

POSSIBLE CHANGES TO REGULATIONS FOR BLUE CRABS

The department intends to make several changes to clarify the blue crab regulations. These changes are all housekeeping and not substantive.

- 1) The department will make it clear that Code of Maryland Regulations [08.02.03.06B\(2\)](#) applies to recreational crabbing in the coastal bays of the Atlantic Ocean and their tributaries.

The regulation states that if two or more individuals are on a boat, not more than any combination of 25 collapsible traps and net rings may be set per boat. It is not clear that the statement should only apply to recreational harvest. The department will make it clear.

- 2) The department would like to clarify the commercial gear limits.

There seems to be general confusion on how much gear a commercial crabber can use. The department receives many calls each year about certain commercial gear and would like to specify the limits in regulation. The following are the current commercial limits. This does not change anything; it makes it clear for everyone.

Collapsible crab trap — unlimited number for all license types

Crab net ring — unlimited number for all license types

Crab pot — LCC – up to 50, UTFL or CB3 up to 300, CB6 up to 600, CB9 up to 900

Trotline — unlimited length for all license types

- 3) The wording in the Code of Maryland Regulations [08.02.03.11](#) pertaining to recreational crabbing times can be confusing and the department would like to clarify the language.

The regulation says that except for handlines and dipnets, a person may not set any recreational crabbing gear or catch crabs for recreational purposes from a boat during certain time periods. The way the sentence is structured makes it confusing. Handlines, dipnets and properly registered crab pots may be used at all times during the season. All other gear has limits on the times that you may set it and times that you can catch crabs. The department will clarify that text. Clarifying the text does not change the department's interpretation or enforcement of this regulation.