

# NEWS RELEASE

MS Dept. of Marine Resources  
1141 Bayview Ave., Biloxi 39530



*FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE*

**16-65-MMS**  
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ENHANCE ★ PROTECT ★ CONSERVE

## ***Oyster fishermen encouraged to get dredge weights inspected for oyster season***

BILOXI, Miss. – Officials with the Mississippi Department of Marine Resources are encouraging fishermen who dredge for oysters to get their dredges checked before the season opens.

MDMR Marine Patrol officers are offering courtesy inspections to ensure dredges are compliant. Dredges cannot exceed the 115-pound weight limit and may not have more than 16 teeth.

During the courtesy inspections, officers will not issue citations for non-compliant dredges. However, fishermen caught harvesting oysters with a dredge heavier than 115 pounds will receive a citation.

In June of 2015, the Mississippi Commission on Marine Resources voted unanimously to change Title 22, Part 1 to reduce the weight of oyster dredges from 140 pounds to 115 pounds.

Fishermen interested in having their dredges checked should call Marine Patrol at 228-523-4134. Inspections will be scheduled between 7 a.m. and 5 p.m. and will be conducted at the oyster check station in the Pass Christian Harbor.

Oyster season opens in the western portion of the Mississippi Sound at legal sunrise on Monday, Oct. 3, and the daily sack limit is 25 for dredgers and 15 for tongers.

Scientists with the Mississippi Department of Marine Resources estimate nearly 80,000 sacks of oysters survived a series of mortality events in August in the western Sound. The Commission on Marine Resources voted at its September meeting to establish a harvest quota not to exceed 35 percent, nearly 28,000 for this year's oyster season.

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Commissioners also voted unanimously in September to place a moratorium on license sales for oyster harvesting, which applies to recreational and commercial licenses. License sales are limited to those fishermen who purchased an oyster license from March of 2015 through April of 2016.

If the commercial vessel were damaged or lost, the license can be transferred to the new vessel.

For a complete list of regulations regarding oyster season, visit [dmr.ms.gov](http://dmr.ms.gov) or call the 24-hour Oyster Information Hotline at 228-374-5167 or 1-800-385-5902.

The Mississippi Department of Marine Resources is dedicated to enhancing, protecting and conserving marine interests of the state by managing all marine life, public trust wetlands, adjacent uplands and waterfront areas to provide for the optimal commercial, recreational, educational and economic uses of these resources consistent with environmental concerns and social changes. Visit the DMR online at [dmr.ms.gov](http://dmr.ms.gov).

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