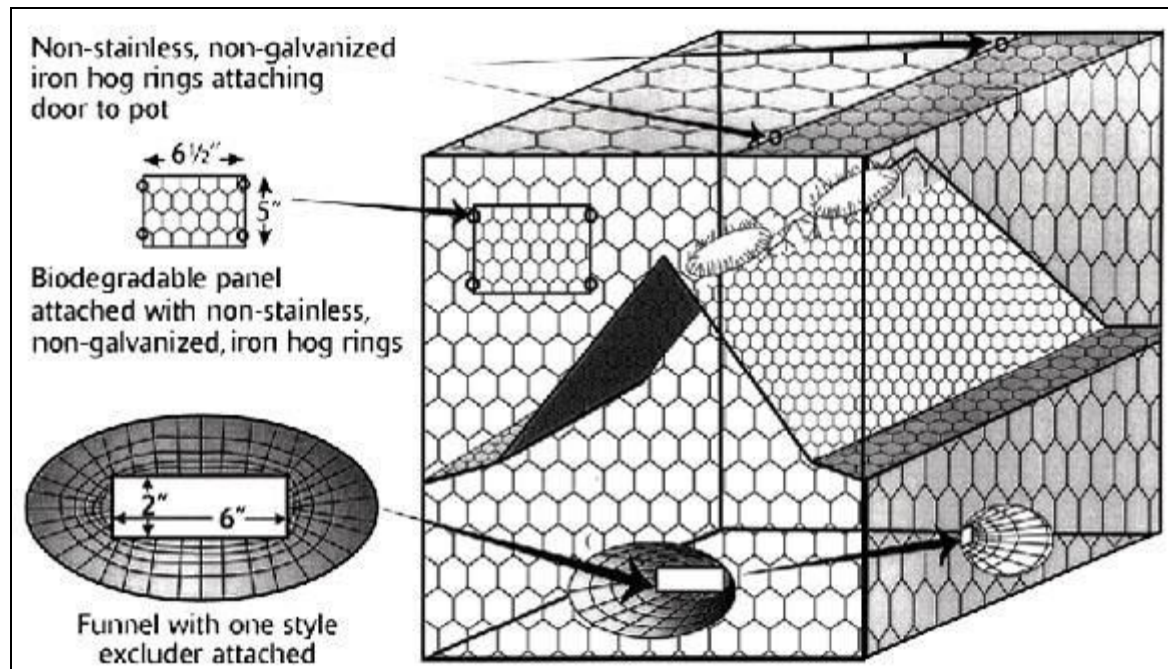


Buck's Online

The Watermen: Crab Pot

Pictured below: Diagram of a crab pot.



NJ Wildlife. *Chesapeake-Style Crab Pot*. Illustration. New Jersey Marine Digest. Accessed August 2, 2020.

<http://www.eregulations.com/newjersey/fishing/19njmd/shellfish-crab-information/>.

The crab pot has a misleading name; the above tool is actually not a pot, but more of a crate structure. Of all crab-catching techniques, crab pots have caught the largest percentage of the Chesapeake Bay's blue crab since the 1950s (7). The crab pot was patented in 1938, and in the following decades it surpassed all other competing tools in the Chesapeake region (7). Licenses to catch Chesapeake blue crabs have been required for fishermen since 1898, and in 1943 the number of crab pot gear per license was limited in order to support blue crab conservation efforts. Guinea watermen must abide by these regulations. By the 1960s, the crab pot was labeled a commercial gear and their standard was regulated (7). These limits and license requirements are still in effect in Virginia today, albeit changed a bit.

The crab pot is still dominantly popular throughout the Chesapeake and a common tool among the Guinea watermen. Several Guinea watermen families, including the Greens and the Jenkins reported to local records that they used and use crab pots in their work (8, 9). The crab pot is an example of a constant tool in the waterman trade, and it also provides an example as to how state regulation over even one tool affects local practices.

This item was donated by Nan Belvin McComber in honor of Captains Dick Belvin, Frank Belvin Sr., Frank Belvin Jr., and Carroll Belvin. The donation information alone shows that local Guinea watermen could pass down their occupation and craft within the family; additionally, the destination of Carroll Belvin as a captain alongside her male relatives indicates the watermen/captain position was not limited to male family members.