

Crabbing



Best Time of Year:

Crab Pots:
Open Dec.1 through Sept. 15.
Crab gear other than pots:
Open all year.

Time Frame:

15 minutes to all day

Cost: All persons 15 and older must wear a current shellfish/seaweed license. Resident licenses are less than \$10; Non-resident licenses are about \$20.

Bring:

Crab pot or net, tub or net to carry your catch, license, bait

Directions:

See text for step by step directions to favorite crabbing spots

For More Information:

Long Beach Peninsula Visitors Bureau
1-800-451-2542 or funbeach.com
Washington Department
of Fish and Wildlife
360-902-2200
<http://www.wa.gov/wdfw>

Port of Ilwaco
(360) 642-3143

Port of Peninsula at Nahcotta
(360) 665-4547

This document is general information; sport crabbers are strongly encouraged to contact WDFW for the most current and complete regulations.

Several species of crab are found on the Long Beach Peninsula, though only a few are large enough to be of commercial and sport interest. Crabs are crustaceans, having an exterior skeleton or shell. Two crab species (Dungeness and red rock) are harvested locally. Crabs are commonly harvested with crab pots, but also caught using ring nets, dip nets, and by wading in shallow water during spring and early summer.

SPECIES

• Dungeness Crab (*Cancer magister*)

The shell is purple-tinged, grayish-brown on the back, with white tipped claws. The Dungeness crab can reach ten inches across the back, with six to seven inches being more common. The Dungeness crab prefers sandy or muddy substrates. Crab must be at least 6". Limit: 6 males. Must retain back shell while in the field. Must release all softshell, females and undersized crab. Catch record card required.

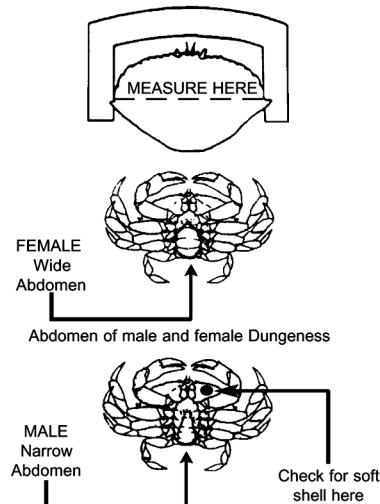
• Red (Rock) Crab (*Cancer productus*)

Another species similar to, but smaller than the Dungeness, is the red crab, rock crab, or red rock crab. Since this crab usually measures less than six inches across the back, it is less meaty than the Dungeness. It does have delicious meat, however, and is characterized by large claws. It can be distinguished from the Dungeness by the presence of black on the tips of its pinchers and by its red coloration and prefers rocky substrates. Crab must be at least 5". Limit: 6 crab of either sex. Must retain back shell while in the field. Must release all softshell.

More

Where and How to Measure for Minimum Size

Caliper measurement at the widest part of the shell just in front of rear-most point or tips.

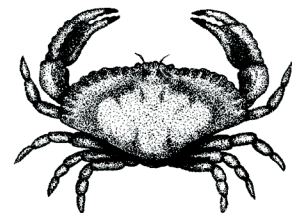


Dungeness Crab



White-tipped claws, brownish shell

Red Rock Crab



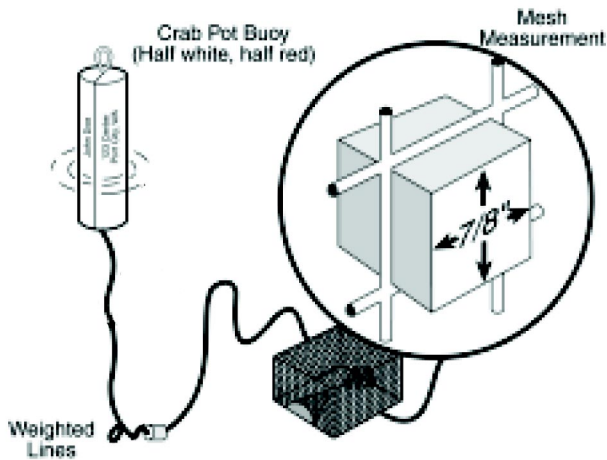
Black-tipped claws, reddish shell, shell much wider than long

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Crabbing

- continued -



TOOLS

Each fisherman may use two (2) pots or nets per day.

- Crab pots - Sport fishermen can purchase mesh pots or use their ingenuity to rig up pots of netting or wire mesh over an iron frame. Crab pots must be closed using untreated 100% cotton or other natural fiber no larger than thread size 120 or 1/8-inch. This cord must be able to rot away and allow crab to escape freely if the pot is lost. Crab pots are generally set in 20 to 150 feet of water and are located by an attached buoy. Sport crabbers must use red and white buoys marked with their first and last name as well as permanent address.

- Ring nets - This is basically a basket made from two iron hoops and cotton or nylon mesh. The bait is anchored to the bottom meshes. The rings lie flat on the bottom allowing the crab easy access to the bait. When the net is hauled up quickly to the surface, a basket is formed temporarily trapping the crab. These nets are increasingly popular with sport crabbers fishing from docks. The nets are checked every 15 to 30 minutes.
- Wading with short-handled dip nets - This method involves wading through shallow water at low tide and searching for legal-size crabs. The wader generally tows a small tub or gunny sack to hold his catch so that both hands will be free to use the dip net.

BAIT

Generally used are herring, rockfish carcasses, salmon heads, or clams.

LICENSE

All persons 15 or older must wear their current shellfish/seaweed license while harvesting crab. Licenses may be purchased online through WDFW or at the following locations on the Peninsula:

Ilwaco: CoHo Charters, Ed's Bait & Tackle, Fort Canby Store, Pacific Salmon Charters

Seaview: Short Stop Store, Deli & Shell Gasoline

Long Beach: Dennis Company, Pioneer Market

WHERE TO CRAB

Both the Port of Ilwaco and the Port of Peninsula (at Nahcotta) are excellent spots for dropping a crab pot or using a ring net. Check with your favorite local bait shop for additional locations and seasonal hot spots.

The Port of Peninsula is located in Nahcotta at the end of 273rd Street at Sandridge Road. From the blinking light in downtown Ocean Park, travel east to Sandridge Road and turn left. Proceed approximately 12 blocks and turn right onto 273rd. The marina is on your left.

The Port of Ilwaco is located on Howerton Avenue in Ilwaco. From the stoplight in downtown Ilwaco, proceed south for 3 blocks and follow the road as it makes a 90-degree turn and becomes Howerton Avenue. Park along Howerton and walk between the buildings to the marina.

