

By: Senator(s) Hewes, Gollott

To: Ports and Marine Resources

SENATE BILL NO. 2553
(As Sent to Governor)

1 AN ACT TO AMEND SECTION 49-15-84, MISSISSIPPI CODE OF 1972,
2 TO CLARIFY REGULATION OF CRAB TRAPS AND FEMALE CRABS BEARING EGGS;
3 TO CREATE CODE SECTION 49-15-84.1, MISSISSIPPI CODE OF 1972, TO
4 AUTHORIZE THE COMMISSION ON MARINE RESOURCES TO ESTABLISH A CLOSED
5 SEASON ON THE USE OF CRAB TRAPS; TO AUTHORIZE THE COMMISSION ON
6 MARINE RESOURCES TO DESIGNATE AS ABANDONED THOSE TRAPS REMAINING
7 IN PUBLIC WATERS DURING THE CLOSED SEASON; TO PROVIDE THAT
8 ABANDONED CRAB TRAPS ARE SUBJECT TO IMMEDIATE REMOVAL AND
9 DISPOSAL; TO REPEAL SECTION 49-15-85, MISSISSIPPI CODE OF 1972,
10 WHICH PROHIBITS THE TAKING AND POSSESSION OF EGG-BEARING CRABS;
11 AND FOR RELATED PURPOSES.

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

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

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

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

28 (3) It is unlawful to catch, hold or have in possession any
29 female sponge crab or any female crab bearing visible eggs at any
30 time * * *. It is not unlawful to catch those crabs



31 unintentionally, if the crabs are immediately returned to the
32 water.

33 **SECTION 2.** The following shall be codified as Section
34 49-15-84.1, Mississippi Code of 1972:

35 49-15-84.1. (1) The commission may establish a closed
36 season for the use of crab traps in the public waters of this
37 state. The commission may designate the closed season as not less
38 than ten (10) days nor more than thirty (30) days per year. Any
39 crab trap remaining in the public waters after the expiration to
40 the seventh day of a closed season may be considered as abandoned
41 under the regulations established by the commission.

42 (2) The commission shall adopt rules to govern the removal
43 and disposal of abandoned crab traps as necessary to enhance:

44 (a) The conservation and management of crab resources;

45 (b) Boating safety;

46 (c) The cleanliness of the beds and bottoms of the
47 public waters of the state; and

48 (d) Enforcement of this chapter.

49 (3) Abandoned crab traps are litter and are subject to
50 immediate removal and disposal.

51 **SECTION 3.** Section 49-15-85, Mississippi Code of 1972, which
52 prohibits the taking and possession of female egg-bearing crabs,
53 is repealed.

54 **SECTION 4.** This act shall take effect and be in force from
55 and after July 1, 2002.

