

NEWS RELEASE

Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife

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Commercial Dungeness crab season opens Jan. 4

NEWPORT, Ore. – Fresh Oregon Dungeness crab is back on the menu after fishery managers determined the fishery is ready to open Jan. 4 along the entire Oregon coast.

Fishery managers exercised an abundance of caution in opening the crab season this year due to unusual levels of domoic acid found in crabs along Oregon's southern coast. The month-long delay in opening the season allowed for additional testing for domoic acid in order to provide confidence that crab harvested from Oregon waters are safe to consume and of excellent quality.

"Along with the state agencies, the Oregon commercial Dungeness crab industry has taken a very proactive and precautionary approach to the opening of this crab season in the interest of public safety," says Caren Braby, ODFW Marine Resources Program Manager.

Testing of crab in recent weeks show the elevated levels of domoic acid in the southern half of the state have decreased and are all below U.S. Food and Drug Administration alert levels for three sample periods in a row. Based on these results and consultations with the Oregon Department of Agriculture, the Oregon commercial crab industry and Washington and California Departments of Fish and Wildlife, the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife is opening the ocean commercial Dungeness crab season along the entire Oregon coast just after the New Year, Jan 4.

Commercial crab boat lights will start dotting the horizon Jan. 1 as boats are allowed to set gear three days prior to the fishery opening. The recreational harvest of Dungeness crab in Oregon's bays and ocean is currently open coastwide.

As the season gets underway, state agencies will continue to monitor marine biotoxins in shellfish to ensure that the concentrations remain below the alert level to ensure the consumer safety.

For more information about Oregon's shellfish marine biotoxin monitoring, call ODA's shellfish safety information hotline at (800) 448-2474 or visit the ODA shellfish closures web page at:

<http://www.oregon.gov/ODA/programs/FoodSafety/Shellfish/Pages/ShellfishClosures.aspx>.

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