

State of Arkansas  
92nd General Assembly  
Regular Session, 2019

As Engrossed: S3/13/19

# A Bill

HOUSE BILL 1640

By: Representatives D. Garner, D. Whitaker, Clowney, C. Fite

By: Senator B. Ballinger

## For An Act To Be Entitled

AN ACT TO DESIGNATE THE ALLIGATOR GAR AS THE OFFICIAL  
PRIMITIVE FISH OF THE STATE OF ARKANSAS; AND FOR  
OTHER PURPOSES.

### Subtitle

TO DESIGNATE THE ALLIGATOR GAR AS THE  
OFFICIAL PRIMITIVE FISH OF THE STATE OF  
ARKANSAS.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ARKANSAS:

SECTION 1. DO NOT CODIFY. LEGISLATIVE INTENT.

The General Assembly finds:

(1) Arkansas is one (1) of only five (5) states that does not designate an official state fish;

(2) The designation of an official state primitive fish provides conservation and educational benefits, increases interest in Arkansas's rich and diverse fauna, and promotes the important study of fisheries and ichthyology;

(3) The alligator gar, *Atractosteus spatula*, is commonly recognized by most citizens of the State of Arkansas for its razor-sharp teeth and its stone-hard scales, which make it as tough as the Arkansas Razorback;

(4) Alligator gar in Arkansas have been known to exceed eight feet (8') in length and two hundred forty pounds (240 lbs.) in weight, by far the largest fish in Arkansas;



(5) The alligator gar has for centuries been one (1) of Arkansas's most remarkable resident creatures, with its scales used by Native Americans for arrowheads and its striking features likely noted by Spanish explorer Hernando De Soto, who described eating a fish "the size of a hog, with rows of teeth above and below" in his exploration in the 1500s of what later became the State of Arkansas; and

(6) While acknowledging the known diversity of fishes represented in Arkansas's lakes and rivers, the General Assembly concludes that the alligator gar shall represent the State of Arkansas as the official primitive fish of the State of Arkansas.

SECTION 2. Arkansas Code Title 1, Chapter 4, Subchapter 1, is amended to add an additional section to read as follows:

1-4-134. State primitive fish.

(a) The alligator gar is designated the official primitive fish of the State of Arkansas.

(b)(1) This section does not require a state agency or office to republish a publication or brochure in order to list or display the alligator gar.

(2) A state agency or office may include the information concerning the state primitive fish in future publications or brochures or in a scheduled update to a publication or brochure.

(c) This section does not grant a protected status to the alligator gar.

*/s/D. Garner*

**APPROVED: 3/27/19**