



## 103RD GENERAL ASSEMBLY

### State of Illinois

2023 and 2024

HB4515

Introduced 1/31/2024, by Rep. Ryan Spain - Tony M. McCombie

#### SYNOPSIS AS INTRODUCED:

20 ILCS 801/1-38 new

Amends the Department of Natural Resources Act. Makes legislative findings concerning the growth of American white pelican populations and their impacts on recreational fish populations in the Upper Mississippi River System. Directs the Department of Natural Resources to collaborate with an accredited university or college in the State to conduct a study of the American white pelican communities that reside, during their migration, in Pool 13 of the Upper Mississippi River System in order to: (1) evaluate the movements and foraging activities of those communities; (2) assess how the migration of those communities impacts fish populations in the Upper Mississippi River System; and (3) collect the data necessary to develop trophic models of the Upper Mississippi River System that incorporate impacts of piscivorous birds, such as the American white pelican. Requires the Department to report the findings of its study to the General Assembly by no later than December 31, 2025. Effective immediately.

LRB103 34205 JDS 64028 b

1 AN ACT concerning State government.

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

4 Section 1. Legislative findings. The General Assembly  
5 finds that:

6 (1) American white pelican (*Pelecanus erythrorhynchos*)  
7 communities that migrate through the Upper Mississippi  
8 River System have grown dramatically in size in recent  
9 decades;

10 (2) the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, for example,  
11 estimates that approximately 4,000 American white pelicans  
12 now forage in Pool 13 of the Mississippi River, which  
13 stretches 34.2 miles from Lock and Dam Number 13, near  
14 Fulton, Illinois, to Lock and Dam Number 12, near  
15 Blanding, Illinois;

16 (3) this is a ten-fold increase in the size of that  
17 population since a breeding colony of American white  
18 pelicans was first established;

19 (4) these foraging pelicans consume between 2.5 and 4  
20 pounds of fish per day, meaning that a population of just  
21 4,000 American white pelicans could consume 10,000 to  
22 16,000 pounds of fish from Pool 13 of the Mississippi  
23 River each and every day and potentially millions of  
24 pounds during the months of the pelicans' migration;

1           (5) this foraging impacts not only shad and small  
2 schooling fish that are of little value to humans, but  
3 also largemouth bass, white bass, bluegills, crappies,  
4 northern pike, and other game fish in the Upper  
5 Mississippi River System; and

6           (6) because of the value of recreational fishing to  
7 the economy of the State of Illinois, there is a need to  
8 conduct a thorough study of the impact of American white  
9 pelican communities on the Upper Mississippi River System.

10           Section 5. The Department of Natural Resources Act is  
11 amended by adding Section 1-38 as follows:

12           (20 ILCS 801/1-38 new)

13           Sec. 1-38. American white pelican study. The Department  
14 shall collaborate with an accredited university or college in  
15 the State to conduct a study of the American white pelican  
16 communities that reside, during their migration, in Pool 13 of  
17 the Upper Mississippi River System in order to: (1) evaluate  
18 the movements and foraging activities of those communities;  
19 (2) assess how the migration of those communities impacts fish  
20 populations in the Upper Mississippi River System; and (3)  
21 collect the data necessary to develop trophic models of the  
22 Upper Mississippi River System that incorporate impacts of  
23 piscivorous birds, such as the American white pelican. The  
24 Department shall report the findings of its study to the

1 General Assembly by no later than December 31, 2025.

2 Section 99. Effective date. This Act takes effect upon  
3 becoming law.