

PUBLIC NOTICE
The Maryland Department of Natural Resources
Fishing and Boating Services

Daily Recreational Catch and Possession Limits for Hard Crabs – July 2026 through June 2027

WHAT THIS NOTICE DOES

The Secretary of the Maryland Department of Natural Resources announces the daily recreational catch and possession limits for male hard crabs in the Chesapeake Bay and its tidal tributaries for July 2026 through June 2027. Effective 12:01 a.m. July 1, 2026, the recreational male hard crab catch and possession limits for individuals on a vessel are:

Daily Recreational Male Hard Crab Catch and Possession Limits for Boats

Unlicensed Boat	With 1 unlicensed individual	2 dozen
	With 2 or more unlicensed individuals	4 dozen
	With 1 or more licensed individuals and any number of unlicensed individuals	1 bushel OR 6 dozen*
Licensed Boat	With any number of licensed or unlicensed individuals	1 bushel OR 6 dozen*

* The recreational catch limit is 1 bushel of crabs if storing crabs in a bushel basket or 6 dozen crabs if using a container other than a bushel basket.

Daily recreational catch and possession limits for male 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. Catch and possession limits for July through December 2027 will be determined when results from the 2027 Blue Crab Winter Dredge Survey are available.

WHERE THIS NOTICE APPLIES

This applies to recreational crabbing on vessels in the Chesapeake Bay and its tidal tributaries, including the Maryland tributaries of the Potomac River. This change does not affect recreational crabbing from shore in the Chesapeake Bay and its tidal tributaries, nor any recreational crabbing in the Atlantic Ocean, its coastal bays, or tributaries.

WHY THIS IS NECESSARY

This action is necessary to ensure that male blue crab harvest does not exceed the Chesapeake Bay male conservation trigger referenced in Amendment 2 to the Chesapeake Bay Blue Crab Fishery Management Plan.

WHO THIS NOTICE AFFECTS

This applies to recreational crabbers who harvest hard male blue crabs on vessels in the Chesapeake Bay and its tidal tributaries.

AUTHORITY

Code of Maryland Regulations 08.02.03.14G

Josh Kurtz
Secretary of Natural Resources