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An Act To Promote and Encourage the Sustainability of the Elver Fishery
Be it enacted by the People of the State of Maine as follows:

Sec. 1. 12 MRSA §6404-H, as amended by PL 2013, c. 49, §4, is further amended to read:

§ 6404-H. Suspension or revocation based on conviction of an elver fishing license offense

The commissioner shall suspend or revoke a person's eligibility for the elver ~~lotteries~~lottery under section 6505-A, subsection ~~2-B2-C~~ if the person is convicted of an offense in violation of section 6505-A, subsection 1.

1. First offense. For a first offense, the commissioner shall suspend the person's eligibility for the elver ~~lotteries~~lottery under section 6505-A, subsection ~~2-B2-C~~ for one year.

2. Second offense. For a 2nd offense, the commissioner shall permanently revoke the person's eligibility for the elver ~~lotteries~~lottery under section 6505-A, subsection ~~2-B2-C~~.

Sec. 2. 12 MRSA §6505-A, sub-§1-F is enacted to read:

1-F. Licenses issued. The commissioner shall issue 425 elver fishing licenses each year under this section.

Sec. 3. 12 MRSA §6505-A, sub-§2, ¶F, as enacted by PL 2011, c. 549, §3, is amended to read:

F. Becomes eligible to obtain an elver fishing license pursuant to the elver ~~lotteries~~lottery under subsection ~~2-B2-C~~.

Sec. 4. 12 MRSA §6505-A, sub-§2-B, as amended by PL 2013, c. 301, §9, is repealed.

Sec. 5. 12 MRSA §6505-A, sub-§2-C is enacted to read:

2-C. Elver license lottery. The commissioner shall establish an elver fishing license lottery under which a person may become eligible for that license under subsection 2, paragraph F. An applicant to the lottery must submit a lottery application together with a \$35 nonrefundable application fee no later than January 15th of the same calendar year as the lottery. An applicant may not submit more than one elver fishing license lottery application per lottery year. The lottery must be held on or before February 15th of each calendar year.

The commissioner shall adopt rules to implement the elver fishing license lottery, including provisions for the method and administration of the lottery. Rules adopted pursuant to this subsection are routine technical rules as defined in Title 5, chapter 375, subchapter 2-A.

Twenty-five dollars of the application fee collected under this subsection must be deposited in the Eel and Elver Management Fund established in section 6505-D and used to fund a life-cycle study of the elver fishery. Ten dollars of the application fee may be used by the department to fund the costs of administering the elver fishing license lottery.

Sec. 6. 12 MRSA §6505-A, sub-§3-A, ¶¶B and C, as enacted by PL 2013, c. 485, §7, are amended to read:

B. Establish the amount of the overall annual quota under paragraph A that is allocated to persons licensed under this section and specify a formula to establish individual quotas for persons licensed under this section, except that each person licensed under this section must be allocated at least 4 pounds unless an allocation of 4 pounds per license holder exceeds the overall annual quota established by the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission. If an allocation of 4 pounds per license holder exceeds the annual quota established by the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission, each license holder must be allocated equal amounts that, in total, equal the annual quota established. The formula may take into account the amount of elvers a person licensed under this section lawfully harvested in previous seasons based on final harvesting reports. The rules must specify the date by which harvester reports are considered final for the purpose of determining individual quotas; ~~and~~

C. Provide, in accordance with section 6302-B, that 21.9% of the overall annual quota under paragraph A is allocated to the federally recognized Indian tribes in the State and establish the amount of that portion of the overall annual quota allocated to the Passamaquoddy Tribe, the Penobscot Nation, the Houlton Band of Maliseet Indians and the Aroostook Band of Micmacs; and

Sec. 7. 12 MRSA §6505-A, sub-§3-A, ¶D is enacted to read:

D. Provide a method for redistributing the quota that will not be fished by a person licensed under this section due to the death of the license holder or for any reason known to the commissioner.

SUMMARY

This bill sets at 425 the number of elver fishing licenses issued each year, not including licenses issued to federally recognized Indian tribes. The bill requires the Commissioner of Marine Resources to hold a lottery for elver fishing licenses through which a person who did not possess an elver fishing license in the previous year may become eligible to obtain one. The bill establishes a minimum allocation of elver quota to each elver fishing license holder of 4 pounds, unless that amount causes the State to exceed its overall annual quota set by the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission. The bill requires the commissioner to adopt rules that provide a method for redistributing quotas allocated to deceased elver fishing license holders or license holders who for another reason will not fish those quotas.