

CONSERVATION NEWS RELEASE

Department of Conservation
and Natural Resources
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Marine Police * Marine Resources * State Lands * State Parks * Wildlife & Freshwater Fisheries

The Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, Marine Resources Division announces a seven day closed season for the taking of crabs by the use of crab traps (commercial or recreational) in areas that are opened to shrimping on the initial opening day of the 2002 shrimp season. The closure will begin at 12:01 a.m. on the initial opening day of the 2002 shrimp season. There is also established a one day closed season for the taking of crabs by the use of crab traps (commercial or recreational) within 100 yards of the Alabama shoreline on Saturday, June 15, 2002. Any crab traps remaining in the closed areas will be considered marine litter and can be removed by any individual from these closed waters. Anyone who removes crab traps (commercial or recreational) that are considered marine litter do so under the jurisdiction of the Marine Resources Division and must dispose such litter properly.

“The goal of this regulation is to reduce loss rates for crab traps in commercial and recreational fisheries and facilitate the removal of existing derelict crab traps”, Commissioner Smith said. These derelict traps can continue to fish and may cause unnecessary mortality to marine organisms. The derelict traps may also pose a safety and navigational hazard to local boaters. Governor Siegelman expressed support of the regulation. “This program will be the first of its kind in the coordinated removal of abandoned or derelict traps in both deep and shallow waters. Removal of these traps will improve the quality of the marine environment and aid local fishermen, boaters, area residents and visitors to Alabama’s Gulf Coast.”

This program is a coordinated effort initiated by the Alabama Seafood Association, Coastal Conservation Association, and the Mobile Bay National Estuary Program. Additional conservation societies, commercial fishermen and concerned citizens are expected to participate this clean-up effort. Interested groups can contact the Marine Resources Division at 251 861-2882 (Mobile County) or 251 968-7576 (Baldwin County).