

# HOUSE BILL 473

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71r2558  
CF SB 206

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By: **Delegates Elmore, Cane, Eckardt, Haddaway, Mathias, Smigiel, and Walkup**

Introduced and read first time: February 6, 2007

Assigned to: Environmental Matters

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Committee Report: Favorable with amendments

House action: Adopted

Read second time: March 16, 2007

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## CHAPTER \_\_\_\_\_

1 AN ACT concerning

2 **Natural Resources – Soft Crabs – Bycatch**

3 FOR the purpose of creating a certain exception to the prohibition against possessing a  
4 bycatch of undersized soft crabs; requiring the Department of Natural  
5 Resources to adopt certain regulations relating to a bycatch for soft crabs; and  
6 generally relating to catching or possessing soft crabs.

7 BY repealing and reenacting, with amendments,  
8 Article – Natural Resources  
9 Section 4–809  
10 Annotated Code of Maryland  
11 (2005 Replacement Volume and 2006 Supplement)

12 SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF  
13 MARYLAND, That the Laws of Maryland read as follows:

14 **Article – Natural Resources**

15 4–809.

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### EXPLANATION: CAPITALS INDICATE MATTER ADDED TO EXISTING LAW.

[Brackets] indicate matter deleted from existing law.

Underlining indicates amendments to bill.

~~Strike out~~ indicates matter stricken from the bill by amendment or deleted from the law by amendment.



1 (a) A person may not catch or possess more than 10 hard crabs per bushel or  
2 25 hard crabs per barrel which measure less than 5 inches across the shell from tip to  
3 tip of spike.

4 (b) (1) Except as provided in paragraph (2) of this subsection, a person  
5 may not catch or possess peeler crabs measuring less than 3 inches across the shell  
6 from tip to tip of spike.

7 (2) A person may possess a bycatch of peeler crabs measuring less  
8 than 3 inches across the shell from tip to tip of spike if the bycatch is not greater than:

9 (i) 30 per bushel; or

10 (ii) 60 per float.

11 (3) In determining the number of peelers measuring less than 3 inches  
12 across the shell from tip to tip of the spike, the Department shall select the minimum  
13 number of bushels or floats necessary to be representative of the person's catch.

14 (c) (1) **[A] EXCEPT AS PROVIDED IN PARAGRAPH (2) OF THIS**  
15 **SUBSECTION, A** person may not catch or possess soft crabs measuring less than three  
16 and one-half inches across the shell from tip to tip of the spike.

17 (2) **A PERSON MAY POSSESS A BYCATCH OF SOFT CRABS**  
18 **MEASURING LESS THAN THREE AND ONE-HALF INCHES ACROSS THE SHELL**  
19 **FROM TIP TO TIP OF THE SPIKE ~~IF THE BYCATCH IS NOT GREATER THAN ONE~~**  
20 **~~UNDERSIZED SOFT CRAB PER DOZEN SOFT CRABS POSSESSED IN ACCORDANCE~~**  
21 **WITH REGULATIONS ADOPTED BY THE DEPARTMENT.**

22 (d) In the waters of Worcester County, a person may not catch, possess, or  
23 keep in floats any fat crabs, or any crab known as snot crab, green crab, or buckram  
24 crab.

25 (e) The minimum size of crabs does not apply to mature female crabs,  
26 identified by the rounded apron.

27 (f) The provisions of subsection (a) do not apply to crabs imported into  
28 Maryland during the closed season for catching crabs if the person possessing the  
29 imported crabs has a certificate of origin.

30 (g) Once taken, peelers shall be kept separate from other crabs.

1           SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That, on or before October 1,  
2 2007, the Department of Natural Resources shall adopt regulations establishing and  
3 governing a permissible bycatch for soft crabs under § 4-809(c) of the Natural  
4 Resources Article as enacted by Section 1 of this Act.

5           SECTION 3. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect  
6 June 1, 2007.

Approved:

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Governor.

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Speaker of the House of Delegates.

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President of the Senate.