

## DNR Reminds Crabbers Of August 31 License Buy-Back Deadline

Posted by [TBN](#) On 08/20/2010

The Maryland Department of Natural Resources (DNR) reminds watermen and license holders that the August 31 deadline to submit a bid for the commercial Limited Crab Catcher (LCC) License Buy-Back Program is fast approaching. This voluntary program is in keeping with DNR's effort to effectively manage Maryland's blue crab population. Crabbers may receive \$2,260 per license, and DNR's goal is to permanently buy back 2,000 of the latent and active 3,676 LCC licenses.

"The voluntary buy-back program has proven very successful thus far, but we have a long way to go," said DNR Secretary John Griffin. "We encourage crabbers to sell back unused licenses so DNR can continue its strategy in implementing harvest targets and build a sustainable crab population for Maryland's future."

DNR implemented the buy-back program in response to public feedback. Support for the program came from \$15 million in Federal Crab Disaster Funds obtained through the efforts of U.S. Senator Barbara Mikulski and the Maryland Delegation to help watermen and to foster restoration solutions for the crabbing industry in Maryland.

Since July 2009, 650 crabbers have sold their licenses back to the state. DNR will continue to buy LCC licenses until the funds earmarked for this purpose run dry or are needed for other crab disaster projects.

"Inactive licenses account for approximately one-third of LCC license holders, making it difficult to adopt management strategies that will ensure the harvest target is met, while allowing full-time active crabbers to make an adequate wage," said Tom O'Connell, Director of DNR's Fisheries Service. "Having such a large number of people who may or may not crab in any given year poses a long-term biological and economic threat to a rebuilding stock."

Inactive licenses are those with no reported harvest between April 1, 2004 and December 15, 2008. In February 2010, a regulation went into effect requiring inactive license holders to declare their LCC to be male-only or frozen. The purpose of that regulation was to prevent inactive licenses from placing additional harvest pressure on female crabs. This regulatory action clarifies which individuals with a male-only or frozen LCC license can upgrade to an unlimited Tidal Fish License (TFL).

DNR has determined that upgrades by these individuals will not compromise the management objective. Only those individuals who met the requirements by April 6, 2010 are allowed to use a male-only or frozen LCC license to upgrade to a TFL beginning in the 2011 renewal period.

Renewal of LCC licenses must be made by March 2011 or they will automatically revert back to the State at no charge. The penalty for a late renewal is \$50, but an LCC license does not need to be renewed in order to sell it back to the state.

Through the various fisheries programs put into place since 2008, the Chesapeake Bay's blue crab population has increased by 60 percent, a substantial rise for the second straight year. Results of the most recent winter dredge survey place the crab population at its highest level since 1997. The survey indicates that the O'Malley administration's management measures, along with an historic collaboration with Virginia and the Potomac River Fisheries Commission, are continuing to pay dividends.

For more information call the DNR Crab Hotline—(800) 893-2722 or visit a DNR Service Center to sell your LCC License back to the State.

---

Copyright © 2019 thebaynet.com. All rights reserved.