

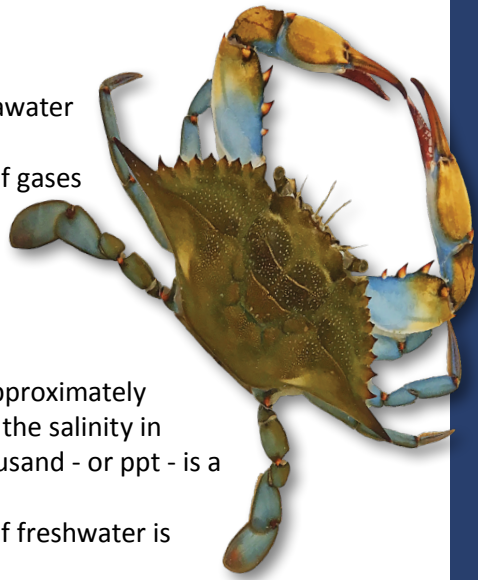
# Blue Crab Shedding

## Preparing Sea Water

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Typical water sources a shedder can use to make artificial seawater are wells, local waterways and municipal water.

Water from these sources can contain large concentrations of gases or chlorine that need to be removed. This can be done with aeration, or a chlorine chemical remover can be used to remove chlorine or chloramine from municipal water sources.

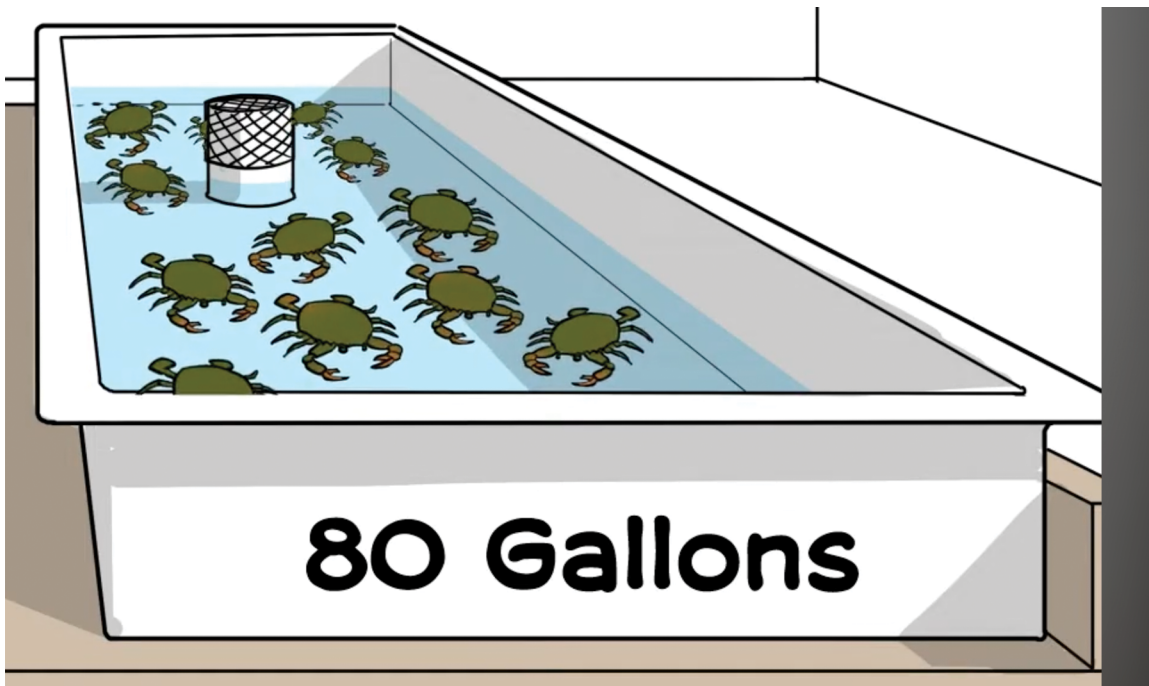


### Salinity:

A traditional shedding tray (three-foot by eight-foot) holds approximately 80 gallons of water. The salinity of the water should be similar to the salinity in which peeler crabs are caught. However, about one-part per thousand - or ppt - is a common salinity used in Louisiana.

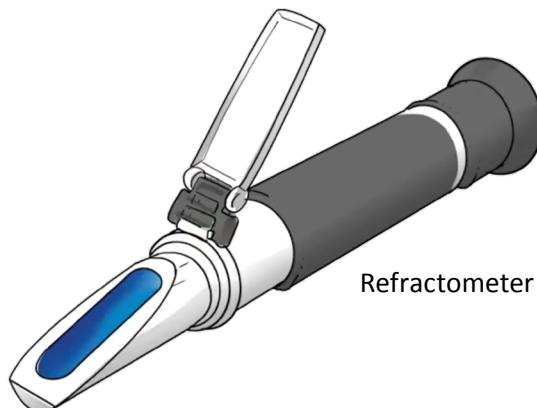
To make a salinity of 1 ppt, the weight of salt for one gallon of freshwater is 0.01 pounds (3.78 grams).

For 80 gallons of water, 0.67 pounds (302.37 grams) of salt is required to reach a salinity of 1 ppt. The amount of salt needed per system may vary slightly based on your salt mix.



### Mixing:

- Salt should be added slowly to the water.
- Test the water with a refractometer while mixing to prevent over salting.
- If the salinity becomes too high, dechlorinated freshwater can be used to dilute the salinity.



Refractometer

Pre-dissolve salt in a separate container to prevent the buildup of undissolved salt in the tray or sump. Storing water in a separate container also allows for a quick water change when water quality problems occur.

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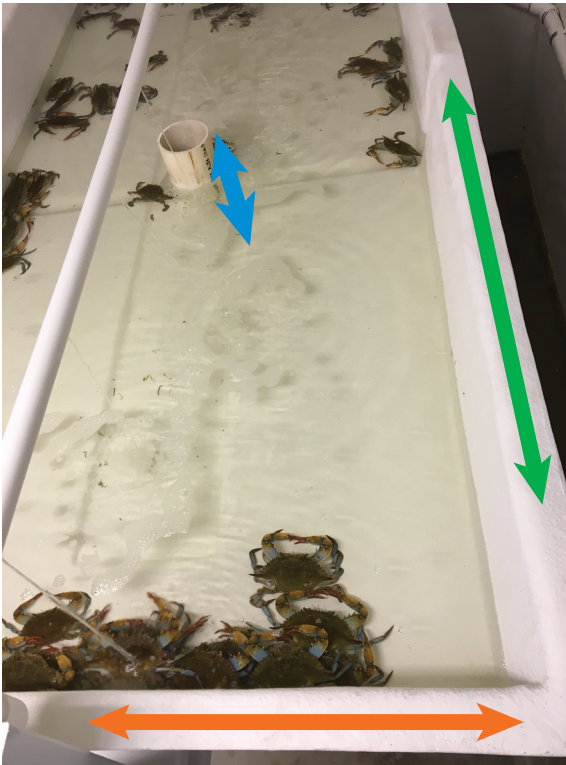
Water changes are used to reduce high ammonia and nitrite concentrations in shedding systems. It is recommended that water changes do not exceed 25 percent of the system's water capacity.

### Calculate capacity:

The water capacity of your system = Volume of all tanks + sump + extra storage.

Volume = length x width x water height.

To convert to gallons, multiply the total volume in cubic feet (ft<sup>3</sup>) by 7.5.



$$\text{Volume (ft}^3\text{)} = \text{width (ft)} \times \text{Length (ft)} \times \text{water depth (ft)}$$

Remember that water being added to the recirculating system must be dechlorinated and the same temperature and salinity of the water in the system to prevent shocking crabs.

General maintenance can be performed while conducting a partial water change. Some maintenance tasks include removing debris from trays. Rinse biofilter substrate with saltwater to clean the filter but keep the bacteria alive. Remember the biofilm or slime is your happy bacteria.

Back flush the sand or bead filters if applicable. After any maintenance, remember to turn everything back on including any closed water valves, pumps or aeration.



[laseagrant.org/outreach/projects/soft-shell-crab/](http://laseagrant.org/outreach/projects/soft-shell-crab/)

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