

Louisiana's Ghostly Problem

In Louisiana's coastal ecosystem, ghosts lurk just below the water's surface. Blue crab traps that have been lost continue to capture crabs and other marine species through a process called ghost fishing.



Each trap that becomes derelict remove nearly 26 blue crab from the fishery each year.

In 2004, the Louisiana State Legislature recognized the problem in our state and gave the authority to the Louisiana Wildlife and Fisheries Commission to set brief annual closures of the blue crab fishery to permit the removal of derelict crab traps.

Since the start of the program, more than 20,000 derelict traps have been removed from Louisiana waters. The success of the removal program depends on the active support of all user groups.

Derelict Crab Traps

Tips for preventing derelict crab traps:

1. Don't intentionally cut buoy lines.
2. Always check lines, knots, and buoys for proper function.
3. Avoid setting traps in navigational areas.
4. Make sure traps haven't drifted into areas of high traffic.
5. Properly discard of unfishable traps.
6. Attach a common float if you accidentally sever a buoy line.
7. Remove traps before predicted major weather events.
8. If possible, use easily degradable cull rings or hog rings to prevent ghost fishing.
9. Secure traps to boat while navigating.
10. Report derelict traps at <https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/crabtraps>



For more information about marine debris, derelict crab traps, and opportunities to participate in annual derelict crab trap removal programs visit:

www.laseagrant.org/crabtraps

