



Chesapeake Bay Program

A Watershed Partnership

## CHESAPEAKE BAY BLUE CRAB FISHERY

Characterizing the Fishery Across Jurisdictions

Jurisdiction	Season (Dates)	Minimum Size Limit ---- Harvest Season	Total Harvest Landings (and estimated \$ value)	# Licenses	Gear Types/ Restrictions	Industry breakdown (peeler, soft shell, hard shell)	Groups involved in policy development/ implementation (Ex: Advisory Councils)	Other Regulations/ Programs (ex: Electronic Harvest Reporting Pilot)	Additional Comments/ Information
<b>Maryland</b> <i>Commercial</i>	Females -4/1/14-11/10/14 Males -4/1/14-12/15/14	<u>Tidal Waters:</u> -Hard Crabs: 5'' from 4/1→7/14; 5¼'' from 7/15→12/31 -Peelers: 3¾'' from 4/1→7/14; 3½'' from 7/15→12/15 -Soft: 3½'' -Harvest of sponge crabs prohibited ---  Female bushel limits set by specified season dates and license type	<u>2013 Value:</u>  18.7 million lbs  (Dock side value of \$39 million)	~5000 crabbing licenses  A 17% reduction from the number of crabbing licenses issued in 2009.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Crab Pot – hard &amp; peeler, limited by license type, (50, 300, 600, 900). <i>All commercial pots are prohibited in tributaries.</i></li> <li>Collapsible Crab trap</li> <li>Crab net ring</li> <li>Dip Net</li> <li>Handline</li> <li>Trot Line</li> <li>Seine</li> <li>Bank trap</li> <li>Channel pound</li> <li>Crab scrape</li> <li>Hand scrape</li> </ul>	<u>by weight:</u>  <u>Hard Shell:</u> 95%  <u>Soft/Peeler:</u> 5%	-Maryland Blue Crab Industry Advisory Committee  -Tidal Fisheries Advisory Commission  -Sport Fisheries Advisory Commission  -Blue Crab Design Team	A pilot for daily electronic reporting of commercial blue crab harvest began in 2012 and continued in 2013 and again this year.  MD is currently planning to implement daily electronic harvest reporting for all fisheries	

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Potomac River Fisheries Commission Commercial	<p>Crab Pot: -4/1-11/30</p> <p>Trotlines &amp; Dip Nets: -4/1-11/30</p> <p>Peeler Traps: -5/1-6/30</p> <p>Hard Crabs: -Males, Immature Females, Mature Females: 4/1-11/30</p> <p>Soft and Peeler Crabs: 5/1-10/30</p> <p><b>Harvesting is closed during the following periods:</b></p> <p><u>Above St. Clements Island/Hollis Marsh:</u> -9/18/14-10/2/14</p> <p><u>Below St. Clements Island/Hollis Marsh:</u> -10/3/14-10/17/14</p>	<p>-Hard crabs: 5 ¼” from 4/1→7/9 (<i>exception: mature females</i>)</p> <p>-Hard crabs: 5 ½” from 7/10→end of season (<i>exception: mature females</i>)</p> <p>-Peeler Crabs: 3 ½”</p> <p>-Sponge Crabs, spawn crab, blooming female crab, mother crab or the female crab from which egg pouch or bunion has been removed: <i>no removal of any size.</i></p> <p>---</p> <p>No harvesting of mature females during respective “closed season” (based on geographic divide)</p>	1,787,407 pounds	429	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Crab Pots: Pot Limits based on <a href="#">licenses</a> (285, 380, and 475 pot limits)</li> <li><a href="#">Longline</a></li> <li>Dip Net</li> <li>Trot Line</li> <li>Peeler Traps</li> </ul>	<p><u>2013:</u></p> <p><u>Hard Shell</u> 44,270 bushels</p> <p><u>Soft Shell</u> 901 lbs</p> <p><u>Peeler</u> 15,706 lbs</p>	-PRFC Blue Crab Advisory Committee		<p><b><u>Locations with High Volume Landings:</u></b></p> <p><b>MD Locations:</b> -Cobb Island, -Ridge -St. George’s Island</p> <p><b>VA Locations:</b> -Colonial Beach -Kinsale -Coles Pt. -Hague</p>

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Virginia <i>Commercial</i>	<p><u>Males:</u> -3/17/13→ 12/15/13 -3/17/14→ 11/30/14</p> <p><u>Females:</u> -3/17/13→ 12/15/13 -3/17/14→ 11/30/14</p> <p>(2014 seasons may change)</p> <p>-3/17→6/30: It shall be unlawful for any person to possess more than 10 dark sponge crabs per United States standard bushel</p>	<p>-Peeler Crabs: No more than <a href="#">10 peeler crabs/US bushel</a> (or 5% of crabs for any other container); 3¼” from 3/16→7/15 -Soft Crabs: 3 ½” throughout season</p> <p><u>Daily Vessel Possession limits for 2014 by license category:</u> Up to 85= 16 86-127= 21 128-170= 27 171-255= 43 256-425= 55</p>	17,906,963 lbs \$23,941,014	<p><u>Sold in 2013</u></p> <p><b>Crab Pots:</b> Up to 85= 305 86-127= 66 128-170= 25 171-255= 568 256-425= 115</p> <p><b>Peeler Pots:</b> 501</p> <p><b>Trot Line:</b> 18</p> <p><b>Trap/Pound:</b> 1,053</p> <p><b>Crab Scrape:</b> Single= 45 Double= 65</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Crab Pot</li> <li>Peeler Pot</li> <li><a href="#">Trot line</a></li> <li><a href="#">Crab Pound/Trap</a> (at least 4 cull rings of at least 1 ½”, 2 must be underwater)</li> <li>Crab Scrape</li> </ul>	<p><u>Hard shell</u> 17,307,247 lbs \$21,874,394</p> <p><u>Soft shell</u> 43,851 lbs \$158,442</p> <p><u>Peeler</u> 555,845 lbs \$1,808,178</p>	<p>-Crab Management Advisory Committee</p> <p>-Blue crab Industry Panel</p>		<p><u>Data on Area Harvested and Landings</u></p> <p><u>Water Areas where Harvested:</u> <b>Ches Bay (LE):</b> 2,553,856 lbs <b>Ches Bay (UE):</b> 1,674,919 lbs <b>Ches Bay (LW):</b> 1,195,352 lbs <b>Tangier Sound:</b> 1,147,978 lbs <b>James River (M):</b> 790,737 lbs</p> <p><u>Counties Landed:</u> <b>Accomac:</b> 3,924,262 lbs <b>Northampton:</b> 2,813,725 lbs <b>Gloucester:</b> 2,268,897 lbs <b>Out-of-State:</b> 1,451,453 lbs <b>York:</b> 1,035,639 lbs</p>

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<b>Maryland</b> <i>Recreational</i>	-4/1→12/15 (Chesapeake Bay and tributaries experience differentiated time restrictions within harvest season)	-Male Hard Crabs: 5'' from 4/1→7/14; 5¼'' from 7/15→12/15 -Male Peeler Crabs: 3¼'' 4/1→7/14; 3½'' from 7/15→12/15 -Soft Crab: 3½'' from 4/1→12/15 --- Female harvest (hard and peeler) is prohibited.	Based on previous studies it's estimated to be 8% of commercial male hard crab harvest.	<b>Sold in 2011:</b> <b>Purchased Individual Licenses:</b> ~50,000  <b>Complimentary Licenses</b> (issued with perchance of consolidated Bay sport fishing license): ~ 49,000  <b>Unlicensed Crabbers:</b> unknown  <b>2014</b> New requirement for the ~40,000 waterfront property owners to register their 2 crab pots	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Crab Pot (<i>limited to waterfront property owner who may set 2 pots attached to their pier or property</i>)</li> <li>Collapsible Crab Trap</li> <li>Crab Net Ring</li> <li>Dip Net</li> <li>Handline</li> <li>Trot Line</li> <li>Seine</li> </ul>		-Tidal Fisheries Advisory Commission  -Sport Fisheries Advisory Commission		

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<b>Potomac River Fisheries Commission</b> <i>Recreational</i>	<u>Hard Crabs (male and immature females):</u> -4/1-11/30  <u>Soft Crabs:</u> -5/1-10/30  <u>Peelers:</u> -5/1-10/30  (note: Maryland & Virginia Tributaries of the River are Regulated Separately)	-Hard Crabs: 5 ¼” from 4/1→7/9 -Hard Crabs: 5 ½” from 7/10→11/30 -Soft Crabs: no min size limit -Peelers: 3 ½” --- Mature females cannot be harvested: <u>Above St. Clements Island/Hollis Marsh:</u> -9/20/13-9/30/13 <u>Below St. Clements Island/Hollis Marsh:</u> -10/4/13-10/14/13		43 sport crabbing boat licenses sold (PRFC does not sell individual licenses)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Crab Pot</li> <li>Collapsible Crab Traps</li> <li>Dip Net</li> <li>Handline</li> <li>Trot Line</li> </ul>		- PRFC Blue Crab Advisory Committee		<u><b>Locations with High Volume Landings:</b></u>  <b>MD Locations:</b> -Cobb Island, -Ridge -St. George’s Island -Pt. Lookout -Issue -St. Clements <b>VA Locations:</b> -Colonial Beach -Kinsale -Nomini Bay
<b>Virginia</b> <i>Recreational</i>	<u>Males and Females:</u> -3/17/13→ 12/15/13 -3/17/14→ 11/30/14  <u>Blue Crab Sanctuary:</u> Closed 5/16→9/15	-Male Hard Crabs & Immature Female hard crabs: 5 in. -Peeler Crabs: 3¼” from 3/16→7/15 and 3 ½” from 7-16 →11-30 -Soft Crabs: 3 ½” throughout season -Sponge Crabs: Dark sponge are prohibited 3-17→6-30; tolerance of 10 per bushel  <b>-Daily Limit:</b> 1 Bushel hard crabs and 2 dozen peeler crabs per day		<b><u>Sold in 2013:</u></b>  <b>5 Crab Pot:</b> 745  <b>Crab Trap/Pound:</b> 44  <b>Trotline:</b> 338	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All Crab Pots Closed: 1/1 → 1/31</li> <li>Bay &amp; Tributaries cull rings: 2 (2 3/8”)</li> <li>Seaside cull rings: 1 (2 <sup>3</sup>/<sub>16</sub>”) and 1 (2 <sup>5</sup>/<sub>16</sub>”)</li> <li>5 Crab Pot License</li> </ul> Open: 6/1→ 9/15 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Trot line (300 ft max)</li> <li>Dip Net</li> <li><a href="#">Crab</a></li> </ul>		-Crab Management Advisory Committee		Annual mandatory reports have very low compliance

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					<a href="#">Pound/Trap</a>				