



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

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### SUMMARY OF ALABAMA RECREATIONAL 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.

1. Individuals can use up to, but not more than five (5) crab traps for taking crabs for personal, noncommercial purposes but must purchase a resident or non-resident annual or 7-day trip Saltwater Fishing License.
2. No person shall take, catch, sell, transport, or possess blue crabs that measure less than five inches (5") carapace width as measured from the tip of one lateral spine to tip of the opposite lateral spine.
3. Crabs taken by licensed recreational shrimp boats in exclusive bait areas or in waters open to commercial shrimping for use as bait are exempt from minimum size limit (limited to no more than the number of crabs held by a one-gallon container per boat per day).
4. Licensed recreational shrimp boats taking crabs in waters open to commercial shrimping are limited to no more than one 5-gallon container of legal size crabs in possession per boat.
5. 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).
6. 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.
7. (a) The conditions for setting or placing recreational traps in the areas named in 7(b) and 7(c) are:
  - (1) Such trap must be physically attached by a line to a pier, dock, piling, bulkhead, boathouse, or other structure, on or attached to the shore.
  - (2) The line shall allow the trap to be placed no farther than a distance of 10' from the pier, dock, boathouse, or shoreline.
  - (3) No more than 5 traps are allowed per property.

(b) **Recreational traps** used for the taking of crabs or other seafood may be set or placed in the following rivers, creeks, bayous, bay, or canal, or their tributaries, under the conditions as set forth in 7(a).

**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  
Miflin Creek  
Hammock Creek  
Robert's Bayou  
Soldier Creek  
Palmetto Creek  
Old River (between Ono Island and Perdido Key)

(c) Recreational traps used for the taking of crabs or other seafood may be set or placed in manmade canals (including but not limited to the following on Dauphin Island), under the conditions as set forth in 7(a).

Quivera Bay  
Polaris Lagoon  
Port Royal Lagoon  
Lafitte Bay  
Indian Bay  
Indian Canal  
Buchanan Bay  
Columbia Bay

Colony Cove  
Spanish Bay  
Barcelona Bay  
Confederate Bay  
Salt Creek (Heron Bayou)  
Government Cut  
Billy Goat Hole

8. Crab traps shall not exceed twenty-seven (27) cubic feet in volume.
9. 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.
10. 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".
11. 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.
12. Recreational crab traps must be marked with an orange, floating, visible buoy not less than 6" in diameter or width. The buoy must have a legible letter "R", at least 2" high, permanently affixed to it.
13. It is unlawful to take crabs from traps belonging to another person without written authorization from the owner.
14. Crab traps which are no longer serviceable or in use must be removed from the water by the owner. No person shall intentionally damage or destroy crab traps or the floats or lines attached thereto.
15. Any unidentified, improperly marked, or illegally placed crab trap is considered a nuisance and will be confiscated.
16. 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 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 the business day following the recovery of a crab trap (excludes holidays and weekends).