HOUSE BILL NO. 1083

AN ACT TO AMEND SECTION 49-15-84, MISSISSIPPI CODE OF 1972, TO CLARIFY REGULATION OF CRAB TRAPS AND FEMALE CRABS BEARING EGGS; TO REPEAL SECTION 49-15-85, MISSISSIPPI CODE OF 1972, WHICH RELATES TO THE PROTECTION OF EGG-BEARING FEMALE CRABS AND DUPLICATES PROVISIONS OF SECTION 49-15-84; AND FOR RELATED PURPOSES.

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

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

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

(2) The commission shall establish specifications for crab traps and shall require buoys of adequate size which are identified as to the owner of the buoys and traps. Recreational crabbers may use no more than six (6) crab traps per household. The taking of crabs with drop nets is permitted without a license.

(3) (a) It is unlawful to catch, hold or have in possession any female sponge crab or any female crab bearing visible eggs at any time within marine waters. It is not unlawful to catch those crabs unintentionally, if the crabs are immediately returned to the water.

(b) This subsection shall not apply to the importation of female crabs, if the shipment of imported female sponge crabs...
has with it an invoice from a licensed harvester from a state that allows the taking of such crabs or a certificate from the appropriate agency verifying that the crabs were taken legally.

SECTION 2. Section 49-15-85, Mississippi Code of 1972, which relates to the protection of egg-bearing female crabs and duplicates provisions found in Section 1 of this act, is repealed.

SECTION 3. This act shall take effect and be in force from and after July 1, 2002.