

NEWS RELEASE

Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife

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State delays Dungeness crab season coastwide

NEWPORT, Ore. – The traditional Dec. 1 opening of the commercial Dungeness crab season along the entire Oregon coast will be delayed due to concerns about domoic acid levels in some areas. During recent testing, domoic acid in crab viscera from the Garibaldi area was above the alert level that normally triggers action. In addition, the overall trend indicates domoic acid in other areas may be increasing as well.

Based on these results and consultations with the Oregon Department of Agriculture (ODA), the Oregon commercial Dungeness crab industry, and Washington and California departments of Fish and Wildlife, the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) is exercising an abundance of caution and delaying the ocean commercial Dungeness crab season along the entire Oregon coast.

“Oregon’s commercial crab industry and the department place a high priority on making sure that seafood consumers can be confident that they are buying a safe, high-quality and sustainable product when they purchase Oregon Dungeness crab,” said Caren Braby, ODFW Marine Resource Program Manager.

ODFW will continue to work closely with ODA and the Oregon commercial Dungeness crab industry to test crab along the coast to ensure an opening of the commercial crab season on safe and high quality crab. In close coordination with ODA and the Oregon commercial Dungeness crab industry, ODFW plans to evaluate options for opening the commercial season once additional domoic acid test results are available.

Despite the delay, crab and shellfish products sold in retail markets and restaurants remain safe for consumers.

All recreational and commercial harvest of Dungeness and red rock crab in Oregon’s bays is currently closed south of Tillamook Head (just south of Seaside) due to elevated levels of domoic acid. The opening of recreational crab harvest in the ocean and bays will be decided pending additional domoic acid testing.

Domoic acid or amnesic shellfish toxin can cause minor to severe illness and even death. Severe poisoning can result in dizziness, headaches, vomiting and diarrhea. More severe cases can result in memory loss and death. Shellfish toxins are produced by algae and originate in the ocean. Toxins cannot be removed by cooking, freezing or any other treatment. For more information on toxin closures, 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>.