

**PUBLIC NOTICE**  
**The Maryland Department of Natural Resources**  
**Fishing and Boating Services**  
*Commercial Male Hard Crab Catch Limits and Season — July 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 male hard crab catch limits for the Chesapeake Bay and its tidal tributaries for July through December 2023. Male hard crab catch limits include catch of all male market categories combined (e.g., number ones, number twos, and mixed/culls).

Effective 12:01 a.m. July 1, 2023, the bushel limits are:

| Daily Male Hard Crab Catch Limits by License Type and Container<br>from July 1, 2023 - December 15, 2023   |                                   |     |               |                                       |                                       |
|--|-----------------------------------|-----|---------------|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Date   | Container                         | LCC | TFL or<br>CB3 | TFL with<br>CB6 or<br>CB3 with<br>CB6 | TFL with<br>CB9 or<br>CB3 with<br>CB9 |
| July 1 – July 31   | No Limit on Male Hard Crabs       |     |               |                                       |                                       |
| August 1 – August 31   | Bushel                            | 4   | 8             | 12                                    | 15                                    |
|  | Lug                               | 2   | 5             | 8                                     | 10                                    |
| September 1 – September 4  | No Limit on Male Hard Crabs       |     |               |                                       |                                       |
| September 5 – October 4  | Bushel                            | 4   | 8             | 12                                    | 15                                    |
|  | Lug                               | 2   | 5             | 8                                     | 10                                    |
| October 5 – November 30  | No Limit on Male Hard Crabs       |     |               |                                       |                                       |
| December 1 - December 15   | No Male Hard Crab Harvest Allowed |     |               |                                       |                                       |
| <p>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</p> <p>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.</p> |                                   |     |               |                                       |                                       |

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

Male hard crab bushel 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 bushel 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 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 commercial crabbers who harvest male 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