

# Blue Crabs—Chesapeake Bay



Maryland Fishing

## Crabbing License/Registration

See [Recreational Crabbing Licenses & Crab Pot Registration](#).

## Season

April 1–Dec 15.

## Time of Day Restrictions

Rivers, creeks and tributaries:

- April and Oct through Dec. 15—one half hour after sunrise to sunset.
- May through Sept—one half hour before sunrise to sunset.

Chesapeake Bay Mainstem:

- April and October through Dec. 15—one half hour after sunrise to 5 p.m.
- May through September—one half hour before sunrise to 5 p.m.

Using properly registered crab pots on private property, dip nets or handlines is permitted 24 hours a day.

## Day of Week Restrictions

No recreational crabbing is allowed on Wednesdays except:

- When using crab pots from private property;
- When using handlines or dip nets;
- During a week when a state or federal holiday falls on a Wednesday or Thursday.

## Minimum Size Limits

### (measured from tip to tip of spikes)

Male hard crab:

- April 1–July 14—5 inches
- July 15–Dec 15—5¼ inches

Male peeler crab:

- April 1–July 14—3¼ inches

- July 15–Dec 15—3½ inches

Soft crab:

- April 1–Dec 15—3½ inches

## It is Illegal for a Recreational Crabber:

- To sell crabs.
- To possess an egg-bearing (sponge) crab or any female hard or peeler crab.
- To set or fish a trotline, collapsible trap or crab net ring within 100 feet of another individual's set gear.
- To fish crab gear which belongs to another person.
- To harvest crabs while SCUBA diving.
- To use gear other than the gear listed in the table below.

## Additional Crab Pot Rules

- Crab pots must have two cull rings, one measuring at least 23/16 inches and one at least 25/16 inches located in the exterior side panel or the top panels of the pot.
- Crab pots must have a turtle excluder device attached to each entrance or funnel in the lower chamber constructed of wire or plastic, rectangular in shape not larger than 1¾ inches high by 4¾ inches long.
- Annual registration required.

## Daily Creel/Possession Limits

License		Daily Creel / Possession Limit	
		Male Hard Crabs	Male Peelers, Soft crabs or combination
Unlicensed Individual	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• From shore</li> <li>• From unlicensed boat</li> <li>• From waterfront crab pots</li> </ul>	2 dozen	1 dozen
Licensed Individual	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• From shore</li> <li>• From unlicensed boat</li> <li>• From waterfront crab pots</li> </ul>	1 bushel	2 dozen