

# Oregon

## *A Great Catch!*

### How to Crab

#### **KIDS UNDER 14 DO NOT NEED A LICENSE.**

- 🦀 People 14 and older require a shellfish license for crabbing. Resident annual licenses and nonresident 3-day licenses are available at local ODFW offices and at many sporting goods or hardware stores. Please review the Oregon Sport Fishing Regulations for all regulations before you head out.

#### **Time of year**

- 🦀 Fall is typically the best time to crab. Beginning in September, crabs tend to be more “filled out”, meaning there is a higher percentage of meat. This is determined by the condition of the shell. Hard-shelled crabs contain 20 to 30 percent meat by weight, compared to soft-shelled crabs, which can be as low as 12 percent.
- 🦀 At times, after heavy rainfall and resulting freshets, crab tend to be less abundant in the bays.

#### **Time of day**

- 🦀 Slack water (the time around high or low tide) are the best times to crab. During slack water, crabs are generally walking around and foraging since they are not getting pushed around by tidal exchange.

#### **Where to Rent Your Crab Pot**

- 🦀 Businesses all along the coast rent crab pots and crab rings. Check the local chambers of commerce or visitor centers for the business nearest you. An internet search will also yield a number of businesses that sell or rent crab gear.

#### **Prepare for crabbing**

- 🦀 Make sure you have your shellfish license, crab measuring tool, pots or rings, cooler, gloves, bait holders and bait supply.
- 🦀 Check all lines on crab pots or rings for kinks or knots to ensure they are durable and will allow

gear to work correctly. Make sure your gear is properly marked. Use sinking line to avoid having your line sucked up into a boat's propeller.

#### **Baiting your gear**

- 🦀 Many different types of bait are used for crabbing: turkey, chicken, mink, fish carcass, shad, herring, clams, etc. Fresh bait is best.
- 🦀 There are many ways of securing your crab bait to the inside of your crabbing gear. As long as the bait stays in the gear when crabbing, and the crabs can get to it, most methods will work.
- 🦀 Keep in mind that seals and sea lions will eat attractive bait that they can access (e.g. laying out on a crab ring). You can avoid this problem by using a bait bag, using bait that they don't eat (e.g. turkey legs), or avoiding areas where they are prevalent.

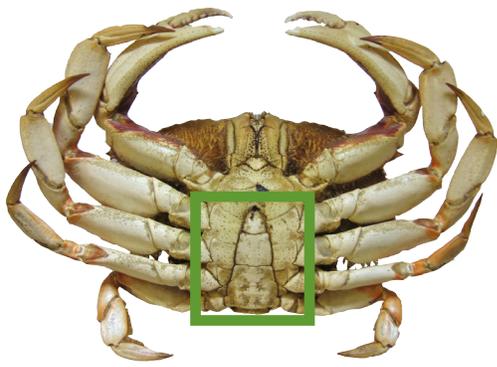
#### **Setting your gear and soak time**

- 🦀 Tie the end of your crab line to the dock or pier from where you are crabbing.
- 🦀 Throw your crab pot or ring in the water and start crabbing.
- 🦀 Allow between one to two hours before retrieving your gear if you are crabbing with crab pots and 15 to 30 minutes if you are crabbing with rings.

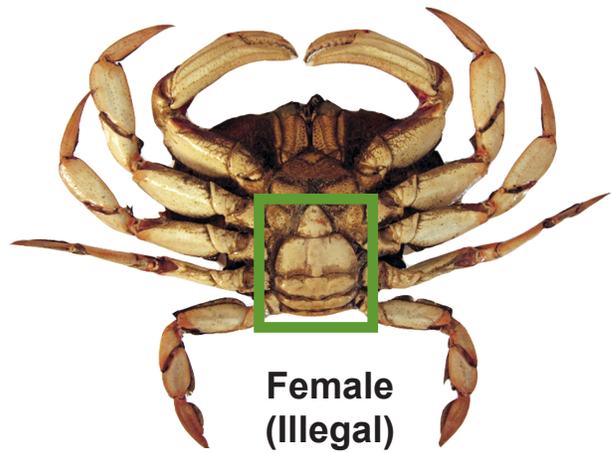
#### **Retrieving crab gear**

- 🦀 Grab your crab line below where you have attached to the dock or pier and proceed pulling your crab ring or pot to the surface.
- 🦀 When crabbing with rings, remember to retrieve at a consistent speed in order to keep the sides of the ring over the crabs so they're retained within the ring.

*(continued on back)*



**Male  
(Legal)**



**Female  
(Illegal)**

### Sorting crabs

- Quickly sort through crab, being careful to not break crab legs or get your fingers pinched.
- An experienced crab handler will sort crabs by keeping them at ease. They want to get out, but they don't want to be forcefully grabbed. A quick shake of the pot is often more effective than reaching directly for them.
- Be sure to carefully and quickly release crab, do not throw them from heights as this will often crack their carapace and kill them. It is illegal to retain only the claws on all species.

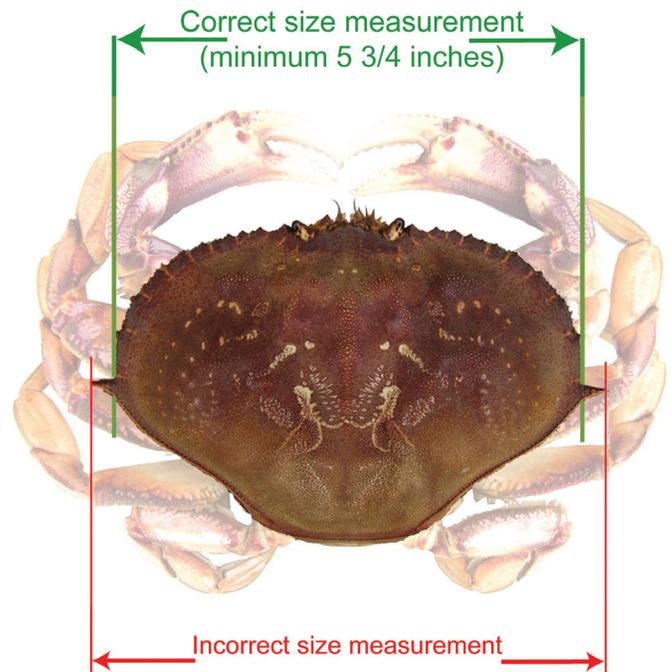
- Releasing "soft shell" crab is strongly recommended. Soft shelled crab are newly molted and are essentially a small crab in a big crab's body. Meat pick out can be very low (as little as half that of a crab in good condition) and the quality of the meat is usually stringy and less palatable.

### Making sure your crabs are LEGAL

- With a crab gauge, measure all male Dungeness crab retained. Retain no more than 12 male dungeness crab per shellfish license that are 5 3/4" inches across (NOT including the points) or wider.
- When measuring make sure you measure in a straight line across the back immediately in front of, but NOT including, the last points.

### Keeping your crab quality

- Store legal-sized (keeper) crabs in a cooler with ice or ice packs, or in a bucket or cooler with water.
- If you keep your crabs in bucket or cooler with water, make sure to change the water frequently to keep the water cool and oxygenated. And make sure the water is seawater - freshwater will kill crabs.



**Proper measurement is across the carapace INSIDE and NOT including the widest points.**

<http://www.dfw.state.or.us/MRP/shellfish/crab/>

