RECREATIONAL BLUE CRABBING GUIDELINES

This guide aims to provide quick and easy reference for recreational blue crabbers to maintain legal and sustainable practices. Please note that this guide is only a reference. For the most up-to-date saltwater fishing and crabbing regulations visit https://coastalgadnr.org/RecreationalFishing.
LEGAL CRAB HARVEST

You can distinguish male blue crabs from female blue crabs by looking at the shape of their abdomen or “apron.”

*Mature male blue crabs,* or “Jimmies,” have a strongly tapered apron that resembles an inverted T or the Washington Monument.

*Mature female blue crabs,* or “Sooks,” have a broad, rounded apron, similar to the Capital dome.

*Immature females,* also known as “she-crabs” or “Sallies,” have a triangular shaped apron.

*It is unlawful to harvest female sponge (egg-bearing) crabs.* Sponge crabs have a mass of eggs on their underside. As the eggs develop, the sponge goes from orange to black in color. Eggs of any color are alive and the sponge crab should be returned to the water.
The legal size of a blue crab is 5 inches.
LEGAL SIZE OF BLUE CRABS

It is unlawful to take or possess any crab that is less than 5 inches from spike to spike across the back (other than a “peeler” or a mature adult female crab).

Peelers, or crabs that show signs of molting, must measure at least 3 inches from spike to spike across the back.
one 5-gallon bucket + half a 5-gallon bucket = roughly one bushel
BLUE CRABBING REGULATIONS

A fishing license and **Saltwater Information Program (SIP) permit** is required for those 16 years of age and older.

A recreational crabber may possess up to **six standard size crab traps** (2 feet by 2 feet) with **two escape rings** on each trap.

Recreational crabbers may take no more than one bushel of crabs during any 24-hour period. No more than two bushels may be taken recreationally or possessed during a 24-hour period on a boat with more than one person on board.

**One and a half 5-gallon buckets** full of Jimmy-size (5 to 7 inch) blue crabs is approximately the same as **one bushel** of blue crabs.

Unless otherwise designated, the saltwaters of Georgia are open year-round for recreational crabbing at any time of day.
No such throat shall extend farther than 6” into the side of any trap.
CRABBING WITH A CRAB POT

Georgia residents and their immediate family living on private docks don’t need a license to use a crab trap on their property.

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Diamondback terrapin excluder devices, or “TEDs,” fit on the outer entrance funnels on crab traps. Although not legally required, these devices prevent terrapins from getting caught in the traps and drowning.

Recreational crabbers are required to mark their traps with a fluorescent green buoy bearing the owner’s name and address in one-inch letters.