

## **Commercial Crabbers Operating Within Private Eden Isles Waterways Are Subject To Criminal Trespassing Laws**

In 2014, the issue of commercial crabbers using Eden Isles waterways came up and the Louisiana State Attorney's Office specifically ruled the Eden Isles canals are private and owners may have a civil cause of action for trespass against crabbers who have placed crab traps in the canal without authorization.

Note: crab traps sit on the bottom of the waterways and Eden Isles residents own that water bottom along with its mineral rights. In the opinion of the Louisiana State Attorney's Office, crabbers who have placed crab traps on the canal water bottoms without authorization from the landowner are subject to civil action for trespassing.

Recently, the St. Tammany Parish Sheriff's Dept. was notified of "commercial" crabbers placing traps on private property without obtaining the owner's permission. The residents complained that the traps were "obstructing" the Eden Isles waterways, and preventing "safe" recreational boating and fishing. Acting upon resident complaints, and in accordance with the Louisiana State Attorney's Office's ruling, the Sheriff's Dept. had the commercial crab traps removed from the private waterways.

It should be noted that there is no objection to respectful "recreational" use of Eden Isles waterways for boating or fishing, however, crabbers "obstructing" private waterways, and preventing "safe" recreational boating or fishing are subject to criminal trespassing laws.

In the future, if a crabber places a trap on your property without your permission you may contact Deputy Thomas Wood with the St. Tammany Parish Sheriff's Dept., Marine division at [ThomasWood@stpso.com](mailto:ThomasWood@stpso.com) or 985- 898-2340 for assistance in having the traps removed.

This information is presented as a public service to clarify the issue, and to keep the information factual and respectful.