

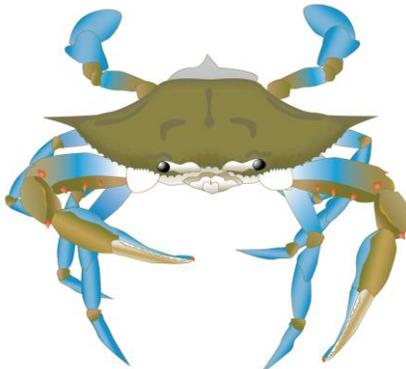


STATE OF ALABAMA  
DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION AND NATURAL RESOURCES  
MARINE RESOURCES DIVISION

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**SUMMARY OF ALABAMA COMMERCIAL BLUE CRAB LAWS AND REGULATIONS**

THIS IS NOT AN OFFICIAL COPY OF THE LAWS OR REGULATIONS. THIS EXPLANATION OF THE LAWS AND REGULATIONS IS CORRECT AS OF THE DATE SPECIFIED. BEFORE TAKING PART IN THIS FISHERY PLEASE CALL 251-861-2882 OR 251-968-7576 OR VISIT OUR WEBSITE WWW.OUTDOORALABAMA.COM FOR UPDATED INFORMATION. IT IS THE FISHERMAN'S RESPONSIBILITY TO KNOW THE LAWS AND REGULATIONS IN EFFECT AT ANY GIVEN TIME.

**LICENSE:**

**EXPIRES SEPTEMBER 30<sup>TH</sup>**

(Non-residents pay the same fee as that charged Alabama residents to conduct the same activity in the applicant's state of residence, or not less than twice the amount of a resident license.)

1. Any person taking crabs for commercial purposes or using more than five (5) crab traps must first obtain and have in possession a "crab catchers" license.
2. No person, firm, or corporation shall take, catch, sell, transport, or possess blue crabs that measure less than five (5) inches carapace width as measured from the tip of one lateral spine to tip of the opposite lateral spine, except:
  - a. Exemption from minimum size limit for soft-shelled and pre-molt crabs, if taken solely for the purpose of shedding and held in separate containers marked "peelers" or "busters".
  - b. Exemption from the minimum size limit for licensed live bait dealers when crabs are sold for bait.
  - c. Exemption from the minimum size limit for crabs in work boxes aboard the commercial crab fisherman's vessel (maximum of two work boxes to sort crabs allowed).
3. Possession by a dealer of crabs of less than 5" carapace width is prohibited except that pre-molt crabs in possession of, or held by, a dealer for sale or processing as soft-shelled crabs, are exempt from minimum size limit if identified as pre-molt crabs, and held in separate containers marked "peelers" or "busters".
4. Except from January 15 through May 15, all egg bearing females, otherwise known as gravid, berried or sponge crabs, must be immediately returned to the water. Possession of egg bearing female crabs shall be prohibited with the exception of January 15 through May 15.
5. It is unlawful to take crabs from traps belonging to another person without written authorization from the owner.

6. Each commercial crab trap shall be marked with at least one (1) buoy no smaller than six (6) inches in diameter. At least one-half (1/2) of the buoy shall be white. Each buoy shall be marked above the water line with the fisherman's identification number (assigned to fisherman by MRD and remains the same for subsequent years). Buoys must be attached to the traps by use of weighted line to prevent the line from floating. Plastic bottles are prohibited for use as a commercial crab trap buoy. Owner trap verification number must be painted or affixed to each side of the vessel used to harvest crabs in three (3) inch minimum height block letters contrasting to the background.
7. It is unlawful to remove commercial crab traps from the water or remove crabs from commercial crab traps during the hours from sunset to one (1) hour before sunrise the following day.
8. It is unlawful to set or place a crab trap in the access canals to Heron Bay (west of and adjacent to State Hwy. 193) or within 300 feet of any navigational channel marked by a lawfully established system of waterway markers or within 300 feet of any public boat launching ramp or public pier, Heron Bay Cut off, or the mouth of West Fowl River, Weeks Bay, Fish River, Magnolia River, any man-made canal, or in any manner so as to prevent ingress or egress to or from any pier, wharf, dock, marina, or boat launching ramp.
9. It is unlawful to set or place any commercial trap used for the taking of crabs or other seafood in the following rivers, creeks, bayous, bay, canal, or their tributaries:

**Mobile County**

Mobile River  
 Dog River  
 Theodore Industrial Canal  
 Fowl River  
 Northwest arm of Heron Bay  
 Heron Bayou (Long Bayou)  
 Bayou Coden  
 Bayou la Batre  
 Bill's Bayou (Heron Bay)

**Baldwin County**

Fly Creek  
 Fish River  
 Magnolia River  
 Bon Secour River (north of channel Marker #7 & #8)  
 Wolf Creek  
 Sandy Creek  
 Mifflin Creek  
 Hammock Creek  
 Robert's Bayou  
 Soldier Creek  
 Palmetto Creek  
 Old River (between Ono Island and Perdido Key)

10. It is unlawful to set or place traps in any waters in the Mobile Delta north of Interstate Highway 10 eastbound lane and/or State Highway 90 Battleship Parkway (whichever is the southernmost highway).
11. Crab traps shall not exceed twenty-seven (27) cubic feet in volume.
12. All crab traps must contain at least two (2) unobstructed escape rings with a minimum inside diameter of 2 5/16 inches located on a vertical surface. There must be one ring per chamber.
13. From April 1 through September 30, a licensed crab catcher may obstruct or remove the escape rings, after obtaining a permit from the Marine Resources Division, for the purpose of catching pre-molt crabs, otherwise known as "busters" or "peelers".
14. All containers of Alabama crabs in possession of commercial crab fishermen or processors must be tagged, marked, or otherwise identified with the catcher's full name, identification number, and date harvested.
15. Crabs imported for commercial purposes, from another state, must have been taken and shipped pursuant to that state's laws and regulations. Containers of crabs must be marked or otherwise identified as required by the laws and regulations in that state. A bill of sale or other proof of purchase showing the non-resident dealer's or fisherman's name and address, pounds or numbers of containers purchased, and date of purchase must be maintained at the place of business for one year.

16. Commercial crab fishermen taking crabs from the waters of another state may import those crabs into the State of Alabama provided the crabs were legally taken, licensed, and transported pursuant to the state's laws and regulations. Containers of crabs must be marked and tagged with the fisherman's full name, commercial crab fisherman's license number issued by that state, and the date of harvest.
17. Licensed commercial shrimp boats without a commercial crab license may possess, in waters open to commercial shrimping, no more than one 5-gallon container of legal size crabs per boat. If the operator of a commercial shrimp boat possesses a valid commercial "crab catcher's" license, he or she is required to comply with all laws/regulations relating to the taking, possession, or sale of crabs for commercial purposes.
18. Crab traps which are no longer serviceable or in use must be removed from the water by the owner. No one shall intentionally damage or destroy crab traps or the floats or lines attached thereto.
19. During the first and second day of each calendar month, a validly licensed crab catcher may recover crab traps that are unidentified and derelict or abandoned. The catcher shall report to the Marine Resources Division the number of traps recovered, the location of the recovery of each trap, and any additional information required by the Division. The report shall be made no later than the close of business the day following the recovery of a crab trap (excludes holidays and weekends).
20. Any unidentified, improperly marked, or illegally placed crab trap is considered a nuisance and will be confiscated.
21. Any commercial crab license(s), invoices, tags, or other information required by law or regulation must be immediately available for inspection, upon request, by a conservation enforcement officer or other authorized agent.