

Crab harvesting reopens on a portion of Oregon coast

November 22, 2017... The Oregon Department of Agriculture and the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife announce the reopening of recreational and commercial bay crabbing from the north jetty of the Coquille River to the north jetty of Coos Bay. The reopening includes crab harvested in bays and estuaries, and on beaches, docks, piers, and jetties. Crab samples taken from the area indicate levels of domoic acid have dropped and remain below the alert level.

The recreational crabbing season in the ocean closed coast-wide on October 16.

Crab harvesting remains closed from the California border to the north jetty of the Coquille River (including the Coquille estuary), and from Tahkenitch Creek (north of Winchester Bay) to Cape Foulweather (north of Newport). Crabbing north of Cape Foulweather to the Columbia River remains open in bays and estuaries, and on beaches, docks, piers, and jetties.

Today's test results and health advisory come at a complicated time of year for Oregon's crab fisheries. By rule, December 1 is Oregon's earliest annual start for ocean crabbing, for both commercial and recreational fisheries. However, this year, due to low crab meat yield and elevated levels of biotoxins in some areas, much of Oregon's ocean area remains closed to crabbing after December 1. Additional testing for meat yield and biotoxin levels will continue at least through the end of December.

For both recreational and commercial crab fishermen, below is a simple guide for what is currently open and closed. Before you go crabbing, please confirm the status of ODFW/ODA harvest areas relative to concerns about elevated biotoxins at the website below.

- **Recreational crabbing** – currently open in all bays and estuaries that are not under the health advisory; opens after December 1 in ocean areas where biotoxins are below the alert level.
- **Commercial ocean crabbing** – Delayed in all areas until at least December 16.
- **Commercial bay crabbing** – 1-week opener in Coos Bay: Just in time for Thanksgiving weekend, commercial bay crabbing is re-opened in Coos Bay; commercial bay crabbing remains closed from the California border to the north jetty of the Coquille River (including the Coquille estuary), and from Tahkenitch Creek to Cape Foulweather. Commercial bay crabbing remains open at this time in bays and estuaries, and on beaches, docks, piers, and jetties within the areas that are not under the health advisory.

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- All commercial bay crabbing will be closed as of December 1 along with the delayed season for the commercial ocean fishery, according to existing ODFW rules. This year, the commercial ocean fishery is delayed from December 1 until at least December 16.

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

For more information, 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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