

2015-16 Commercial Crab Fishing Timeline

Rock Crab Season Openers

Commercial rock crab season is usually open all year.

1. On December 31, 2105 the commercial rock crab fishery opened along the mainland California coast south of 35° 40' N Latitude (Piedras Blancas Light Station).
2. On March 28, 2106 the commercial rock crab fishery rock crab opened in state waters near the Channel Islands. However, a closure still remains in effect in state waters between Santa Cruz and Santa Rosa Islands within an exclusion area.
3. On April 22, 2016 commercial rock crab fisheries opened along the mainland coast south of 36° 58.72' N Latitude at Sand Hill Bluff, Santa Cruz County (approximately 9 miles north of Santa Cruz Harbor entrance) to the California/Mexico border.
4. On June 3, 2016 state waters around the Channel Islands opened to commercial rock crab fisheries.
5. On July 6, 2016 commercial rock crab fisheries opened south of 37° 11' N lat. at Pigeon Point, San Mateo County. The commercial rock crab fisheries are now open from Pigeon Point in San Mateo County south to the U.S. – Mexico border.
6. As of July 21, 2016 Commercial and recreational rock crab fisheries remain closed north of 37° 11' N lat. at Pigeon Point, San Mateo County.

Dungeness Crab Season Openers

Commercial Dungeness crab season is usually open November 15 south of the Sonoma-Mendocino County line (near Gualala, Mendocino County) and December 1 from the Sonoma-Mendocino County line north to the Oregon border.

1. On March 26, 2016 commercial Dungeness crab fishery south of the Sonoma-Mendocino County line (near Gualala, Mendocino County) opened to fishing.
2. On May 12, 2016 the commercial fishery opened from the Mendocino/Sonoma County line to 40° 46.15' N latitude (a line extending due west from the west end of the north jetty at the entrance of Humboldt Bay) and north of 41° 17.6' N latitude at the southern boundary line at Reading Rock SMCA (near Redwood Creek), Humboldt County to the California/Oregon border.
3. On May 26, 2016 the Dungeness crab fishery opened (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). The entire California coast from the California/Oregon border to the California/Mexico border (which includes all previously opened areas) is open to the commercial fishery.

Nov. 3, 2015: The California Department of Public Health (CDPH) advises consumers not to eat Dungeness and Rock crabs caught in waters between the Oregon border and the southern Santa Barbara County line, due to the detection of dangerous levels of domoic acid, a naturally occurring toxin. Recent test results have shown persistently high levels of domoic acid in

Dungeness crab and Rock crab, which have been caught along the California coastline. The levels have exceeded the State's action level for the crabs' body meat as well as the viscera, commonly referred to as crab butter, and therefore pose a significant risk to the public if they are consumed. The state's action level for crab viscera is >30 ppm and for crab meat is >20 ppm.

Nov. 3, 2015: The Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment (OEHHA) notifies the California Department of Fish and Wildlife and California Fish and Game Commission of test results indicate an emergency situation requiring prompt action. The consumption of Dungeness and rock crab pose a threat to public health and safety as a result of high levels of domoic acid. OEHHA, in consultation with the California Department of Public Health, recommends the rock crab fishery be closed and the Dungeness crab fishery be delayed from the Oregon border to the southern Santa Barbara County line. In order to open the crab seasons or lift a closure for recreational and commercial fishing, OEHHA must provide a recommendation, after consultation with CDPH, that crab test below the threshold for domoic acid and are safe for the public to consume.

Nov. 6, 2015: The Director of the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) enacts an emergency rulemaking to delay the opener of the commercial Dungeness crab season, scheduled to open on Nov. 15 south of the Sonoma-Mendocino County line, and close the commercial rock crab fishery, which is open year round. The closure is effective immediately. CDFW will continue to coordinate with CDPH and OEHHA to test domoic acid levels in crab along the coast to determine when the fisheries can safely be opened.