Diamondback terrapin with barnacles growing on its shell.

The diamondback terrapin *(Malaclemys terrapin)* is our state reptile and lives exclusively in the tidal salt marshes of the Chesapeake Bay and Atlantic coastal waters. This brackish water habitat is also the home of the blue crab *(Callinectes sapidus)*.

Photo/illustration credits:
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George Grall, *National Aquarium*
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A terrapin is seen swimming in the Bay. You can help to ensure our state reptile is around for future generations to enjoy by having BRDs on all of your crab pots.

To learn more about terrapins and their conservation visit the following websites:

Chesapeake Terrapin Alliance
www.cterrapin.org

Diamondback Terrapin Working Group
dtwg.org

Maryland DNR-Wildlife & Heritage Service
P.O. Box 68
Wye Mills, MD 21679
410-827-8612
www.dnr.state.md.us

The National Aquarium
www.aqua.org

The Terrapin Institute
www.terrapininstitute.org

The Wetlands Institute
www.terrapinconservation.org

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Attention Maryland Crabbers:

MARYLAND DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

Larry Hogan, Governor
Mark Belton, Secretary

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What's the problem?

Terrapins were once very plentiful but today are struggling to survive because of loss of nesting beach habitat, increased mortalities from boat collisions, road mortality, and drowning in crab pots and other types of fishing gear.

The terrapin desperately needs your help to survive.

Each year recreational crab pots unnecessarily claim the lives of terrapins. Terrapins are lured into crab pots by the same baits used to attract blue crabs. However, unlike blue crabs, terrapins must rise periodically to the surface for a breath of air. Terrapins trapped in a fully submerged crab pot will eventually die from drowning.

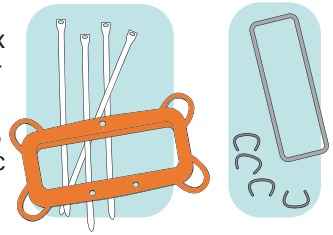
How can you help?

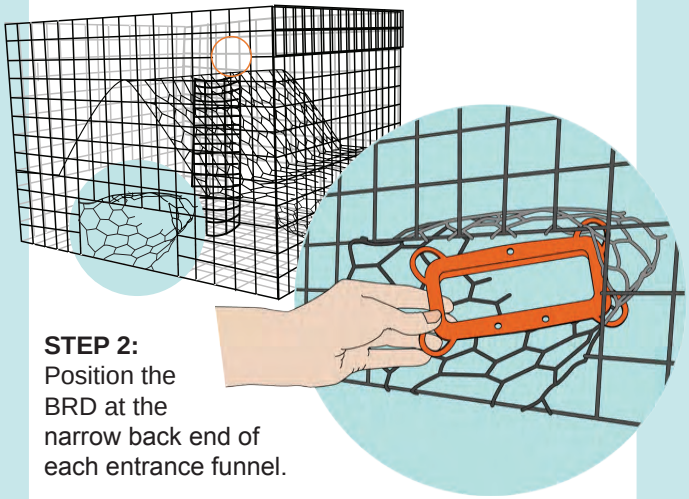
Waterfront property owners are legally allowed to crab with a maximum of two recreational crab pots. Since 1999, Maryland regulation requires that each entrance funnel of all recreational crab pots must be equipped with a crabpot **By-catch Reduction Device (BRD)**, also known as a Turtle Excluder Device (TED).

BRDs, developed by turtle conservationists, are rectangular inserts attached to the funnels that prevent large terrapins and other air breathing animals from being able to enter the crab pot. BRDs reduce unintended by-catch from drowning, but they do not interfere with trapping legal size crabs. You can help by insisting that any recreational crab-pots you purchase are properly fitted with BRDs and by installing BRDs on all your older crab pots.

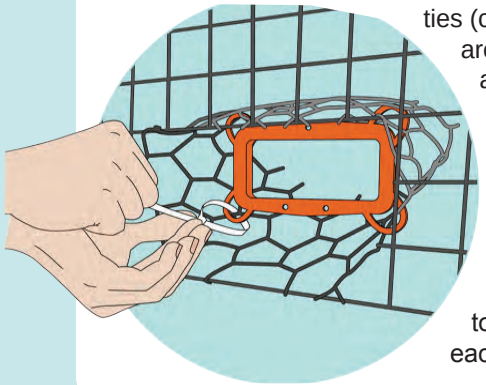
Installing a Bycatch Reduction Device (BRD) on a crab pot.

STEP 1: Obtain a 1 ¾ x 4 ¾ inch BRD (metal or plastic) for ***each*** funnel opening in the crab pot, along with heavy plastic cable ties. Hog rings or cable ties can be used to attach metal BRDs.

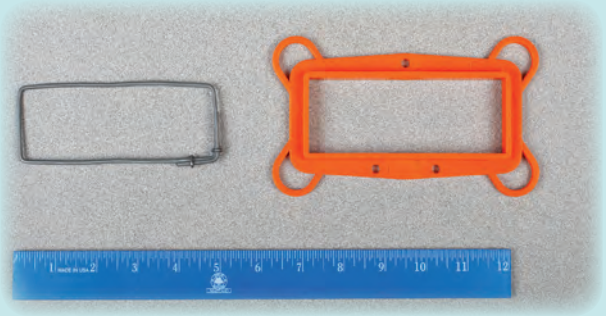




STEP 2: Position the BRD at the narrow back end of each entrance funnel.



STEP 3: Use heavy zip ties (cables) to loop around funnel wire and the corner of the BRD. Pull tightly and trim excess cable. Use a ***minimum of four*** cable ties or hog rings to firmly attach each excluder.



Metal (left) and plastic (right) BRDs.

Where do you get a BRD?

Some retailers sell crab pots with BRDs installed and others sell them separately. BRDs can also be purchased directly from manufacturers or constructed from 11 gauge galvanized wire.

Will BRDs prevent all terrapins from entering a crab pot?

Unfortunately, small terrapins will still be able to fit through the 1 ¾ X 4 ¾ inch BRD. To make BRDs any smaller will reduce the capture of legal size crabs. Checking crab pots a minimum of twice a day can prevent small terrapins from drowning.

A BRD will prevent almost all terrapins and other species of turtle from entering a crab pot.