

By: Senator(s) Hewes, Gollott

To: Ports and Marine  
ResourcesCOMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE  
FOR  
SENATE BILL NO. 2553

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 between January  
39 31 and April 1 in any year so designated by the commission. Any  
40 crab trap remaining in the public waters after the expiration to  
41 the seventh day of a closed season may be considered as abandoned  
42 under the regulations established by the commission.

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

- 45               (a) The conservation and management of crab resources;  
46               (b) Boating safety;  
47               (c) The cleanliness of the beds and bottoms of the  
48 public waters of the state; and  
49               (d) Enforcement of this chapter.

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

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54 is repealed.

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

