



MISSISSIPPI DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY
MISSISSIPPI DEPARTMENT OF MARINE RESOURCES



News Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Mississippi Marine Territorial Waters North of the Barrier Islands Reopen to All Commercial and Recreational Blue Crab Fishing

BILOXI, Miss. – The Mississippi Department of Marine Resources (MDMR) and the Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ), in coordination with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) and the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA), have ordered the **reopening of Mississippi territorial waters north of the barrier islands to all commercial and recreational blue crab fishing activities** that were part of the precautionary oil spill closures. This order takes effect at 5 p.m. Aug. 20, 2010.

The reopening is being implemented after the completion of extensive sampling and testing conducted by the MDMR, MDEQ, NOAA and FDA. The FDA has advised that, following extensive sensory testing and chemical analysis, tissue samples tested indicate that crabs from these previously closed areas north of the barrier islands are safe for consumption. Testing for crab tissues includes specimens of special interest, such as those with dark gills, brought to DMR's attention by concerned fishermen and the public; all of these samples have been determined to be safe for consumption as well.

All other regulations specific to each particular fishery will remain in full force and effect.

The reopening affects the following Mississippi territorial waters: all waters north of a line beginning at a point on the Louisiana-Mississippi border at the Intracoastal Waterway Grand Island Channel LIGHT 1; thence northeasterly, along the Grand Island Channel to Buoy 15; thence easterly to Buoy 1 at the intersection of the Grand Isle Channel and the Pass Marianne Channel to LIGHT 18, thence to Buoy 12, thence to Buoy 10; thence southeasterly, along the most direct line, to the westernmost point of Cat Island; thence running northeasterly, following the northern shore to the northeastern-most point of Cat Island; thence southeasterly, along the most direct line, to the westernmost point of West Ship Island; thence easterly, following the northern shore, to the easternmost point of West Ship Island; thence easterly along the most direct line, to the westernmost point of East Ship Island; thence easterly following the northern shore to the easternmost point of East Ship Island; thence easterly, along the most direct line, to the westernmost point of Horn Island; thence easterly, following the northern shore, to the easternmost point of Horn Island; thence easterly, along the most direct line, to the westernmost point of Petit Bois Island; thence easterly, following the northern shore, to the easternmost point of Petit Bois Island; thence due east to a point on the Mississippi-Alabama border.

Waters south of the barrier islands remain closed for crabbing. Samples from that area have been collected and delivered to NOAA and FDA for analysis. Those waters will be reopened when sample results show that the crab resources in that area are safe for consumption.

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The Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality safeguards the health, safety, and welfare of Mississippians by conserving and improving our environment and wise economic growth through focused research and responsible regulation.

The Mississippi Department of Marine Resources is dedicated to enhancing, and conserving marine interests of the state by managing all marine life, public wetlands, adjacent uplands and waterfront areas to provide for the optimal commercial, recreational, educational and economic uses of these resources consistent with environmental concerns and social changes. Visit the DMR online at www.dmr.ms.gov.

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