

BLUE CRABS – Addition of Juneteenth Holiday

What is being considered?

Commercial crabbers are currently allowed to begin crabbing an hour earlier than their usual start time on federal holidays in the summer months between Memorial Day and Labor Day, as well as the day immediately prior to those holidays. The holidays are named in the regulation. The department is proposing to modify the regulation to include the recently recognized federal holiday Juneteenth National Independence Day, as it falls within this timeframe.

Why is this change necessary?

The intention of the regulation is to allow commercial crabbers to have extra time to crab on and immediately before summer holidays when demand for crabs is often highest. Juneteenth National Independence Day was established as a federal holiday in 2021 and will be observed annually on June 19th. Therefore, the holiday falls within the summer timeframe (Memorial Day to Labor Day) and should be included in the regulation.

Who will this affect?

Commercial crabbers who crab in the Chesapeake Bay and its tidal tributaries and the Atlantic Ocean, its coastal bays and their tributaries.

When would this be effective?

The department projects that this change could be effective in the spring of 2023. However, the exact date cannot be determined. The department will follow our normal proposal procedures if this concept moves forward.

Has this change been discussed with stakeholders?

No.

BLUE CRABS – Crab Pot Set Time Clarification

What is being considered?

The department is considering a modification to the description of legal crabbing times which would clarify that commercial crab pots on board a boat at the end of the legal crabbing hours may only be set during the legal crabbing hours and for one hour after the end of the legal crabbing hours.

Why is this change necessary?

Individuals have asked for clarification on when crab pots may be set due to the current wording of the regulation. The current language allows for crabs to be removed from crab pots during the established legal crabbing times and for pots already on board the vessel to be set for one hour after the end of the legal crabbing times. The change being considered will clarify that those are the only times crab pots may be set, which should be clearer to all affected individuals and remove any ambiguity as to when crab pots may be set.

Who will this affect?

Commercial harvesters who crab pot in the Chesapeake Bay and its tidal tributaries.

When would this be effective?

The department projects that this change could be effective by the spring of 2023, however the exact date cannot be determined. The department will follow our normal scoping and proposal procedures if this concept moves forward.

Has this change been discussed with stakeholders?

No.