

By: Representative Ellington

To: Conservation and Water Resources

HOUSE BILL NO. 729

1 AN ACT TO AMEND SECTION 49-15-84, MISSISSIPPI CODE OF 1972,
2 TO PROHIBIT THE POSSESSION OF EGG-BEARING FEMALE CRABS EXCEPT FOR
3 THE IMPORTATION OF FEMALE CRABS FROM OTHER STATES WHERE THE TAKING
4 AND POSSESSION OF SUCH CRABS IS LAWFUL; TO REPEAL SECTION
5 49-15-85, MISSISSIPPI CODE OF 1972, WHICH ALLOWS THE HARVEST OF
6 EGG-BEARING CRABS AT CERTAIN TIMES OF THE YEAR; AND FOR RELATED
7 PURPOSES.

8 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF MISSISSIPPI:

9 SECTION 1. Section 49-15-84, Mississippi Code of 1972, is
10 amended as follows:

11 49-15-84. (1) The commission shall coordinate with the Gulf
12 Coast Research Laboratory in the development of an ordinance for
13 the purpose of taking Callinectes sapidus (blue crab) or allied
14 species. The ordinance shall include provisions for the
15 establishment of size limits for individual or market use as well
16 as establishing legal harvest size for the cultivating of peeler
17 crabs and soft-shell crabs.

18 (2) The commission shall establish minimum specifications
19 for crab traps and shall require buoys of adequate size which are
20 identified as to the owner of the buoys and traps. Within the
21 bays and bayous recreational crabbers may use no more than six (6)
22 crab traps per household. The taking of crabs with drop nets is
23 permitted without a license.

24 (3) It is unlawful to catch, hold or have in possession any
25 female sponge crab or any female crab bearing visible eggs at any
26 time * * *. It is not unlawful to catch those crabs
27 unintentionally, if the crabs are immediately returned to the
28 water. The provisions of this subsection (3) shall not apply to
29 the importation of female crabs from other states where the taking



30 and possession of such crabs is lawful if each shipment or load of
31 such imported female crabs shall have with it either an invoice
32 from a licensed harvester in a state which legally allows their
33 taking or a certificate from that state's appropriate agency
34 verifying that the crabs were taken legally.

35 SECTION 2. Section 49-15-85, Mississippi Code of 1972, which
36 allows the harvest of egg-bearing crabs at certain times of the
37 year, is repealed.

38 SECTION 3. This act shall take effect and be in force from
39 and after July 1, 2001.

