

PUBLIC NOTICE
The Maryland Department of Natural Resources
Fishing and Boating Services
Commercial Mature Female Hard Crab Catch Limits — July through December 2024

WHAT THIS NOTICE DOES

The Secretary of the Maryland Department of Natural Resources, in consultation with the Blue Crab Industry Advisory Committee, announces the commercial mature female hard crab catch limits for the Chesapeake Bay and its tidal tributaries for July through December 2024. Effective 12:01 a.m. July 1, 2024, the catch limits are:

Daily Commercial Catch Limits for Mature Female Hard Crabs by License Type					
Dates	Container	LCC	TFL or CB3	TFL with CB6 or CB3 with CB6	TFL with CB9 or CB3 with CB9
Jul 1 - Aug 31, 2024	Bushel	2	10	14	18
	Lug	1	6	9	12
	Barrel	*N/A	4	5	7
Sep 1 - Oct 31, 2024	Bushel	5	19	29	34
	Lug	3	12	19	22
	Barrel	2	7	11	13
Nov 1 - 30, 2024	Bushel	2	5	10	15
	Lug	1	3	6	10
	Barrel	*N/A	2	4	6
Dec 1 - 15, 2024	No Female Hard Crab Harvest Allowed				

*Due to a barrel holding 2.5 bushels of crabs, this container is not allowed for use by LCC's whose limit is less than that amount.

License Acronyms

LCC – Limited Crab Harvester License (up to 50 pots)

TFL – Unlimited Tidal Fish License

CB3 – 300 Pot Crab Harvester License

CB6 – 600 Pot Crab Harvester License

CB9 – 900 Pot Crab Harvester License

Container Definitions

Bushel, circular – A circular container with inside dimensions not exceeding 12" height, 18" top diameter, 13-½" bottom diameter

Bushel, rectangular – A rectangular container with inside dimensions not exceeding 11" height, 19-½" length, 12-½" width

Lug – A rectangular container with inside dimensions not exceeding 12-¾" height, 22-⅞" top length, 14-⅞" top width, 21" bottom length, 13" bottom width

Barrel – A circular container with inside dimensions not exceeding 27-½" height, 20-½" top diameter, 18" bottom diameter

Daily catch limits for mature female hard crabs are based on the Blue Crab Winter Dredge Survey results, conducted by the Maryland Department of Natural Resources and the Virginia Institute of Marine Science, and in consultation with the Blue Crab Industry Advisory Committee.

All catch of mature female hard crabs on board a vessel must be kept in the same type of container, although crabs of different sexes may be kept in different types of containers. For example, a harvester may have all females in lugs and all males in bushels, but could not have males or females in both bushels and lugs. Commercial crabbers using lugs or barrels should report harvest in pounds when completing Commercial Harvest Reports.

Crew limits are in effect as described in the Annotated Code of Maryland, Natural Resources Article, §4-814. If crew members are not on board, the licensee is restricted to the TFL or CB3 catch limits.

WHERE THIS NOTICE APPLIES

This applies to the Chesapeake Bay and its tidal tributaries, including the Maryland tributaries of the Potomac River.

WHY THIS IS NECESSARY

This action is necessary to ensure that female blue crab harvest does not exceed the Chesapeake Bay exploitation fraction threshold established in Amendment 2 to the Chesapeake Bay Blue Crab Fishery Management Plan.

WHO THIS NOTICE AFFECTS

This applies to commercial crabbers who harvest female blue crabs in the Chesapeake Bay and its tidal tributaries.

AUTHORITY

Code of Maryland Regulations 08.02.03.14G

Josh Kurtz

Secretary of Natural Resources