

Crab Trap Tags Breakout Session

Overview

People are buying traps w/o necessarily knowing how to work the traps (e.g. vacationers who are buying a single trap to fish recreationally but w/o knowledge of trap function or bycatch issues). Idea is to have a tag that is permanently attached to the trap that talks about how it works.

- Zip tie attachment, or retailer has to actually put it on.
- Would have to be state-specific depending on diff laws associated with traps/crabbing, etc.
- Recreational crabber is less familiar with laws
- On tag, info about terrapins themselves, general info, here's what you can do...
- Is a permit/fishing license required to recreationally crab? Might be different depending on state... maybe up to 2-trap limit.
- Could be required information to be distributed when apply/get license
- Hurdles: finding vendors for the pots. Who is selling the pots? Every hardware store? Gas stations, etc? Lynn Henry – says he doesn't know many sellers who sale directly to recreational fishermen.
- Frequency of visiting vendors to give them the info and make sure they are giving it out to customers... might have to go every 2 weeks, or more/less frequent
- Is there different equipment depending on recreational or commercial fishing? A lot of different tweaks depending on the person who is doing the crabbing so need to have something that works for all different pots. They buy them standardized, but then tweak them after they buy them.
- Why can't traps be manufactured w/ smaller funnel?
- Might need to go directly to manufacturers to get them to include info.
- Could get public visibility through aquariums, rental companies/real estate info.
- Have to find out who sells the most traps.
- Community outreach efforts surrounded by high-rental areas; find nearby bait shops, etc.
- If we have a tag developed, whose responsibility is it to give the tags out, ensure that each year the tags are distributed, etc?
- What about regulations? Could marine fisheries depts., etc require that this a tag is attached to each pot?
- What info should be on a tag?
- How long can a terrapin hold breath? What are the facts surrounding survivability of terrapins in the traps?
- E.g. ability to provide recommended soak times, where traps are placed (e.g. small creeks vs larger water bodies)
- "Do you want to catch terrapins or crabs?"
- Soak time/check frequency – minimum of 2 times per day, possibly 4. (a.m./p.m.) (rec. by NC DMF)
- Even basic "please pull your trap out of the water after you are done using it" – don't leave it all week if you are gone b/t weekends. Don't leave them in the water.
- What to do with your trap at the end of your visit? Don't leave out in the open. Offer deposit refunds to customers from the vendors if they return their used pots at the end of the week.
- "Do not leave pot closed when left unattended on shore" "Please leave open when unattended"
- "Proper knot tying to keep your pot from floating away"
- Make the tag fun and interesting; create it w/ "vacation brain" in mind
- Big issue is not being able to touch ghost trap pots or any pots.

- If you do large-scale comm. outreach, likely that most of the people you talk to, most will not be crabbers, so you need to target a specific population.
- Is there a diff b/t commercial and recreational marking for traps & buoys? In NC, recreational buoys have to be hot pink, and commercial can be any other color. So is there a way to target just the recreational pots and would legislation be easier to address rec crabbers?
- However, regs are tough to change and touching crab pots/pvt property is a hot issue, so why not go w/ low hanging fruit and try to target people when they are receptive such as when they are purchasing traps.
- Additional ideas on what we want to tell them: key points? 4 bullet points, keep it simple.
- Part of pilot study – go to vendors and ask them what they think should be included/what they would be willing/not willing to distribute?
- Key points: (Terrapin-wise tips)
 - o Always leave trap in open position when left unattended
 - o Recommended check times/check rate (2-4 times/day)
 - o Appeal to the charisma of terrapin/species of concern
 - o Knot tying tips and making sure your trap is secure so you can retrieve it
 - o Info on where to return it – local metal recycling, or hardware stores
 - o DON'T LEAVE IN WATER WHEN DONE... key message
 - o Many animals get caught – overall bycatch issues
 - o Image of what bycatch looks like and what could get caught
 - o Keep it positive
 - o Successful crabbing tips/responsible use
 - o “If you cannot check your pot 2-4 times/day, please remove it from the water entirely in an open position.”
 - o Pot storage: store open, away from water in a covered/secure location.
- Part of a pilot study could involve testing different messages – would simple do/don't messages be better, or would environmental issues be more appealing to the crabbers?
- Keep messages positive b/c a lot of it is not intentional environmental neglect
- Have info on state website
- Where are recreational people getting their info on the rules/regs associated with fishing? Bait shops or word of mouth or other?
- What sort of literature are people getting (state-by-state) either when they get their licenses or other times?
- Have to rely a lot on personal responsibility of those who are crabbing to find out for themselves what the regs are.
- Action Items:
 - o Different messages to test out and possible language to include on the traps
 - o Target people w/ no knowledge of crabbing or terrapins to read/test messages
 - o Research trap distribution mechanisms – where are traps coming from? Who is making these, who is buying them? Ask for list of vendors or suppliers, or buyers.
 - o Jen: offering to take on for Northern SC coast... are there other target areas willing to do a pilot? Savannah (Tiffany Burgess, Michelle Calvo); April Alford (Wilmington)
 - o Need to coordinate w/ BRD group b/c if targeting pot manufacturers, vendors, etc at the same time about terrapin issues, should have a coordinated approach so that we aren't overwhelming or appearing like we are not coordinated/communicating with each other
 - o Find funding!

- Research/summarize what info is out there when searching for recreational crabbing info – are people who are *trying* to find info able to find anything that relates terrapin bycatch to crabbing?
- Interested People/Those in Group
 - Chris Voss
 - Lynn Henry
 - Monica Sokol
 - Abby Marlow
 - Peter King
 - Tiffany Burgess (TERPS) – Savannah TERPS aasuterps@gmail.com
 - April Alford (TERPS)
 - Michelle Calvo (TERPS)
 - Uli Umbehr (TERPS)

Q: are there any crabbers invited to meeting?