



Republic of the Philippines
Department of Agriculture
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY
Elliptical Road, Diliman
Quezon City, 1100 Philippines

**FISHERIES ADMINISTRATIVE
ORDER NO. 264
Series of 2020**

SUBJECT: REGULATION ON THE CATCHING, POSSESSION, TRANSPORTING, SELLING, TRADING AND EXPORTING OF MANGROVE CRABLETS, JUVENILE MANGROVE CRABS AND GRAVID MANGROVE CRABS (*Scylla spp.*)

WHEREAS, Section 2(c) of the Republic Act No. 8550 as amended by RA No. 10654 provides for the rational and sustainable development, management and conservation of the fishery and aquatic resources in Philippine waters including the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) and in the adjacent high seas, consistent with the primordial objective of maintaining a sound ecological balance, protecting and enhancing the quality of the environment;

WHEREAS, gathering of mangrove crablets to megalopa stage from the wild for aquaculture and exportation purposes had gone rampant and unregulated over the years, which may lead to stock depletion and growth overfishing;

WHEREAS, the three most common species of mangrove crabs in the Philippines are *Scylla serrata*, *S. tranquebarica* and *S. olivacea*. The *S. serrata* is the most prominent in aquaculture industry, the seeds/crablets of which are mainly collected from the wild;

WHEREAS, some areas in Northern Luzon, Bicol region, Eastern Visayas, Northern Mindanao, Caraga region, and Zamboanga region have already adopted regulations on gathering and trading of Mangrove crablets, including the prohibition on the collection and transport of "*langaw-langaw*" from the wild;

WHEREAS, studies showed that high mortality is evident during collection and transport of fly-size mangrove crabs. Furthermore, push net or scissor net are being used as the primary collection method. These collection methods catch juvenile of other species and contributes to environmental damage;

NOW THEREFORE, the following provisions of this Order are hereby adopted and implemented:

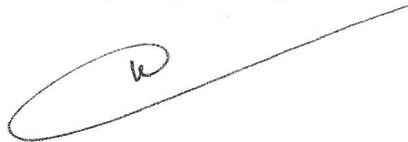
SECTION 1. Definition of Terms

For purposes of this regulation, the following terms and phrases shall mean or be understood as follows:

- 1) **Aquaculture** - farming of aquatic organisms which includes hatchery, nursery and grow-out of fish, molluscs, aquatic plants and crustaceans including mangrove crabs to enhance food production.
- 2) **BFAR** – Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources
- 3) **Breeders/Spawners** – mature mangrove crabs that are physiologically highly developed and ready to spawn or produce eggs and sperm for reproduction.
- 4) **Carapace Width (CW)** – the measurement of the width of the carapace or the “shell” on the back of the crab from side-to-side at the tip of the longest spine (see figure 1)
- 5) **Carapace Width at first maturity (CWm)** - width at maturity, defined as minimal size attained at maturity or the size at which 50% of the mangrove crabs at that size are mature.
- 6) **Gravid** – female mangrove crabs which is considered pregnant or carrying eggs in cluster at its belly.
- 7) **Growth overfishing** - is a form of biological overfishing where fish and other marine species are caught when they are immature or are harvested before their growth potential is fully reached that prevents the fishery to produce its maximum yield.
- 8) **Hatchery-bred** - mangrove crablets or juveniles that are hatched and reared in nurseries which are used as aquaculture seed.
- 9) **Juvenile mangrove crab** – size of the species that is less than 12 centimeters in Carapace Width (CW).
- 10) **Mangrove Crab** – refers to species of crab, locally known as *alimango*, belonging to Family *Portunidae*, Genus *Scylla* with an elliptical depressed carapace, with a well-defined *serrate anterior margin* and the last pair of peripods of which are broad and flattened at the end.
- 11) **Mangrove crablets** – early juvenile stage of a mangrove crabs with Carapace Width (CW) less than 5 cm. Also locally known as *langaw-langaw*, *kuto-kuto* and “alien”.
- 12) **Push Net or Scissors Net** – locally known as *sudsud*, *sakag*, *sayap*, *tangab*. A small triangular fishing net with a rigid frame that is pushed along the bottom in shallow waters.

SECTION 2. Registration of Mangrove Crablets Gatherers, Consolidators, Traders and Growers.

- a. The local government unit (LGU) through the Municipal or City Agriculture



Office (M/CAO) in consultation with the Fisheries and Aquatic Resource Management Council (FARMCs), shall maintain a Registry of Mangrove Crablets Gatherers, Consolidators, Traders and Growers.

- b. Such Registry shall be updated annually or as may be necessary, and shall be posted in Barangay Hall or other strategic locations where it shall be open to public inspection, and for the purpose of validating the correctness and completeness of the list.
- c. Registered consolidators, traders and growers shall only buy/collect mangrove crabs from gatherers registered under FishR and with license/permit from the LGU.

SECTION 3. Prohibition. It shall be unlawful for any person, association, cooperative, partnership or corporation to undertake the following:

- a. Catch, possess, transport, trade and sell mangrove crablets and mangrove crab juvenile, and mangrove crablets less than 12 centimeters CW from the wild;
- b. Catch, possess, transport, trade and sell gravid mangrove crab;
- c. Export of wild-sourced mangrove crablets and juvenile mangrove crabs; and
- d. Export of wild-sourced mangrove crabs breeders, spawners, eggs or fry as per provision of Section 104 of the amended Fisheries Code.

SECTION 4. Exemptions. The following acts are exempted from the above provisions:

- a. Catching, possession, transporting, selling and trading of live matchbox size crablets (5cm CW) and bigger for local aquaculture intended for grow out purposes;
- b. Catching, possession, transporting, selling and trading of live mangrove crabs of 12 centimeters CW and bigger as per Section 3a of this Order including gravid mangrove crabs for local aquaculture intended for hatchery purposes;
- c. Possession, transporting, selling and trading of live mangrove crabs of 10 cm CW and bigger which are sourced from the hatchery intended for the soft-shell crab market;
- d. Collection of mangrove crablets and gravid mangrove crabs for research and academic purposes is allowed provided that Permits to Conduct Research are secured from the Municipal/City Agriculture Office in Consultation with the FARMC and/or, if applicable, in compliance with the Fisheries Administrative Order No. 233 series of 2010; and,



- e. Transporting, selling and trading of hatchery-bred mangrove crablets are allowed, provided that the facilities are registered with BFAR and with certificate issued by the hatchery stating that crablets are hatchery-bred.

Provided that growers and collectors are registered/licensed/permitted and certified by the LGU. Moreover, the transport and trading of mangrove crabs for aquaculture purposes should be accompanied by Local Transport Permit (LTP) issued by Fisheries Quarantine Officers or Provincial Fisheries Officers. Provided further, the LGU through M/CAO in consultation with the FARMC shall maintain a registry of consolidators, gatherers, buyers and traders pursuant to Rule 19.1 and 19.3 of amended Fisheries Code. The catching or collection shall be in compliance with the guidelines recommended by the BFAR.

SECTION 5. Penal Clause. a. In case of violation of Sections 3(a), (b) and (c) the offender shall be subject to a fine of One hundred thousand pesos (P100,000.00) to Five million pesos (P5,000,000.00), depending on the socioeconomic impact and seriousness of the violation, volume and value of the fisheries product, damage to the environment due to the violation, and the habituality of the offender, in accordance with Sec 128 of the amended Fisheries Law.

b. In case of violation of Section 3 Paragraph (d) or the exportation of wild-sourced mangrove crabs breeders, spawners, eggs or fry, the offender, upon a summary finding of administrative liability, shall be punished with an administrative fine equivalent to three (3) times the value of the wild-sourced mangrove crabs breeders, spawners, eggs, or fry exported or One hundred thousand pesos (P100,000.00) to Five hundred thousand pesos (P500,000.00), whichever is higher, confiscation of breeders, spawners, eggs or fry, suspension or revocation of license for commercial fishing and/or registration as exporter.

Upon conviction by a court of law, the offender shall be punished by imprisonment of eight (8) years to ten (10) years, confiscation of wild-sourced mangrove crabs breeders, spawners, eggs or fry, a fine equivalent to twice the amount of the administrative fine, revocation of the fishing license, and/or suspension or revocation of registration as exporter.

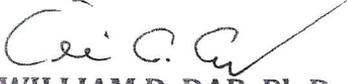
SECTION 6. Repealing clause. All Orders, rules and regulations inconsistent with this Order shall be deemed revoked.

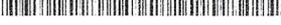
SECTION 7. Separability Clause. If any portion or provision of this Order is declared unconstitutional or invalid, the other sections or provisions thereof which are not affected thereby shall continue to be in full force and effect.

SECTION 8. Effectivity. This Order shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the official gazette and/or in two (2) newspapers of general circulation.



Issued this 22nd day of JANUARY 2020 at Quezon City, Metro Manila, Philippines


WILLIAM D. DAR, Ph.D.
Secretary
Department of Agriculture

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

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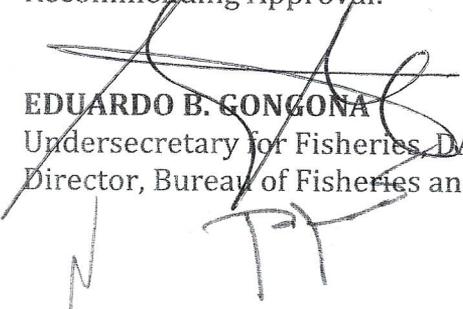

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Figure 1. Diagram for the measurement of carapace width of mangrove crabs

