

**PUBLIC NOTICE**  
**The Maryland Department of Natural Resources**  
**Fishing and Boating Services**  
*Commercial Mature Female Hard Crab Catch Limits — September through December 2023*

**WHAT THIS NOTICE DOES**

The Secretary of the Maryland Department of Natural Resources, in consultation with blue crab advisory groups, announces the commercial mature female hard crab catch limits for the Chesapeake Bay and its tidal tributaries for September through December 2023. Effective 12:01 a.m. September 14, 2023, the catch limits are:

Daily Mature Female Hard Crab Catch Limits by License Type					
Date	Container	LCC	TFL or CB3	TFL with CB6 or CB3 with CB6	TFL with CB9 or CB3 with CB9
September 14 - October 31, 2023	Bushel	5	19	29	34
	Lug	3	12	19	22
November 1 - November 30, 2023	Bushel	2	5	10	15
	Lug	1	3	6	10
December 1 - December 15, 2023 — No Female Hard Crab Harvest Allowed					
The above acronyms stand for: LCC – Limited Crab Harvester License 50 pots; CB3 – Crab Harvester License 300 pots; CB6 – 600 pot authorization; CB9 – 900 pot authorization; and TFL – Unlimited Tidal Fish License					
A lug is defined as a rectangular shaped container that does not exceed the following inside dimensions: 22-7/8 inches length across the top; 14-7/8 inches width across the top; 21 inches length across the bottom; 13 inches width across the bottom; and 12-3/8 inches height.					
Commercial crabbers utilizing lugs should report harvest in pounds when completing Commercial Harvest Reports.					

The catch of female hard crabs on board a vessel must be kept either entirely in bushels, entirely in lugs or entirely in barrels. Containers may not be mixed on a vessel.

Mature female hard crab catch limits are based on results of the winter crab dredge survey conducted by the Maryland Department of Natural Resources and Virginia Institute of Marine Science, and consultation with advisory groups and stakeholders.

Crew limits as described in Annotated Code of Maryland, Natural Resources Article, §4-814, are in effect. If crew members are not on board, then 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 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