

**STATE OF FLORIDA**  
**FLORIDA FISH AND WILDLIFE CONSERVATION COMMISSION**

**Order No. EO 15-05**

**Early opening for the January 2015 Florida  
Panhandle Blue Crab Trap Closure**

The Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission of the State of Florida, acting under the authority of Article IV, Section 9, of the Florida Constitution, and acting through its Executive Director under Delegations of Authority Paragraph 17 and Paragraph 22, and due to the early conclusion of efforts to identify and remove lost and abandoned blue crab traps through the FWC trap retrieval program in the Florida Panhandle, the closure will open ahead of schedule as follows:

1. Notwithstanding anything to the contrary in Chapter 68B-45.0045(1)(a)6, Florida Administrative Code (F.A.C.), all waters of Escambia, Santa Rosa, Okaloosa, Walton, Bay, Gulf, and Franklin counties shall reopen for the use of traps for the recreational and commercial harvest of blue crab beginning at 12:01 a.m. on January 10, 2015.
  
2. This order shall take effect at 12:01 a.m. on January 10, 2015 and remain in effect through the end of the closure established in 68B-45.0045(1)(a)6., F.A.C., for 2015.

Specific Authority: Article IV, Section 9, Florida Constitution

Law Implemented: Article IV, Section 9, Florida Constitution and 120.81(5), Florida Statutes

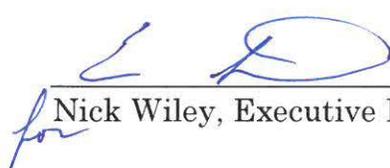
Effective Date: 12:01 a.m. EDT, January 10, 2015



Given under my hand and seal of the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission on this 9<sup>th</sup> day of January, 2015.

Attest:

  
Agency Clerk

  
for Nick Wiley, Executive Director

**MEMORANDUM**

TO: Nick Wiley

FROM: Division of Marine Fisheries Management

DATE: 9 January 2015

SUBJECT: EO for early opening for Florida Panhandle blue crab trap closure

Attached is an executive order that will reopen all waters of Escambia, Santa Rosa, Okaloosa, Walton, Bay, Gulf, and Franklin counties for the use of traps for the recreational and commercial harvest of blue crab. By rule, this regional closure of the blue crab trap fishery runs January 5 to January 14 in order to allow for the cleanup of lost and abandoned traps. A portion of the cleanup efforts have been completed, but the contractor has become ill and is not able to complete the scheduled cleanup efforts in the remaining portion of the region. Thus, there is no longer a reason to prevent fishers from using their traps. The area can be reopened to the use of traps beginning January 10, 2015.