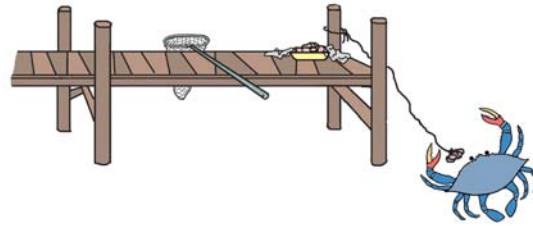




# Crab Lines



Dear Friends,

I would like to inform you about a new and upcoming program, “Louisiana’s Ghost Crab Trap Removal Program”. The Barataria-Terrebonne National Estuary Program is supporting this Department of Wildlife and Fisheries’ program and we are hoping to get as many volunteers as possible to help.

I know many of you are thinking, “What on earth is a Ghost Crab Trap?” Well, by definition, a ghost crab trap is any trap that is not being actively fished. A Ghost Crab Trap may be an old, bent, barnacle-encrusted trap without a buoy or float or it may even be a relatively new trap with a line and buoy still attached. You may see ghost traps referred to as “derelict” traps.

Almost anyone working or playing outdoors in south Louisiana has seen or had encounters with a ghost crab trap. There are some rather negative impacts from these “lost” traps. Crabs, and even fish still can enter them where they die. Once dead, they become bait and attract more crabs and fish. They also die and the cycle continues. Biologists believe that there are significant impacts to crab populations from ghost crab traps. The ghost traps can also cause user group conflicts with shrimpers and other water-based groups and they can be navigational hazards to boaters. Lastly, they can be eyesores.

Several of our neighboring states along the Gulf have had a lot of success over the last 2 years with a program designed to reduce the numbers of ghost traps. Our own La. Department of Wildlife and Fisheries has been working on developing a Louisiana ghost crab trap collection effort. The BTNEP, the La. Crab Task Force, the Coastal Conservation Association, the Louisiana Wildlife Federation, and Louisiana Sea Grant have endorsed the effort and are helping with the planning. This program will center on a temporary crab trap closure within a defined area and removal of remaining ghost or “derelict” crab traps by volunteers.

A ghost trap “sweep” within the Barataria-Terrebonne National Estuary is planned to begin on February 28, 2004 and end on March 14, 2004. That’s a 16-day period during which crab fishing will be closed within a portion of upper Terrebonne Bay (Bayou Lafourche to Bayou Grand Caillou). A map of the closure area, regulations, and

additional information about the proposed ghost crab trap sweep is available at [www.blue-crab.net/derelict.html](http://www.blue-crab.net/derelict.html).


The LDWF's ghost trap removal program will be patterned after local "beach sweep" projects and "ghost trap sweeps" in other Gulf States -- that is, it will be volunteer based. This is an excellent opportunity for everyone who enjoys or works in our coastal waters to help to make a difference. The ghost crab trap sweeps held in Texas and Alabama were very successful because there were a lot of volunteers to help collect the traps. So, we are asking you to volunteer if at all possible.

The primary "volunteer" days are scheduled for the first two Saturdays of the closure (February 28 and March 6), although crab traps may be retrieved at other times as specified earlier. If either "volunteer" day is cancelled due to inclement weather, then Saturday, March 13, will be substituted.

LDWF personnel will be present at each disposal site on February 28 and March 6 beginning at 7:00 a.m. to provide additional instructions, maps, incentives (including a T-Shirt from the Estuary Program), and supplies (tarps, grappling hooks, garbage bags, and gloves) to the volunteers.

If you would like additional information or would like to volunteer, please contact Vince Guillory by phone [985-594-4139] or via email [mailto:guillory\\_v@wlf.state.la.us](mailto:guillory_v@wlf.state.la.us)

With Warm Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kerry M. St. Pé". The signature is written in a cursive style with a clear, legible font.

Kerry St. Pé  
Program Director