

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### BLUE CRABS

**Q: What is the best time of year to catch Blue Crabs?**

A: Generally, fall and spring are the best times to catch crabs.

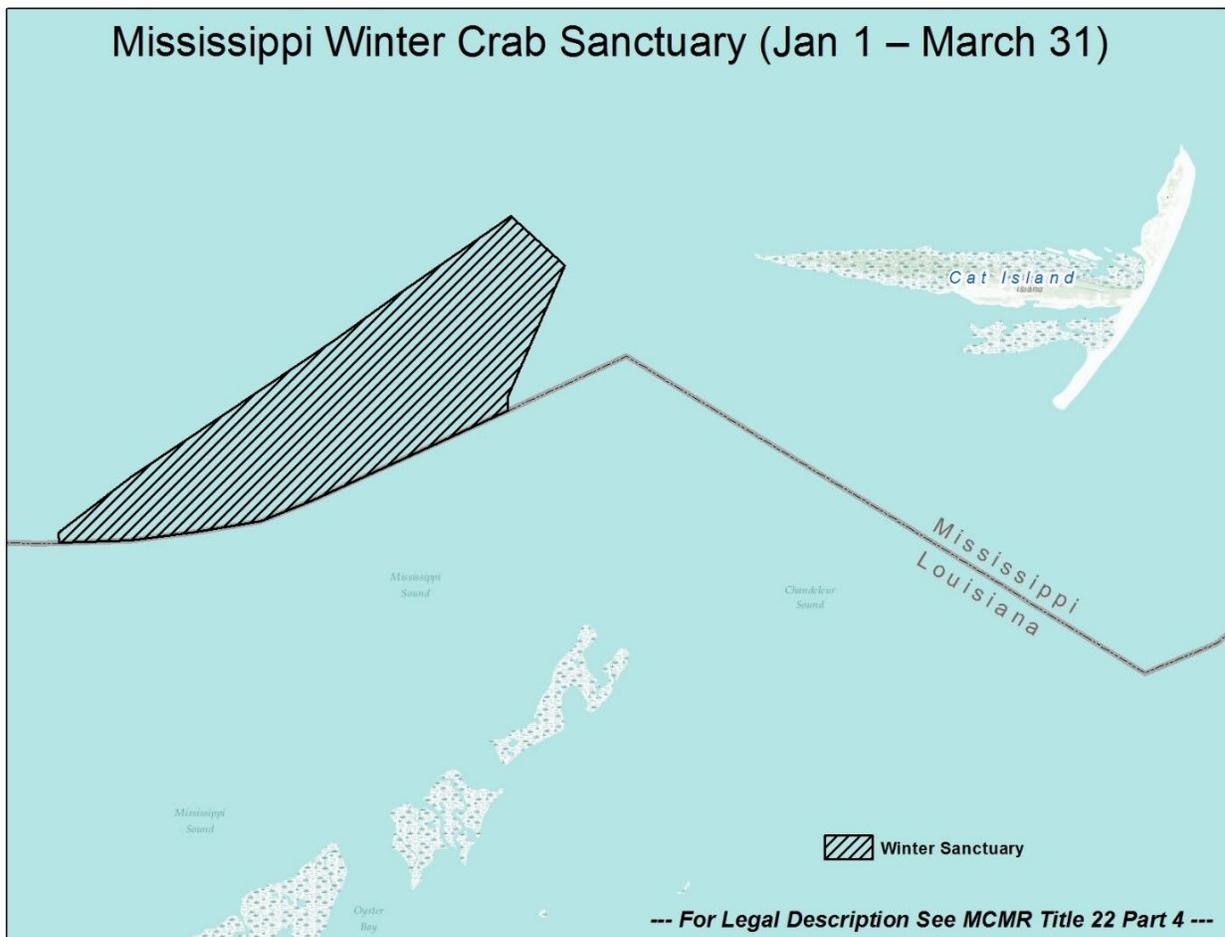
**Q: Where can recreational fishermen catch Blue Crabs?**

A: Recreational license holders can catch crabs in all Mississippi coastal waters located south of Interstate 10. Commercial Blue Crab fishermen must stay south of the CSX railroad bridges. For a detailed description of open crabbing areas, please visit

[dmr.ms.gov/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/Title-22-Part-04-Taking-of-Crabs-092016.pdf](http://dmr.ms.gov/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/Title-22-Part-04-Taking-of-Crabs-092016.pdf).

**Q: Is there a season for Blue Crabs?**

A: Crabbing is allowed year-round, except for the winter crab sanctuary (located southwest of Cat Island). The sanctuary is closed to all crabbing activities annually from January 1 to March 31.



**Q: Do I need a license to use drop nets?**

A: No, a license is not required to harvest Blue Crabs using drop nets. However, a recreational or commercial license is required to harvest Blue Crabs using crab traps. Additionally, a recreational fishing license is needed to harvest any fish caught in drop nets.

**Q: How many crab traps can a recreational crabber have?**

A: Recreational license holders may have up to six traps per household.

**Q: How do I properly identify my crab traps?**

A: The float should have the recreational or commercial crab license number and vessel registration number, if applicable. The inside of each trap should be tagged with the license holder's full name.

**Q: How many Blue Crabs can I keep?**

A: There is no creel/bag limit on Blue Crabs. However, hard shell blue crabs must be at least 5 inches from the tip of the lateral spine to the other. Soft shell Blue Crabs and peeler crabs have no size limit. It is illegal to keep/possess egg bearing crabs.

**Q: Can I pick up a derelict crab trap?**

A: No, it is unlawful to remove crab traps not licensed to you except during an official MDMR authorized clean-up event. For more details on Mississippi's Derelict Crab Trap Removal Program, please visit [dmr.ms.gov/shrimp-crab/](http://dmr.ms.gov/shrimp-crab/).

## SHRIMP

**Q: Where can I find information about shrimp licenses?**

A: Detailed information can be found at [dmr.ms.gov/shrimp-crab/](http://dmr.ms.gov/shrimp-crab/).

**Q: When does shrimp season open and close?**

A: Shrimp season is officially opened when the MDMR has determined the shrimp have reached the legal size of 68 shrimp per pound. Shrimp season annually closes north of the Intracoastal Waterway on December 31 and south of the Intracoastal Waterway on April 30. For more information on the opening and closing of shrimp season, call the MS Shrimp Hotline 1-866-WE-TRAWL.

**Q: Can I purchase fresh shrimp directly from commercial shrimp boats?**

A: Yes, Mississippi Gulf Fresh shrimp can be purchased from commercial fishermen at the Biloxi Small Craft Harbor, Ocean Springs Harbor and Pass Christian Harbor.

**Q: Do I need a recreational license to catch shrimp using a cast net?**

A: A recreational shrimp license is not required when catching shrimp with a cast net. However, a recreational fishing license is needed to retain any fish caught in the net.

**Q: Can a cast net be used to catch shrimp in the bays?**

A: Yes, a cast net can be used in the bays located near Bay St. Louis, Biloxi, Gautier and Ocean Springs (south of Interstate 10) to catch shrimp recreationally. Up to 50 pounds can be retained per person per day for personal consumption only and heads cannot be removed from shrimp on site. The cast net cannot exceed 12 feet in diameter.

**Q: When do I need to use Turtle Excluder Devices (TEDs)?**

A: TED's must be used by recreational and commercial fishermen in all trawl nets that have mechanical assist (pulley, block and tackle, winch, etc.). For more information on TEDs, visit the NOAA Fisheries Turtle Excluder Device Regulations at [fisheries.noaa.gov/southeast/bycatch/turtle-excluder-device-regulations](http://fisheries.noaa.gov/southeast/bycatch/turtle-excluder-device-regulations) or call the local NOAA office at 228-762-4591. For information pertaining to skimmer vessels, see below.

**Q: Do skimmers need to use TEDs?**

A: NOAA has amended previous regulations, which require all skimmer trawl vessels 40 feet and greater in length to use TEDs in their nets. This final rule is effective April 1, 2021. For more information on the NOAA federal rule change please visit <https://s3.amazonaws.com/public-inspection.federalregister.gov/2019-27398.pdf>

**Q: What is the difference between a live bait and commercial shrimp license?**

A: For information about live bait and commercial shrimp license regulations please visit [dmr.ms.gov/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/Live-Bait-License-vs-Commercial-License-2015.pdf](http://dmr.ms.gov/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/Live-Bait-License-vs-Commercial-License-2015.pdf).