

Recreational Dungeness crab Fishery Now Open Statewide, Commercial to Follow in Seven Days

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<https://cdfgnews.wordpress.com/2016/05/19/recreational-dungeness-crab-fishery-now-open-statewide-commercial-to-follow-in-seven-days/>

The last remaining stretch of coast is open to the recreational fishery today and will open to the commercial fishery on May 26, after a seven day notice period. Today the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) and the Fish and Game Commission (Commission) were notified by the director of the Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment (OEHHA), after consultation with the director of the California Department of Public Health (CDPH), that it recommends lifting the last remaining closure of the Dungeness crab fishery (between a line extending due west from 40° 46.15' N latitude, the west end of the north jetty at the entrance of Humboldt Bay and north to the southern boundary line at 41° 17.6' N latitude of the [Reading Rock State Marine Conservation Area](#) near Redwood Creek). Now the entire California coast is open to the recreational fishery.

The commercial fishery in this same closure will open accordingly seven days from today at 12:01 a.m. on Thursday, May 26 with a presoak period on Monday, May 23 at 8:01 a.m.

With the last remaining portion of the commercial Dungeness crab fishery opening next week, CDFW reminds commercial and recreational fishing fleets of the [Best Practices Guide](#) available to download that provides tips for reducing incidences of whale entanglements with crab trap gear. All anglers are strongly encouraged to download the guide and observe best practices. This guide was produced by the Dungeness Crab Fishing Gear Working Group and was a collaborative effort between commercial crabbers, state and federal agencies, and non-profit organizations.

CDFW also reminds crabbers of the recent [FAQ](#) in order to conduct an orderly fishery. This FAQ covers topics about transiting through the current closure area to land crab and the recommended procedures for crab catch on board during the pre-soak period for those not bound by the fair start provision. Since the commercial fishery opened in Fishing Districts 6 and 7 on May 12, those bound by the Fair Start Provision will not be able to set gear and begin fishing in both districts, including the newly opened closure area described above, until the 30 day waiting period ends on Saturday June 11, 2016.

Due to the late start of the season there are also concerns over the take of soft-shelled crab. The commercial fleet should avoid taking crab that are not marketable and abide by Fish and Game Code Section 7704 that makes it unlawful to cause or permit waste of a fished resource. CDFW encourages all crabbers, buyers and processors to closely coordinate to minimize the chance of wasting any crab and violating Fish and Game Code Section 7704.

The delayed opening of the Dungeness crab fishery may concentrate effort at a time that could increase conflict with other active fisheries, for instance the salmon fishery. CDFW advises that all work together and adjust their fishing practices to avoid or minimize these conflicts.

Given the increasing reports of soft shelled crab and the unique circumstances this year that have led to unprecedented levels of fishing effort this late in the season, CDFW has concluded that it will not extend the season pursuant to Fish and Game Code Section 8277. The recreational Dungeness crab season in Del Norte, Humboldt and Mendocino counties will close July 30. The recreational Dungeness crab season will close June 30 in counties south of Mendocino County. The commercial fishery will close in Fish and Game Districts 6, 7, 8 and 9 on July 15. All other areas of the state will close to commercial Dungeness crab fishing on June 30.

Areas **open** to crab fishing include:

- Recreational Dungeness crab fishery open statewide from California/Oregon border to the California/Mexico border.
- On **May 26, 2016** Commercial Dungeness crab fishery open statewide from California/Oregon border to the California/Mexico border (which includes all previously opened areas).
- Commercial fishery currently open along mainland coast south of 40° 46.15' N lat., at the Humboldt Bay entrance, Humboldt County to the California/Mexico border and north of 41° 17.6' N lat. at the southern boundary of the [Reading Rock SMCA](#) (near Redwood Creek), Humboldt County to the California/Oregon border.
- Commercial and recreational rock crab fisheries are open along the mainland coast south of 36° 58.72' N Lat. at Sand Hill Bluff, Santa Cruz County (approximately 9 miles north of Santa Cruz Harbor Entrance)
- Commercial and recreational rock crab fisheries are open in state waters of the Channel Islands except for an exclusion area between Santa Cruz and Santa Rosa islands (see coordinates below)

Areas **closed** to rock crab fishing include:

- Commercial and recreational rock crab fisheries are closed north of 36° 58.72' N lat. and in state waters between Santa Cruz and Santa Rosa islands within an exclusion area bounded by straight lines connecting the following points in the order listed:
 - (1) 34° 7.75' N lat. 120° 0.00' W long.;
 - (2) 34° 7.75' N lat. 119° 50.00' W long.;
 - (3) 33° 53.00' N lat. 119° 50.00' W long.;
 - (4) 33° 53.00' N lat. 120° 0.00' W long.; and
 - (5) 34° 7.75' N lat. 120° 0.00' W long.

CDFW will continue to closely coordinate with CDPH, OEHHA and fisheries representatives to extensively monitor domoic acid levels in rock crabs to determine when the fishery can safely be opened throughout the state.

[OEHHA Memo](#)

Media Contact:

Jordan Traverso, CDFW Communications, (916) 654-9937