



September 5, 2017

Alabama Marine Resources Announces Changes to Crab Regulations

Effective September 24, 2017, there will be several changes to the Alabama crab regulation (220-3-.31) that apply to both commercial and recreational crabbing.

The changes include the following:

- The possession of egg-bearing female crabs, otherwise known as gravid, berried or sponge crabs, will be prohibited and must be immediately returned to the water. There will be an exception from January 15 through May 15 each year.
- All crab traps must contain at least two unobstructed escape rings with a minimum inside diameter of 2 5/16 inches located on vertical surfaces. There must be one ring per chamber. Catchers will have until March 1, 2018 to have the escape rings installed.
- From April 1 through September 30, a licensed crab catcher may obstruct or remove the escape rings after obtaining a free permit from the Marine Resources Division, for the purpose of catching pre-molt crabs, otherwise known as “busters” or “peelers.”
- The closure line in the northeast corner of Mobile Bay in the Blakeley River running from Blakeley Channel marker 18 to the southern tip of Big Island will be removed. Crab traps may be placed up to the eastbound lane of Interstate-10 at the Blakeley River.
- During the first and second day of each calendar month, a validly licensed crab catcher may recover traps that are unidentified and derelict or abandoned. The catcher must make a report to AMRD with the number of traps, the location and any additional information required by AMRD. These reports must be made by close of the next business day (excludes holidays and weekends).

Enforcement officers with AMRD will be making efforts to educate commercial and recreational crab catchers about the regulation changes.

Informational handouts are available at <http://www.outdooralabama.com/regulations-and-enforcement>.