October 12, 2026

Supplement to

POTOMAC RIVER FISHERIES COMMISSION BOOK OF REGULATIONS

This supplement should be inserted inside the back cover of the October 6, 2024 edition of the Potomac River Fisheries Commission Regulations and should be consulted before referring to any law to determine whether there are updates or changes.

I hereby certify that the enclosed Regulations were adopted by the Potomac River Fisheries Commission and are effective for the dates shown thereon.

ATTEST:

_____ 10/12/2026__

Ronald W. Owens, Executive Secretary Date

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REGULATION II

Sec. 1(l) Oyster Containers

a. A round container with rigid, open mesh straight sides and a porous straight bottom; with inside measurements of no more than:

   i. Sixteen and one-half (16 ½) inches top diameter;
   ii. Thirteen and one-half (13 ½) inches bottom diameter; and,
   iii. Fourteen and one-half (14 ½) inches in height.

b. A rectangular-shaped container with inside measurements of no more than:

   i. Twenty (20) inches long;
   ii. Twelve and five-eighths (12 5/8) inches top width;
   iii. Twelve (12) inches bottom width; and,
   iv. Eleven and one-quarter (11 ¼) inches height.

c. A round container with rigid metal sides and a solid straight bottom with holes in the bottom for draining; such holes to be no larger than one inch in diameter; with inside measurements of no more than:

   i. Eighteen (18) inches top diameter;
   ii. Sixteen and one-half (16 ½) inches bottom diameter; and,
   iii. Twelve (12) inches height.

d. Any other container approved by order or written permission of the Commission.

The term "Oyster Containers" includes and applies to oyster baskets, bushels, or containers as referred to elsewhere in the Regulations of the Potomac River Fisheries Commission. Oyster Containers shall be made of smooth, impervious, corrosion-resistant and non-toxic materials which will not readily disintegrate or crack.

Sec. 2(a)(4) Closed Areas for Hand Scraping / Hand Tonging

The Heron Island Oyster Bar shall be closed for the purpose of taking or catching, or attempting to take or catch oysters by means of a hand scrape at any time.

Heron Island Oyster Bar is enclosed within the following described boundaries: "All the waters of the Potomac River enclosed by a line beginning on the northernmost PRFC/DNR jurisdictional line, as marked by markers PR "M3A", "M3B", "M3C", "M3D" and "M3E"; on the west by Dukeharts Channel, as marked by the navigational aids "G C1", "FL G3" and "G C5"; on the south by the Potomac main channel, as marked by navigational aids "R N 14" and "R N 12"; and, on the east by Breton Bay Channel, as marked by navigational aid "R G N 'Hi'" and Marker "PR M3E"".

Notwithstanding the above provisions of this Regulation the Commission may, by appropriate Order, open or close any areas of the Potomac River under its jurisdiction to the taking or catching of oysters by hand tong and/or hand scrape. If a closure is specified, it shall be unlawful to take any oysters in violation of such Order.

Sec. 2(b) Season Dates, Days and Times for Taking or Landing Oysters

The Commission may from time to time, and by appropriate Order, specify the oyster season dates, days and times during which oysters may be taken or caught and the manner of such taking or catching in accordance with the NSSP Ordinances. It shall be unlawful to take any oysters in violation of such Order. It shall be unlawful for any person to take or attempt to take or catch oysters on Saturday or Sunday. It shall be unlawful to land or unload oysters earlier than sunrise or later than sunset, or for any buy boat to unload oysters earlier than sunrise or later than sunset at any time.

Sec. 2(g) Concealment of Oysters

It shall be unlawful for any person to conceal any oysters in the shell in a cabin, compartment, locker, cupboard, washboard, or other place on any vessel in the Potomac River where they are not clearly visible and readily accessible for inspection at all times by duly authorized officers of the Potomac River Fisheries Commission. All oysters in the shell found on any vessel in the Potomac River shall at all times be either in a pile or piles on the culling board, or contained in oyster baskets in plain view in the bottom of any vessel, and at no time shall they be placed or deposited on the washboards, or in any other type of basket, box, sack, bag, or other container, as approved by the Commission by order or written permission. No shucked oysters shall be permitted aboard any vessel in the Potomac River licensed under the provisions of these Regulations during the oyster tonging season.

Sec. 2(g)(1) Identification Tags Required

Each basket of oysters harvested from the Potomac River, except as provided in Reg. II, Sec. 2(g)(2), must be tagged with an accurately completed PRFC issued Individual Wild Shellfish identification tag before leaving the bar from which the oysters were harvested. No basket of oyster harvested from the Potomac River may be removed from the boat without said tag being firmly affixed to the basket. These Individual Wild Shellfish identification tags must be purchased from the PRFC. The identification tag shall stay affixed to the basket until the basket is in possession of a person who is licensed and certified to sell shellfish, in accordance with the requirements of the National Shellfish Sanitation Program Model Ordinance and listed on the Interstate Certified Shellfish Shippers List. All oysters must be sold on day of harvest.

Sec. 3(a) Measures Used for Oysters in Shell and Oyster Shells

All oysters in the shell and all oyster shells harvested and sold in the Potomac River shall be measured in an approved oyster container and shall not extend beyond the top of the container.

Sec. 4(a) Oyster Sanctuaries

The hereinafter listed areas of the Potomac River are declared to be oyster sanctuaries and thereby closed for the purpose of taking or catching or attempting to take or catch oysters by any means at any time. These areas are:

1. All natural oyster bars in the Potomac River, which are west and south of Upper Cedar Point Light #8, which includes the charted natural oyster bars of Metomkin Point (80 acres), Stuart Point (106 acres) and Chotank Lumps (207 acres); and,

2. All areas which cannot be harvested with 18-foot hand shaft tongs on the natural oyster bar Heron Island. Heron Island is that area which is south of the PRFC/DNR jurisdictional line, east of Dukeharts channel, west of Breton Bay channel and north of the Potomac River main channel.

REGULATION III

Sec. 1(b) Resisting or Impeding Officers

It shall be unlawful for any person to resist, impede, abuse, or attempt to escape from any officer authorized to make arrests, seizures, examination, or other performance of duties under any of the Regulations and laws relating to any matters within the jurisdiction or authority of the Potomac River Fisheries Commission.

Sec. 9(a) Gear Specific Fishing Seasons

The times during which gears or devices may be set are as follows:

(1) Pound net - from February 15th through December 25th.

(2) Anchor gill net - as may be fixed from time to time by Commission Order.
(3) Stake gill net - as may be fixed from time to time by Commission Order.
(4) Haul Seine - from January 1st through December 31st, provided however, that such net(s) shall not be set or hauled in the Potomac River during the following periods: (a) between sunrise on any Saturday and sunset on the ensuing Sunday from June 1st through August 31st; and (b) between sunset on any Friday and sunset on the ensuing Sunday at all other times.
(5) Conventional fish trot line - from January 1st through December 31st.
(6) Modified fish trot line - from February 1st through March 15th and from October 1st through December 31st.
(7) Fyke net - from February 15th through December 15th.

Sec. 13(d) Individual Striped Bass Allocation Transfer from Gill Net to Commercial Hook and Line

Any person meeting the qualifying conditions listed below may surrender one gill net license for the purpose of being able to obtain a commercial hook and line license and take his striped bass allocation with that gear. To qualify a person must:

1. Have a valid Potomac River gill net license, with no outstanding harvest reports or outstanding striped bass ID tags; and,
2. Surrender the unrenewed gill net license and its associated rights and privileges between December 1 and the last business day of January that is not a Saturday, Sunday, or legal holiday; and,
3. Purchase a commercial hook and line license, valid for next year, at next year's license fee plus a transfer fee of $50.00.

REGULATION VII

Sec. 1(j) Crab Containers — Effective 4/1/2027

a. Bushel, circular – A circular container with inside measurements of no more than:

i. Eighteen (18) inches top diameter;
ii. Thirteen and one-half (13-½) bottom diameter; and,
iii. Twelve (12) inches height.

b. Bushel, rectangular – A rectangular container with inside dimensions of no more than:

i. Nineteen and one-half (19 ½) inches long;
ii. Twelve and one-half (12 ½) inches width; and,
iii. Eleven (11) inches height.

c. Lug – A rectangular container with inside dimensions of no more than:

i. Twenty-two and seven-eighths (22-⅞) inches top length;
ii. Fourteen and seven-eighths (14-⅞) inches top width;
iii. Twenty-one (21) inches bottom length;
iv. Thirteen (13) inches bottom width; and,
v. Twelve and three-eighths (12-⅜) inched height.

d. Barrel – A circular container with inside dimensions of no more than:

i. Twenty and one-half (20-½) inches top diameter;
ii. Eighteen (18) inches bottom diameter; and,
iii. Twenty-seven and one-half (27-½) inches height.

e. Any other container approved by order or written permission of the Commission.

The term “Crab Containers” includes and applies to baskets, bushels, or containers as referred to elsewhere in the Regulations of the Potomac River Fisheries Commission.

Sec. 2(c) Return of Incidental Catch — Effective 4/1/2027

Any crab which is prohibited or of a size less than permitted which may be caught as a result of other lawful activities shall be released and returned to the water. Provided however, a tolerance of four (4) undersized hard crabs per bushel, six (6) undersized hard crabs per lug, or ten (10) undersized hard crabs per barrel shall be allowed.

Sec. 6(a) Culling Container — Effective 4/1/2027

Each vessel shall be equipped with one and only one crab culling container, which shall not be a crab container. No crabs shall be in such container while the vessel is in transit and all crabs being transported on the Potomac shall be in crab containers.

REGULATION VIII and all subsections within Reg. VIII have been repealed due to dissolution of the Oyster Management Reserve Program.