



# COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

*Marine Resources Commission*  
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Newport News, Virginia 23607

Molly Joseph Ward  
Secretary of Natural Resources

John M.R. Bull  
Commissioner

## **Virginia Marine Resources Commission Adopts New Blue Crab Fisheries Regulations**

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(NEWPORT NEWS, VA.) The Virginia Marine Resources Commission (VMRC) today voted to implement new fisheries management measures to conserve adult female and juvenile blue crabs through targeted harvest reductions. The Commission voted to reduce crab pot bushel and vessel limits by 10 percent for 12 months, July 5, 2014 to July 4, 2015. The Commission also closed the crab dredge fishery season for the seventh year in a row.

These new management measures were taken as a result of the 2014 Annual Winter Dredge Survey which indicated female blue crabs dropped below the safe level of 70 million and are in a depleted state. Juvenile crab numbers increased and have remained at a safe level for the sixth consecutive year. The juveniles must be conserved, however, in order to increase their chances of reproducing in even larger numbers next year.

“These decisions while never easy are absolutely necessary” said VMRC Commissioner John M.R. Bull. “The measures we adopted today complement similar regulations adopted by our partners in this effort, the Maryland Department of Natural Resources and the Potomac River Fisheries Commission. Together, we will continue to monitor the blue crab population with our partners and continue to adjust management strategies when necessary. “

Commissioner Bull, at the conclusion of the public hearing thanked VMRC’s two advisory committees, the Crab Management Advisory Committee, which supported the Commission’s decision and Crab Industry Advisory Committee. “Our industry partners have contributed greatly to VMRC’s work. Our partners have had some interesting ideas recently about building our blue crab fishery. These committees, in the coming months, will be working to provide more detail on their ideas as well as solicit Bay-wide public input.”

*An Agency of the Natural Resources Secretariat*

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**Licensed crabbers will have the following bushel limits beginning July 5, 2014:**

<b><i>Bushel Limits by License Category</i></b>	<b>CURRENT Crab Pot Bushel Limits through July 4, 2014</b>	<b>Crab Pot Bushel Limits July 5 through November 15, 2014</b>	<b>Crab Pots Bushel Limits Halved November 16 through November 30, 2014 and March 17 through March 31, 2015</b>	<b>Crab Pot Bushel Limits April 1 through July 4, 2015</b>
Up to 85 Crab Pots	16	10	8	10
Up to 127 Crab Pots	21	14	10	14
Up to 170 Crab Pots	27	18	13	18
Up to 255 Crab Pots	43	29	21	29
Up to 425 Crab Pots	55	47	27	47
<b>All Other Crab Harvest Gears (Peeler Pots, Scrapes, Trotlines, Traps)</b>	<b>Non-Crab Pot Season Closed beginning September 16, 2014 and Season Reopens May 1, 2015</b>			

Wide Winter Dredge Survey results (1990 through 2014). All surveys begin in December and end in March of the next year.

<b>Survey Year (Year Survey Ended)</b>	<b>Total Number of Crabs in Millions (All Ages and Both Sexes)</b>	<b>Number of Juvenile Crabs in Millions (both sexes)</b>	<b>Number of spawning age Female crabs in Millions</b>	<b>Bay-wide Commercial Harvest (Millions of Pounds)</b>	<b>Percentage of Female Crabs Harvested (female exploitation fraction)</b>
1990	791	463	117	96	44
1991	828	356	227	90	34
1992	367	105	167	53	60
1993	852	503	177	107	35
1994	487	295	102	77	28
1995	487	300	80	72	32
1996	661	476	108	69	20
1997	680	512	93	77	22
1998	353	166	106	56	40
1999	308	223	53	62	37
2000	281	135	93	49	43
2001	254	156	61	47	42
2002	315	194	55	50	34
2003	334	172	84	47	33
2004	270	143	82	48	42

2005	400	243	110	54	24
2006	313	197	85	49	29
2007	251	112	89	43	35
2008	293	166	91	49	24
2009	396	171	162	54	23
2010	663	340	246	85	18
2011	452	204	191	67	24
2012	765	581	95	56	10
2013	300	111	147	37*	23*
2014	297	199	69	TBD	TBD

\* 2013 Bay-wide commercial harvest and percentage of the female crab removal rate are preliminary.

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