



Best Practices for Recreational Blue Crab Trapping

Crab traps that are not checked regularly can kill fish and other animals. These unintended captures, or “bycatch,” often include *diamondback terrapins*, unique brackish water turtles that cannot breathe under water and die in traps within hours.

Following the practices below can help ensure your catch is fresh and that you are being a good steward of Florida’s natural resources by not killing animals you didn’t mean to catch.

- **Remove your traps from the water when not in use!** Traps left in the water continue to fish, killing everything that enters the trap.
- **Check all traps at least daily, more often if possible.**
- **Only use the number of traps that you are willing to check daily, up to the limit of 5 per person.**
- **Install “Bycatch Reduction Devices” (BRDs) to exclude most terrapins and reduce bait loss and damage to crabs (FREE; email terrapin@MyFWC.com for details).**
- **Terrapins congregate in particular, local “Hotspots.” If you catch terrapins in the same place more than once, try trapping in a different area.**
- **Do not place traps in channels.** Boats can cut buoy lines and cause trap loss.
- **Avoid buoys when boating so that you don’t cut others’ lines.**
- **Make sure buoys are properly marked and that lines are in good condition.**
- **Be sure degradable materials are built into the trap so that, if lost, it will eventually breakdown.**
- **You must have a recreational fishing license before you place a trap in the water.** There is a limit of 1 terrapin per person per day (2 total in possession), and **they cannot be sold.**
- **If you catch a terrapin, please report it to terrapin@MyFWC.com, to help biologists learn more about their populations around the state.**



Diamondback terrapin - photo by Bill Turner.



A total of 744 lost or abandoned blue crab traps were removed from the St. Johns River during the regional closure January 16-25, 2012.



Remove your traps from the water when not in use!

