



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



