

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA
SESSION 2013

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HOUSE PRINCIPAL CLERK

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HOUSE DRH70260-LG-92 (03/18)

Short Title: Adopt State Symbols.

(Public)

Sponsors: Representatives Avila, Martin, McElraft, and West (Primary Sponsors).

Referred to:

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT TO ADOPT AN OFFICIAL STATE FOSSIL, FROG, SALAMANDER,
MARSUPIAL, AND FOLK ART.

Whereas, some of North Carolina's official State symbols have been suggested by the State's school children after they have had history, science, social studies, or geography lessons related to North Carolina; and

Whereas, this year some of the suggestions range from the adoption of an official fossil to an official frog; and

Whereas, the State of North Carolina has a number of unique official symbols but does not have an official fossil, frog, salamander, marsupial, or folk art; and

Whereas, the megalodon shark is an extinct shark species that lived over 1.5 million years ago; and

Whereas, the megalodon shark may have reached over 40 feet in length and weighed up to 100 tons; and

Whereas, the megalodon shark had serrated, heart-shaped teeth that may have grown to over seven inches in length; and

Whereas, fossilized teeth of the megalodon shark have been found in North Carolina and throughout the world; and

Whereas, North Carolina and the Southeast region of the United States lead the world in amphibian diversity; and

Whereas, the pine barrens tree frog can be found in the Sandhills and Coastal Plain regions of North Carolina; and

Whereas, the pine barrens tree frog has been considered one of the most striking and beautiful frogs in the Southeast region of the United States; and

Whereas, the pine barrens tree frog by name reflects one of North Carolina's signature trees and ecosystems that have been a vital part of the State's economic, cultural, and natural history since colonial times; and

Whereas, North Carolina also leads the nation and world in salamander diversity, most notably in our Appalachian Mountains; and

Whereas, the marbled salamander is found throughout the State and is unique in that it is a charismatic, striking, chunky-bodied, fossorial amphibian, of which no two are exactly alike in color pattern; and

Whereas, according the North Carolina Wildlife Commission's 2005 North Carolina Wildlife Action Plan, the pine barrens tree frog and the marbled salamander have been identified as priority species for population monitoring and conservation in North Carolina; and



1 Whereas, the Virginia opossum is native to North Carolina and is the only marsupial
2 found in North America; the female carries its underdeveloped young in a pouch until they are
3 capable of living independently, similar to a kangaroo; and

4 Whereas, the Virginia opossum is one of the oldest and most primitive species of
5 mammal found in North America; and

6 Whereas, the opossum is about the size of a large house cat with a triangular head; a
7 long pointed nose; dark eyes; a long, scaly, prehensile tail; and short, black, leathery ears; and

8 Whereas, the Virginia opossum is nocturnal and lives in a wide variety of habitats,
9 including deciduous forests, open woods, and farmland but prefers wet areas such as marshes,
10 swamps, and streams; and

11 Whereas, at age 65, Vollis Simpson, a self-taught folk artist, began making giant
12 windmills known as "whirligigs" at his home in Wilson, North Carolina; and

13 Whereas, Mr. Simpson's whirligigs have been exhibited at the North Carolina
14 Museum of Art in Raleigh, the High Museum of Art in Atlanta, Georgia, and the Visionary Art
15 Museum in Baltimore, Maryland, and at other locations, including New York, California,
16 Canada, and England; and

17 Whereas, Mr. Simpson and details of his artwork have been featured in many
18 national magazines and in several books; and

19 Whereas, the City of Wilson is developing the Vollis Simpson Whirligig Park to
20 display a large collection of these whirligigs in historic downtown, which will be a
21 one-of-a-kind destination for visitors; Now, therefore,

22 The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

23 **SECTION 1.** Chapter 145 of the General Statutes is amended by adding the
24 following new sections to read:

25 **"§ 145-41. State fossil.**

26 The fossilized teeth of the megalodon shark is adopted as the official fossil of the State of
27 North Carolina.

28 **"§ 145-42. State frog.**

29 The pine barrens tree frog (*Hyla andersonii*) is adopted as the official frog of the State of
30 North Carolina.

31 **"§ 145-43. State salamander.**

32 The marbled salamander (*Ambystoma opacum*) is adopted as the official salamander of the
33 State of North Carolina.

34 **"§ 145-44. State marsupial.**

35 The Virginia opossum (*Didelphis virginiana*) is adopted as the official marsupial of the
36 State of North Carolina.

37 **"§ 145-45. State folk art.**

38 The whirligigs created by Vollis Simpson are adopted as the official folk art of the State of
39 North Carolina."

40 **SECTION 2.** This act is effective when it becomes law.