

## **NEWS RELEASE**

Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife

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### **State continues delay of Dungeness crab season coastwide**

NEWPORT, Ore. – The opening of the commercial Dungeness crab season along the Oregon coast continues to be delayed due to concerns about domoic acids levels in the southern half of the state. While recent testing showed domoic acid in crabs in all areas to be below levels that normally trigger action, the overall trend indicates domoic acid in the southern half of the state has increased over the past two weeks and are near the action level.

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 continuing the delay of 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 Kelly Corbett, ODFW commercial crab project leader.

ODFW will continue to work closely with ODA and the Oregon commercial Dungeness crab industry to test crab in the southern half of the state. In close coordination with ODA, fishery managers from Washington and California 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, Corbett said.

All recreational harvest of Dungeness crab in Oregon’s bays and ocean is currently closed south of Heceta Head due to elevated levels of domoic acid. Recreational harvest of crab in bays and ocean north of Heceta Head remains open. The opening of the recreational crab harvest in the ocean off Oregon south of Heceta Head will be decided pending additional domoic acid test.

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>.

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