1 of the Wildlife Code. No sportsmen's  
9 combination license shall be issued to any individual who  
10 would be ineligible for either the fishing or hunting  
11 license separately. The sportsmen's combination license  
12 fee shall be \$25.50. For residents age 65 or older, the fee  
13 is one-half of the fee charged for a sportsmen's  
14 combination license. For resident veterans of the United  
15 States Armed Forces after returning from service abroad or  
16 mobilization by the President of the United States as an  
17 active duty member of the United States Armed Forces, the  
18 Illinois National Guard, or the Reserves of the United  
19 States Armed Forces, the fee, commencing with the 2012  
20 license year, is one-half of the fee charged for a  
21 sportsmen's combination license. Veterans must provide to  
22 the Department acceptable verification of their service.  
23 The Department shall establish by administrative rule the  
24 procedure by which such verification of service shall be  
25 made to the Department for the purpose of issuing  
26 sportsmen's combination licenses to resident veterans at a

1 reduced fee.

2 (c-1) There is no fee for an annual or 3-year  
3 sportsmen's combination license for resident Gold Star  
4 Family members. A Gold Star Family member includes an  
5 immediate relative of a United States Armed Forces member  
6 who died in battle or in support of certain military  
7 activities, including a parent, child, brother, sister, or  
8 other loved one. Gold Star Family members must provide  
9 verification to the Department at one of the Department's  
10 5 regional offices. The Department shall, by rule,  
11 establish who qualifies for Gold Star Family member status  
12 and what constitutes suitable verification.

13 (c-5) Residents of this State may obtain a 3-year  
14 sportsmen's combination license that shall entitle the  
15 holder to the same non-commercial fishing privileges as  
16 residents holding a license as described in subsection  
17 (a-3) and to the same hunting privileges as residents  
18 holding a license to hunt all species as described in  
19 Section 3.1 of the Wildlife Code. A 3-year sportsmen's  
20 combination license shall not be issued to any individual  
21 who would be ineligible for either the fishing or hunting  
22 license separately. The 3-year sportsmen's combination  
23 license fee shall be 3 times the annual fee. For residents  
24 age 65 or older, the fee is one-half of the fee charged for  
25 a 3-year sportsmen's combination license. For resident  
26 veterans of the United States Armed Forces after returning

1 from service abroad or mobilization by the President of  
2 the United States, the fee is one-half of the fee charged  
3 for a 3-year sportsmen's combination license. Veterans  
4 must provide to the Department, per administrative rule,  
5 verification of their service. The Department shall  
6 establish what constitutes suitable verification of  
7 service for the purpose of issuing 3-year sportsmen's  
8 combination licenses to resident veterans at a reduced  
9 fee.

10 (d) For 24 hours of fishing by sport fishing devices  
11 as defined in Section 10-95 or by spearing devices as  
12 defined in Section 10-110 the fee is \$5. This license does  
13 not exempt the licensee from the requirement for a salmon  
14 or inland trout stamp. The licenses provided for by this  
15 subsection are not required for residents of the State of  
16 Illinois who have obtained the license provided for in  
17 subsection (a) or (a-3) of this Section.

18 (e) All residents before using any commercial mussel  
19 device shall obtain a commercial mussel license, the fee  
20 for which shall be \$50.

21 (f) Residents of this State, upon establishing  
22 residency as required by the Department, may obtain a  
23 lifetime hunting or fishing license or lifetime  
24 sportsmen's combination license which shall entitle the  
25 holder to the same non-commercial fishing privileges as  
26 residents holding a license as described in subsection

1 ~~paragraph~~ (a) of this Section and to the same hunting  
2 privileges as residents holding a license to hunt all  
3 species as described in Section 3.1 of the Wildlife Code.  
4 No lifetime sportsmen's combination license shall be  
5 issued to or retained by any individual who would be  
6 ineligible for either the fishing or hunting license  
7 separately, either upon issuance, or in any year a  
8 violation would subject an individual to have either or  
9 both fishing or hunting privileges rescinded. The lifetime  
10 hunting and fishing license fees shall be as follows:

11 (1) Lifetime fishing: 30 x the current fishing  
12 license fee.

13 (2) Lifetime hunting: 30 x the current hunting  
14 license fee.

15 (3) Lifetime sportsmen's combination license: 30 x  
16 the current sportsmen's combination license fee.

17 Lifetime licenses shall not be refundable. A \$10 fee shall  
18 be charged for reissuing any lifetime license. The Department  
19 may establish rules and regulations for the issuance and use  
20 of lifetime licenses and may suspend or revoke any lifetime  
21 license issued under this Section for violations of those  
22 rules or regulations or other provisions under this Code or  
23 the Wildlife Code, or a violation of the United States Code  
24 that involves the taking, possessing, killing, harvesting,  
25 transportation, selling, exporting, or importing any fish or  
26 aquatic life protected by this Code or the taking, possessing,

1 killing, harvesting, transportation, selling, exporting, or  
2 importing any fauna protected by the Wildlife Code when any  
3 part of the United States Code violation occurred in Illinois.  
4 Individuals under 16 years of age who possess a lifetime  
5 hunting or sportsmen's combination license shall have in their  
6 possession, while in the field, a certificate of competency as  
7 required under Section 3.2 of the Wildlife Code. Any lifetime  
8 license issued under this Section shall not exempt individuals  
9 from obtaining additional stamps or permits required under the  
10 provisions of this Code or the Wildlife Code. Individuals  
11 required to purchase additional stamps shall sign the stamps  
12 and have them in their possession while fishing or hunting  
13 with a lifetime license. All fees received from the issuance  
14 of lifetime licenses shall be deposited in the Fish and  
15 Wildlife Endowment Fund.

16 Except for licenses issued under subsection (e) of this  
17 Section, all licenses provided for in this Section shall  
18 expire on March 31 of each year, except that the license  
19 provided for in subsection (d) of this Section shall expire 24  
20 hours after the effective date and time listed on the face of  
21 the license. Licenses issued under subsection (a-3) or (c-5)  
22 shall expire on March 31 of the 2nd year after the year in  
23 which the license is issued.

24 The Department shall by administrative rule provide for  
25 the automatic renewal of a fishing license upon the request of  
26 the applicant.

1 All individuals required to have and failing to have the  
2 license provided for in subsection (a), (a-3), or (d) of this  
3 Section shall be fined according to the provisions of Section  
4 20-35 of this Code.

5 All individuals required to have and failing to have the  
6 licenses provided for in subsections (b) and (e) of this  
7 Section shall be guilty of a Class B misdemeanor.

8 (g) For the purposes of this Section, "acceptable  
9 verification" means official documentation from the Department  
10 of Defense or the appropriate Major Command showing  
11 mobilization dates or service abroad dates, including: (i) a  
12 DD-214, (ii) a letter from the Illinois Department of Military  
13 Affairs for members of the Illinois National Guard, (iii) a  
14 letter from the Regional Reserve Command for members of the  
15 Armed Forces Reserve, (iv) a letter from the Major Command  
16 covering Illinois for active duty members, (v) personnel  
17 records for mobilized State employees, and (vi) any other  
18 documentation that the Department, by administrative rule,  
19 deems acceptable to establish dates of mobilization or service  
20 abroad.

21 For the purposes of this Section, the term "service  
22 abroad" means active duty service outside of the 50 United  
23 States and the District of Columbia, and includes all active  
24 duty service in territories and possessions of the United  
25 States.

26 (Source: P.A. 102-780, eff. 5-13-22; 102-837, eff. 5-13-22;

1 103-154, eff. 6-30-23; 103-456, eff. 1-1-24; revised 7-3-25.)

2 Section 10. The Wildlife Code is amended by changing  
3 Section 3.2 as follows:

4 (520 ILCS 5/3.2) (from Ch. 61, par. 3.2)

5 Sec. 3.2. Hunting license; application; instruction.  
6 Before the Department or any county, city, village, township,  
7 incorporated town clerk or the clerk's duly designated agent  
8 or any other person authorized or designated by the Department  
9 to issue hunting licenses shall issue a hunting license to any  
10 person, the person shall file the person's application with  
11 the Department or other party authorized to issue licenses on  
12 a form provided by the Department and further give definite  
13 proof of identity and place of legal residence. Each clerk  
14 designating agents to issue licenses and stamps shall furnish  
15 the Department, within 10 days following the appointment, the  
16 names and mailing addresses of the agents. Each clerk or the  
17 clerk's duly designated agent shall be authorized to sell  
18 licenses and stamps only within the territorial area for which  
19 the clerk was elected or appointed. No duly designated agent  
20 is authorized to furnish licenses or stamps for issuance by  
21 any other business establishment. Each application shall be  
22 executed and sworn to and shall set forth the name and  
23 description of the applicant and place of residence.

24 No hunting license shall be issued to any person born on or

1 after January 1, 1980 unless that person presents the person  
2 who is authorized to issue the license evidence that the  
3 person seeking the license has held a hunting license issued  
4 by the State of Illinois in a prior year, or a certificate of  
5 competency as provided in this Section. Persons under 18 years  
6 of age may be issued a Lifetime Hunting or Sportsmen's  
7 Combination License as provided under Section 20-45 of the  
8 Fish and Aquatic Life Code but shall not be entitled to hunt  
9 alone, without the supervision of an adult age 21 or older,  
10 unless they have a certificate of competency as provided in  
11 this Section and the certificate is in their possession while  
12 hunting.

13 The Department of Natural Resources shall authorize  
14 personnel of the Department or certified volunteer instructors  
15 to conduct courses, of not less than 10 hours in length, in  
16 firearms and hunter safety, which may include training in bow  
17 and arrow safety, at regularly specified intervals throughout  
18 the State. Persons successfully completing the course shall  
19 receive a certificate of competency. The Department of Natural  
20 Resources may further cooperate with any reputable association  
21 or organization in establishing courses if the organization  
22 has as one of its objectives the promotion of safety in the  
23 handling of firearms or bow and arrow.

24 The Department of Natural Resources shall designate any  
25 person found by it to be competent to give instruction in the  
26 handling of firearms, hunter safety, and bow and arrow. The

1 persons so appointed shall give the course of instruction and  
2 upon the successful completion shall issue to the person  
3 instructed a certificate of competency in the safe handling of  
4 firearms, hunter safety, and bow and arrow. No charge shall be  
5 made for any course of instruction except for materials or  
6 ammunition consumed. The Department of Natural Resources shall  
7 furnish information on the requirements of hunter safety  
8 education programs to be distributed free of charge to  
9 applicants for hunting licenses by the persons appointed and  
10 authorized to issue licenses. Funds for the conducting of  
11 firearms and hunter safety courses shall be taken from the fee  
12 charged for the Firearm Owners Identification Card.

13 The fee for a hunting license to hunt all species for a  
14 resident of Illinois is \$12. For residents age 65 or older,  
15 and, commencing with the 2012 license year, resident veterans  
16 of the United States Armed Forces after returning from service  
17 abroad or mobilization by the President of the United States  
18 as an active duty member of the United States Armed Forces, the  
19 Illinois National Guard, or the Reserves of the United States  
20 Armed Forces, the fee is one-half of the fee charged for a  
21 hunting license to hunt all species for a resident of  
22 Illinois. Veterans must provide to the Department acceptable  
23 verification of their service. The Department shall establish  
24 by administrative rule the procedure by which such  
25 verification of service shall be made to the Department for  
26 the purpose of issuing resident veterans hunting licenses at a

1 reduced fee. There is no fee for an annual or 3-year hunting  
2 license for resident Gold Star Family members. A Gold Star  
3 Family member includes an immediate relative of a United  
4 States Armed Forces member who died in battle or in support of  
5 certain military activities, including a parent, child,  
6 brother, sister, or other loved one. Gold Star Family members  
7 must provide verification to the Department at one of the  
8 Department's 5 regional offices. The Department shall, by  
9 rule, establish who qualifies for Gold Star Family member  
10 status and what constitutes suitable verification. The fee for  
11 a hunting license to hunt all species shall be \$1 for residents  
12 over 75 years of age. Nonresidents shall be charged \$57 for a  
13 hunting license.

14 Residents of this State may obtain a 3-year hunting  
15 license to hunt all species as described in Section 3.1 for 3  
16 times the annual fee. For residents age 65 or older and  
17 resident veterans of the United States Armed Forces after  
18 returning from service abroad or mobilization by the President  
19 of the United States, the fee is one-half of the fee charged  
20 for a 3-year hunting license to hunt all species as described  
21 in Section 3.1 for a resident of this State. Veterans must  
22 provide to the Department, per administrative rule,  
23 verification of their service. The Department shall establish  
24 what constitutes suitable verification of service for the  
25 purpose of issuing resident veterans 3-year hunting licenses  
26 at a reduced fee.

1 Nonresidents may be issued a nonresident hunting license  
2 for a period not to exceed 10 consecutive days' hunting in the  
3 State and shall be charged a fee of \$35.

4 A special nonresident hunting license authorizing a  
5 nonresident to take game birds by hunting on a game breeding  
6 and hunting preserve area only, established under Section  
7 3.27, shall be issued upon proper application being made and  
8 payment of a fee equal to that for a resident hunting license.  
9 The expiration date of this license shall be on the same date  
10 each year that game breeding and hunting preserve area  
11 licenses expire.

12 Each applicant for a State Migratory Waterfowl Stamp,  
13 regardless of the applicant's residence or other condition,  
14 shall pay a fee of \$15 and shall receive a stamp. The fee for a  
15 State Migratory Waterfowl Stamp shall be waived for residents  
16 over 75 years of age. Except as provided under Section 20-45 of  
17 the Fish and Aquatic Life Code, the stamp shall be signed by  
18 the person or affixed to the person's license or permit in a  
19 space designated by the Department for that purpose.

20 Each applicant for a State Habitat Stamp, regardless of  
21 the applicant's residence or other condition, shall pay a fee  
22 of \$5 and shall receive a stamp. The fee for a State Habitat  
23 Stamp shall be waived for residents over 75 years of age.  
24 Except as provided under Section 20-45 of the Fish and Aquatic  
25 Life Code, the stamp shall be signed by the person or affixed  
26 to the person's license or permit in a space designated by the

1 Department for that purpose.

2 Nothing in this Section shall be construed as to require  
3 the purchase of more than one State Habitat Stamp by any person  
4 in any one license year.

5 The fees for State Pheasant Stamps and State Furbearer  
6 Stamps shall be waived for residents over 75 years of age.

7 The Department shall furnish the holders of hunting  
8 licenses and stamps with an insignia as evidence of possession  
9 of license, or license and stamp, as the Department may  
10 consider advisable. The insignia shall be exhibited and used  
11 as the Department may order.

12 All other hunting licenses and all State stamps shall  
13 expire upon March 31 of each year. Three-year hunting licenses  
14 shall expire on March 31 of the 2nd year after the year in  
15 which the license is issued.

16 Every person holding any license, permit, or stamp issued  
17 under the provisions of this Act shall have it in the person's  
18 possession for immediate presentation for inspection to the  
19 officers and authorized employees of the Department, any  
20 sheriff, deputy sheriff, or any other peace officer making a  
21 demand for it. This provision shall not apply to Department  
22 owned or managed sites where it is required that all hunters  
23 deposit their license, permit, or Firearm Owner's  
24 Identification Card at the check station upon entering the  
25 hunting areas.

26 For the purposes of this Section, "acceptable

1 verification" means official documentation from the Department  
2 of Defense or the appropriate Major Command showing  
3 mobilization dates or service abroad dates, including: (i) a  
4 DD-214, (ii) a letter from the Illinois Department of Military  
5 Affairs for members of the Illinois National Guard, (iii) a  
6 letter from the Regional Reserve Command for members of the  
7 Armed Forces Reserve, (iv) a letter from the Major Command  
8 covering Illinois for active duty members, (v) personnel  
9 records for mobilized State employees, and (vi) any other  
10 documentation that the Department, by administrative rule,  
11 deems acceptable to establish dates of mobilization or service  
12 abroad.

13 For the purposes of this Section, the term "service  
14 abroad" means active duty service outside of the 50 United  
15 States and the District of Columbia, and includes all active  
16 duty service in territories and possessions of the United  
17 States.

18 (Source: P.A. 103-456, eff. 1-1-24; 104-325, eff. 1-1-26.)

19 Section 99. Effective date. This Act takes effect upon  
20 becoming law.