

(3) In determining the number of peelers measuring less than 3 inches across the shell from tip to tip of the spike, the Department shall select the minimum number of bushels or floats necessary to be representative of the person's catch.

(c) (1) [A] **EXCEPT AS PROVIDED IN PARAGRAPH (2) OF THIS SUBSECTION, A person may not catch or possess soft crabs measuring less than three and one-half inches across the shell from tip to tip of the spike.**

(2) (I) THIS PARAGRAPH APPLIES UNTIL THE DEPARTMENT ADOPTS REGULATIONS UNDER PARAGRAPH (3) OF THIS SUBSECTION.

(II) A PERSON MAY POSSESS A BYCATCH OF SOFT CRABS MEASURING LESS THAN THREE AND ONE-HALF INCHES ACROSS THE SHELL FROM TIP TO TIP OF THE SPIKE ~~IF THE BYCATCH IS NOT GREATER THAN ONE UNDERSIZED SOFT CRAB PER DOZEN SOFT CRABS POSSESSED IN ACCORDANCE WITH REGULATIONS ADOPTED BY THE DEPARTMENT~~ IF THE BYCATCH IS NOT GREATER THAN ONE UNDERSIZED SOFT CRAB PER DOZEN SOFT CRABS POSSESSED.

(3) (I) THE DEPARTMENT SHALL ADOPT REGULATIONS ESTABLISHING AND GOVERNING A PERMISSIBLE BYCATCH FOR SOFT CRABS UNDER THIS SUBSECTION.

(II) THE REGULATIONS THAT THE DEPARTMENT ADOPTS UNDER THIS PARAGRAPH MAY NOT BE MORE RESTRICTIVE THAN THE APPLICABLE RESTRICTIONS ON THE PERMISSIBLE BYCATCH FOR HARD CRABS AND PEELER CRABS.

(d) In the waters of Worcester County, a person may not catch, possess, or keep in floats any fat crabs, or any crab known as snot crab, green crab, or buckram crab.

(e) The minimum size of crabs does not apply to mature female crabs, identified by the rounded apron.

(f) The provisions of subsection (a) do not apply to crabs imported into Maryland during the closed season for catching crabs if the person possessing the imported crabs has a certificate of origin.

(g) Once taken, peelers shall be kept separate from other crabs.

SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That, on or before October 1, 2007, the Department of Natural Resources shall adopt regulations establishing and