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## DIGEST

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HB 355 Original

2019 Regular Session

Gisclair

**Abstract:** Prohibits the taking of immature female crabs and provides for enhanced penalties for certain crab fishing violations.

Present law prohibits the taking of adult crabs in the berry stage. Proposed law also prohibits the taking of immature female crabs.

Present law provides that most crab fishing violations are class four violations punishable as follows:

1st offense between \$400 & \$950      or      imprisonment for more than 120 days, or both.

2nd offense between \$750 & \$999      &      imprisonment between 90 and 180 days.

3rd offense or more between  
\$1,000 & \$5,000      &      imprisonment between 180 days and 2 years.

Provides forfeiture of anything seized in connection with the violation.

Proposed law adds to the class four punishments the following enhancements for theft of crab traps or crabs from within a trap:

1st offense:      Suspension of crab gear license for one year; 40 hours community service; mandatory use of an approved vessel monitoring system (VMS) on any vessel used by the violator for the one-year suspension period.

2nd offense:      Suspension of crab gear license for three years; 90 hours community service; mandatory use of an approved VMS on any vessel used by the violator for the three-year suspension period.

3rd offense:      Suspension of crab gear license for 10 years; 120 hours community service; prohibited from being on a vessel fishing crabs for duration of the suspension.

(Amends R.S. 56:332(B), (F), and (H))