

Fishing Journal

Information For The Serious Angler

by John Martinis

June 2011

New Puget Sound Salmon Seasons

Area 5:

July 1-August 15: Daily Limit, two salmon, plus two additional Pinks. Release wild chinook, wild Coho and Chum.

See closure Area

August 16-Sept 18: Daily Limit, two salmon, plus two additional Pinks. Release Chinook, wild Coho and Chum

See closure Area

Sept 19-Sept 30: Daily limit two salmon, release chinook and chum

Nov. 1-Nov. 30: Daily limit two salmon, only one may be a chinook.

Feb. 16-April 10: Daily limit one salmon.

Area 6:

Selective Fishery Area

July 1-August 15: Daily Limit, two salmon, plus two additional Pinks. Release wild chinook, wild coho and chum.

See closures

Chinook Release Area

July 1-Aug 15: Daily limit two salmon plus two additional Pinks. Release Chinook, wild Coho and Chum

Entire Area

August 16-Sept 18: Daily Limit, two salmon, plus two additional Pinks. Release Chinook, wild Coho and Chum. See Closures

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John's Sporting Goods Online Store

Now purchase your tackle online

I have made major improvements to my online tackle store. You will now be able to order online by the first week in June 1. Shipping will still be free on almost everything that I sell. There is free shipping on over 1500 items! I think that you will find this an easy way to purchase tackle any time of day. I have 100% of all the Saltwater Fishing Tackle and Shellfish Supplies online that you currently shop for in my store. When you consider the free shipping on most items, you will find shopping at John's Sporting Goods is a much better deal than dealing with any of the larger stores such as Cabelas or Sportco. I still welcome the option of you calling in your order. I will post the links to my new online store in just a few days.

John's Sporting Goods Improved Web Site

Johnssportinggoods.com will have a major facelift in less than a month.

Everything will be better organized. All the content will be indexed by type. Examples: All the Newsletters will be together, maps will be in one place, pictures will be in one place, How-To stuff will be organized together. I think you find the new site to be a better organized resource center. Gone, will be the long scrolling left hand column of all the info I put together. The search function at the top of the page will be greatly improved.

2011 Crab

The general season for Puget Sound Crab opens July 1. The San Juan Islands open: North Part August 15 and the South part opens July 15. Check your individual Area by going to Johnssportinggoods.com and scrolling down until you see the shellfish Areas. Click on the Area that you are interested in.

[Click Here for all Crab Seasons](#)

I want to break down crabbing into four topics:

- 1) Crab Pots
- 2) Rigging
- 3) Bait
- 4) Places to crab

Crab Pots

The design of crab pots is interesting. Round pots, six sided pots, square pots, folding pots and crab rings. There is so much to choose from that it makes the task of choosing a crab pot a mind bender. Before I would even consider purchasing a crab pot I would measure the doors in which the crabs have to crawl through. If the doors are not close

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Oct 1-Oct 31: Daily limit two salmon, only one chinook.. See closures

Feb. 16-April 30: Daily limit one salmon. See closures

Salmon Area 7:

July 1-July 31: Daily limit two salmon plus two additional Pinks, only one chinook. See boundaries and closures.

Aug. 1-Sept 30: Daily limit two salmon plus two additional Pinks, only one chinook. Release wild Coho. See boundaries and closures.

Oct. 1-Oct 31: Daily limit two salmon, only one chinook, release wild coho. See boundaries and closures.

Dec. 1-April 30: Daily limit two salmon, release wild chinook. See boundaries and closures.

Area 8-1:

Aug 1-Sept. 30: Daily limit two salmon plus two additional Pinks, release all chinook.

Oct. 1-Oct 31: Daily limit two salmon, release chinook.

Nov. 1-April 30: Daily limit two salmon, release wild chinook.

Area 8-2:

Aug 1-Sept. 30: Daily limit two salmon plus two additional Pinks, release all chinook. See closures

Oct. 1-Oct. 31: Daily limit two salmon, release all chinook. See closures

Nov. 1-April 30: Daily limit two salmon, release wild chinook.

Tulalip Terminal Fishery:

to eight inches wide, I would not consider purchasing that pot. You can talk to me all day long about what shape trap is best, but it all boils down to door size. Crab has to maneuver themselves to get into any pot with a trap door. So, you have to make it easy for them. If the door is too small, it is like trying to shove a square peg into a round hole. If you want to be successful at crabbing, you have to make it easy for these critters to get into your pot. The larger males will get discouraged and leave if they cannot easily get access to the bait that is in the pot.

The crab pot that I like the best is the Danielson CTO3. This pot is 28" round, it has three large doors and it has two large easy access doors to get to the crab when you are ready to remove them from the pot. This pot comes with a built in bait container. This pot sells for \$79.

I also like the Danielson FTC pot. This is a very inexpensive pot. I sell this pot with 100ft of leaded line, buoy, crab measure, bait bag and a trap harness for \$39.95. The pot by itself is only \$22.50. This pot is full collapsible. Its four doors are close to 8" wide. These pots catch crab as good as anything.

Crab Pot Rigging

Rigging the crab pot properly is very important. The pot must be rigged to fish at different depths. If you are crabbing in less than 50 feet of water, the trap must weigh at least 12-15lbs. If you are crabbing in over 100 feet water, the trap must weigh 15-20lbs. Adjust the weight of the trap accordingly to the depth of the water. It is better that the trap is too heavy than too light. The weight of the trap serves two purposes: Having enough weight anchors the trap to the bottom so that it does not float away. Having enough weight also

keeps the trap from shaking from the rope pulling on the trap. If the trap is not steady, crab will not enter the trap. The crab that are in the trap will leave if the house starts shaking. If you think that crab cannot leave any trap, think again. They can and they will leave the best of traps.

[Click Here for Color Illustration of a Crab Pot Set-Up](#)

Use a heavy duty crab trap harness. If you purchase the cheap harnesses, they will only last one season SMI has a new pot harness that is extra heavy duty, its item number is #19119.

You must either sink the rope or have sinking rope (leaded Rope). The best way to rig a crab pot is with leaded rope. In most cases 100 feet is enough. However, many crabbers are crabbing as deep as 150 feet. The rule of thumb is this, if you are crabbing in less than 100 feet of water, you need at least 25 more feet of rope than it is to the bottom. If you are crabbing over 100 feet, you need 50 more feet of rope than it is to the bottom. Remember, a crab pot does not go straight to the bottom when you toss it overboard. The bottom of Puget Sound is quite steep in most places. There is no room for error if you do not have plenty of extra rope. Not a day goes by in the summer when someone tells me the story of tossing their crab pot overboard and watching it sink out of sight. I've been there, done that.

The regulation for rigging crab pots is that they must have a red/white buoy. I would use two per pot. Your name and address must be on the buoy.

Crab Pot Bait

Crab do not like nasty foul bait. Do yourself and your neighbors a favor, do not put chicken out on the back porch until the blow flies are ready to fly away

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Tulalip Bubble: June 3-June 18, Open Friday through Monday Noon. Closed on June 19. Two salmon limit, plus two additional Pinks.

June 20-September 5, two salmon limit, plus two additional Pinks. Open Friday through Monday Noon.

September 10-25, open Saturday and Sunday, limit two salmon, plus two additional Pinks.

Closed June 19

Area 9:

July 16-Aug. 31: Daily limit two salmon, plus two additional Pinks. Release wild Chinook and Chum. See closures

Sept. 1-Sept 30: Daily limit two salmon, plus two additional Pinks.. Release Chinook and Chum.

Oct. 1-Oct 31: Daily limit two salmon, release chinook

Nov. 1-Nov 30: Daily limit two salmon, release wild chinook.

Jan. 16-April 15: Daily limit two salmon, release wild chinook.

Area 10:

June 1-June 30: Catch and release only. See closures

July 1-July 15: Daily limit two salmon, plus two additional Pinks. Release Chinook. See closures

July 16-Aug. 31: Daily limit two salmon, plus two additional Pinks. Release wild chinook. See closures

Sept. 1-Sept. 30: Daily limit two salmon, plus two additional Pinks. Release Chinook. See closures

Oct. 1-Jan. 31: Daily limit two salmon, release wild

with your chicken. Crab like fresh bait.

Bait that works well: Chicken, Salmon carcass (not heads and tails), mackerel, clams, turkey and Ace of Baits Premium Crab Blend. I would also recommend soaking the bait in attractant oil such as Ace of Baits Crab Scent.

Put the bait in a container that has large enough openings so that the crab can pick at the bait. This is essential for setting up a scent trail to attract other crab. The round bait barrels do not work well for crab at all. The mesh is too fine. Use a bait container that has 1/2" to 7/8" wire mesh. The bait container must be centered in the crab pot so that crab cannot feed on the bait from the outside of the pot. Use a stainless steel crab bait pin or a zip tie to center the bait container.

Places to Crab

If you want to start crabbing on July 1, Central Puget Sound is outstanding crabbing. Following will be a complete set of maps. I will rate the crab areas by a star rating system with 5 stars being the best areas.

*****Mission Bar, Everett Area: [Click Here for Map](#)

*****Port Susan/Camano Head: [Click Here for Map](#)

*****Port Susan/Tulalip to Kayak Park: [Click Here for Map](#)

*****Marrowstone Head/ Port Townsend: [Click Here for Map](#)

**** Hat Island: [Click Here for Map](#)

****Elger Bay/Saratoga Passage: [Click Here for Map](#)

****Browns Bay/Edmonds Area: [Click Here for Map](#)

***Ship Wreck: [Click Here for Map](#)

***Useless Bay: [Click Here for Map](#)

**Possession Bar: No Map

The South part of the San Juan Islands opens for Crab on July 15. This is by far

the most popular Area to crab in the San Juans. This Area can be easily accessed out of Anacortes by launching in the Swinomish Channel or at Washington Park.

*****Saddlebag Island: [Click Here for Map](#)

*****Guemes Island: [Click Here for Map](#)

****Blakely Island: [Click Here for Map](#)

****Lopez Island/Decatur Island: [Click Here for Map](#)

Cooking Dungeness Crab

Place the crab/s (either alive or recently killed) in boiling, salted water and cover the pot. There should be enough water so that the crab is completely submerged, plus an additional 4 or 5 inches on top of that. Use about half a cup of salt per gallon of water. Cook for about 15 minutes; 10 to 12 minutes for smaller ones, up to 20 minutes for large ones. When cooking live crab, you can put it in the freezer for half an hour beforehand so that it moves more slowly and is easier to handle when placing in the pot. Some people also feel this is a more humane method. They say the cold puts them into a dormant state and then they're not fully conscious when they're boiled.

Obviously, the crab will be hot. So, if you want to serve it warm, you'll need to wear rubber gloves to clean it. Otherwise, put the crab in a bowl of ice water for several minutes and then drain before cleaning.

Cleaning

To remove the back, hold the base of the crab with one hand and pull the shell away from the body with the other hand. Turn the crab over and pull on the triangular-shaped section and lift it away. Turn the crab again and gently scrape away the gills on either side with your thumb or a spoon. Also, throw away the



chinook. See closures

Elliot Bay Fishery:

Aug. 19-Aug 28: Open Friday through Sunday only. Daily limit two salmon, release Chinook and Chum, plus two additional Pinks. Fishing with bait prohibited. Other restrictions apply. See closures.

Puget Sound Crab

Areas 8-13

**Will Open at 7:00 a.m.
July 1, 2011.**

Will be open Thursday through Monday only through September 5, 2011. Any additional opening dates will be announced in October. Refer to Shellfish Rule Change toll free Hotline, (866) 880-5431

**Crabbing to be open
Sundays this year!**

intestine, which runs down the center of the back.

Most people wash away the "crab butter" (the yellow, mushy stuff in the cavity). But, some consider these organs a delicacy and there are recipes that call for them. So, set them aside if you like.

Twist off the legs.

Rinse the rest of the body under cold water and break it in half.

Crack the legs with a mallet.

Dig out the meat with forks or picks or however you can get to it. Eating crab is a messy affair, so just dig in and enjoy.

Crab meat is typically served with lemon wedges and melted butter. But, of course, there are many sauces and recipes you can experiment with.

Dungeness Crab Life Cycle

Dungeness crabs mate from spring to fall. The mating takes place between hard-bodied males and soft-bodied females that have just molted (shed their old shell to grow). A male may mate with many females. Females store the sperm until all the eggs are fully developed. A large female can carry 2.5 million eggs.

After hatching, baby crabs are planktonic (planktons) and swim freely. It take 4 months to 1 year and through 6 stages of transformations for a crab to reach juvenile stage.

Crabs grow by molting, which means shedding their old shell. Dungeness crabs molt several times during their first 2 years of life, with males and females growing at the same pace. After 2 years, moltings are reduced to once a year and females grow slower than males, resulting in the size difference between the sexes. During an annual molt, a Dungeness crab grow about 1 inch (2.5cm) in width. Dungeness crabs are soft after molting and can be easily pierced, so they dig into the sand and

hide for several days until their shells start to harden. An adult crab requires 2 to 3 months for its shell to completely harden and fill with meat.

Note: It is possible for you to catch a soft-shelled crab. You can test crabs by pinching their large walking legs and see if the shell gives a little. If it gives even a little, you should return the crab to the water because soft-shelled crabs hold a lot of water but little meat, so they won't be good for eating.

Dungeness crabs reach sexual maturity at 3 to 4 years of age, the same time when males reach legal size. Dungeness crabs are estimated to have a life span of 8 to 13 years.

Downriggers 101

A guide to understanding downrigger fishing

Downriggers have become a basic tool that many anglers use to fish for Kokanee, Salmon, Trout, Mackinaw and many other species of fish. Using downriggers does not make you a better angler, when used properly they help you to fish more effectively. When you have a total understanding of how to use downriggers to your fishing advantage,, at that point you become a better angler.

Follow these simple rules when choosing the correct downrigger to purchase: If your boat is 16 feet or less, the downrigger you choose needs to have a 24 inch boom. A longer boom is OK. If your boat is 16-19 feet you should select a 30" boom. Again, longer is OK. If your boat is over 19 feet a longer boom is essential to keep the cable and downrigger ball away from the side of the boat when in operation. Don't make the mistake of trying to save

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a few dollars by purchasing less downrigger than what you actually need. This is a costly mistake many anglers make. You can upgrade the downrigger with a longer boom at any time but it is much less expensive to do so when you originally purchase your downrigger.

I want to cover three basic areas of downrigger fishing:

- 1) Mounting
- 2) Rigging
- 3) Operation

Mounting any downrigger regardless of brand is always the biggest obstacle before you get to use the device. Take a close look at your boat to assess likely mounting places. Scotty downriggers that come with a swivel base need an area approximately 5" square to mount the swivel base. Both Cannon and Penn downriggers that have a swivel base need approximately the same surface area to mount the swivel base. Most downriggers that do not include a swivel base take a much smaller area to mount the downrigger. Check with the manufacture to get base plate dimensions to make sure that your boat can accommodate their product.

Choose a place on your boat that is convenient to operate the downrigger. I like to be able to straddle the downrigger and reach the fishing rod at the same time. Most often the boat will dictate where the downrigger is placed because of the dimensions of the base plate. If you do have a choice where to mount the downrigger, I would choose 3-4 feet from the back of the boat.

A good idea when mounting a downrigger is to add a backing plate underneath the deck when you are mounting the base plate to the boat. The backing plate can be made out of

plywood or out of plastic board similar to cutting board material

Swivel Base vs Standard Base: I would highly recommend purchasing a downrigger with a swivel base. A swivel base comes in handy when departing or docking the boat. It is very convenient to swing the downrigger out of the way without disconnecting it from the boat.

I would also highly recommend purchasing a locking system for your downriggers. Downriggers are a high theft item.

Once the downrigger is mounted, you to consider different types of rigging beyond what the downrigger comes with. Most downriggers come with 200-300 feet of 150lb wire cable.

Releases: I would choose a release that snaps on to the cable. I prefer snapping the release on to the cable with a line snap (halibut snap) about 1-2 feet above the lead ball. There are several good releases on the market; I prefer the two styles of custom made releases that that we make at John's Sporting Goods for saltwater fishing. I like the Scotty 1180 and 1181 release for fishing trout and some of the smaller warm water fish.

Some anglers choose to snap a rubber bungee on the end of the cable. This makes handling the lead ball much easier. Some claim this aids in not getting hung-up on the bottom. Using a bungee is a must with braided downrigger line because the braid is too sharp to hang on to. I highly recommend a bungee with braid. The braid is also nice to snap a downrigger release to by using a line snap.

Braid vs Cable: The life expectancy of cable is less than one year. The life expectancy of braid is 3-5 years. Both

Cable and Braided Spectra line have their qualities that the other does not have. Cable is very resistant to fraying. Cable in most cases is 150lb test. Cable will last about one year. Crimping tool and sleeves required to install. Cable rots/rusts down inside the spool where you cannot see it most of the time. When you trim the cable you are actually exposing the part of the cable that has been rusting.

Braid will last 3-5 years. There are no crimping tools required to put it on a downrigger. In most cases it is 200lb test. A sharp knife or scissors required to install. Spectra wears on the end where it is being used. When you trim back the Braid you are getting into fresh line that is full strength. No cable hum.

Do not purchase 150lb braid; it is too light duty for downrigger fishing. There is too much potential for losing a lead ball!

Operating a downrigger requires a certain amount of skill from two aspects: 1) the operational skill of using the downrigger. 2) The fishing skills that are required to make the downrigger an effective fishing tool.

Operating a downrigger improperly can cause you a lot of headaches and money. Use these basic tips for the operation of all brands of downriggers. Assume you are at the desired trolling speed before you perform these steps:

1) Attach the downrigger weight with care. Make sure that when you are attaching the weight that you do not get a kink in the cable. This most often happens when you are putting the ball over the side of the boat and into the water. If you get a kink in wire cable, cut it out immediately. If you don't, you will lose a lead ball



before the end of the day.

2) Depending on the species of fish that you are fishing for, let the lure or bait out at least 25 feet before attaching the line to the release. Many anglers in ultra clear water conditions let the bait or lure out 75-100 feet before attaching the line to the downrigger release.

3) Place the rod in the rod holder, loosen the drag and let the downrigger pull the line off of the fishing reel. When you get to the desired depth, tighten the drag to the desired setting and crank back some of the line. Do not let your line out with the clicker on (fishing reel clicker) or you will destroy the clicker on your fishing reel.

4) If you get a fish on, crank the downrigger up until the downrigger ball is out of the water. Make sure that you bring the ball in enough so that it will not hit the side of the boat. That is usually 1 foot beneath the downrigger pulley. If you have two downriggers out, crank both downriggers in when playing a fish.

Downrigger Balls: I prefer using a 12lb downrigger ball with fin when fishing saltwater in less than 200 feet of water. Lake fishing 6-8lb with fin. River fishing; 10-12lb with fin depending on the depth or current. Scotty Electric downriggers operate best with a 12lb ball. If you use less than a 12lb ball with a Scotty downrigger the ball will go out and stop before reaching the depth you wish to fish. Manual downriggers; you can use any size ball because there is no motor or gears to slow the descent of the downrigger ball.

Supplies needed to maintain your downrigger: If you are using wire cable, you need size #4 crimping

sleeves handy to repair the cable. Scotty downriggers also use a stopper beads that facilitates stopping the downrigger on the accent. For all downriggers I would have bumpers to add to the cable or braid when repairing either. Using braid or cable a 4/0 snap swivel is necessary to repair the end of the cable when you have a total loss.

Supply List:

- Extra Belt for Scotty downriggers
- Wire thimble (cable only)
- Spool of cable or braid
- Extra Downrigger Ball
- 4/0 Stainless Snap Swivel
- #4 Sleeves for wire
- Line Releases
- Bumpers
- Bungee

Tulalip Special Salmon Fishery and Area 10 Catch and Release June Salmon

Salmon opens June 1 in Area 10 for catch and release and the **Tulalip Terminal Fishery opens June 3** for catch and keep, including Chinook.

The special rules for Tulalip are: Open Fridays through Noon Mondays ONLY. CLOSED ONE DAY JUNE 19. CHINOOK - min. size 22". Other SALMON species - no min. size. Daily limit 2 (combined) plus 2 additional PINK. Please read page 117 of the Sports Fishing Rules to get more details.

The special rules for Area 10 are: Catch-and-release. Open only north of a line from Point Monroe to Meadow Point. Release all salmon.

For complete information on fishing the Tulalip Terminal Fishery: Go to the search function at the top of the John's Sporting Goods page and type in Tulalip. Several of my older columns on fishing this area will come up. Just click on any of those columns to read about this fishery.

Discover Pass

Annual pass: \$30
Daily pass: \$10

The Discover Pass allows you to enjoy nearly 7 million acres of Washington state-managed recreation lands – including campgrounds, parks, wildlife areas, trails, natural areas, wilderness areas and water access points.

Beginning July 1, 2011, you will need to display the Discover Pass on your vehicle when visiting state recreation lands managed by the Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission, the Washington State Department of Natural Resources and the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife. The fine for not displaying the pass is \$99.

The Discover Pass may be purchased (will be available for purchase prior to July 1):
Online

In person from any of nearly 600 recreational license vendors where state fishing and hunting licenses are sold.

By phone. Call toll-free (866) 320-9933.

When you renew your vehicle license. Beginning in the fall of 2011, you will be able to purchase the Discover Pass through the state Department of Licensing vehicle registration and tab renewal process.

**John's Sporting Goods
1913 Broadway
Everett, WA 98201**

**Scotty Downrigger
Cleaning with 250' Cable
or 300' Spectra
Downrigger Line
\$39.95**

Included in the price is new brake pads, your choice of 250' of 150lb. Cable or 300' 200lb. of Cortland spectra downrigger line, cleaning and lubricating the downrigger and any other Scotty factory authorized upgrades.

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**20% Discount
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Items that are excluded: Downriggers, Ace Line Hauler, Shimano Products, G Loomis, Electronics, items that are discounted, on sale, repairs, parts, and closeout items. Cannot be used with discounted gift cards that are issued by John's Sporting Goods.

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