

Fishing Journal

Information For The Serious Angler

by John Martinis

June 2017

Fishing Dates These Seasons and Limits May Change

Area 6
Closed for salmon

Area 7
Closed for salmon

Area 8-1
Closed for salmon

Area 8-2
Closed for salmon

Tulalip Bubble
Open for Chinook
Fri-Sat-Sun-Noon Mon

Area 9
Closed for salmon

Area 10
Closed for salmon

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Puget Sound Summer 2017 Fishing Opportunities

Skykomish River: Open now for Steelhead and Chinook

Skagit River Sockeye: This fishery starts June 11 (closures June 28-29 July 6-7 and July 11)

Baker Lake Sockeye: Opens July 8

Puget Sound Ling Cod: Open until June 15

Tulalip Bubble: Now Open (Friday, Saturday, Sunday and only to noon on Monday)

Area 6 Spot Shrimp: Open every day until quota is attained. There is a 120-shrimp limit

Area 7 (West) Spot Shrimp: Open every day until quota is attained. There is a 120-shrimp limit

Lake Cavanaugh: Fishing has been great for large Kokanee - best kept secret in Western Washington

Puget Sound Crab: Opening day not yet published but in prior years has opened on July 1

Puget Sound Dungeness Crab

Crabbing, I'm sorry to say, is quite similar to salmon fishing. There are always those anglers who do so much better than others. (that old 80/20 ratio – 20 per cent of the people out there

catch 80 per cent of the fish/crab). How come? Well It can be simplified down to a single word - "Preparation". If you want to do cut-rate crabbing, your results will most likely be reflected in your amount of preparation. It is not pure luck. Some people subscribe to those oft quoted words of Dilbert (remember him?). "...some days you are the pigeon, and then some days you're the statue...".

Crabbing is not as simple as buying an inexpensive folding trap and then going to Costco for some cheap Rhode Island Red chicken for bait.

The inexpensive folding SMI crab pots will catch plenty of Dungeness Crab if properly rigged. Out of the package these pots only weigh 8 or 9 pounds. This simply is not enough weight to keep these pots in one place on the bottom, especially when there is wind and tidal movement. All folding crab pots need additional weight for two reasons:

1) To keep your crab pots from floating off and then - Deja-poo (same old crap all over again) - you think someone stole your crab pot.

2) To keep the pot solidly anchored in one place. Why? The more stable the pot, the more crab will enter your crab pot. You should add at least 10 pounds of weight to every crab pot.

In addition, rigging folding crab pots should include zip-ties to tie the pot together making it more secure when handling the pot. Bob Buchanan from

Just Fishing



SMI recommends using his 2-pound rectangular crab pot weights to secure the inside corners of any folding crab pot. This makes a folding crab pot just as strong as a one-piece unit.

Use a quality crab pot harness constructed with steel or stainless-steel snaps. When I am rigging my crab or shrimp pots I rig them for what I call, "No Loss". Each part of my traps, harness and rope are put together so that there is no chance of losing any gear. Essentially, it is less expensive to rig pots the correct way the first time. Also, it is much better for the crab and the environment not to have lost crab pots which end up bouncing around the bottom of Puget Sound. Many a Puget Sound salmon angler knows how many lost crab pots there are in Puget Sound. Salmon anglers are constantly hooking-up to these lost crab pots. These "ghost" pots are trapping and killing a lot of crab. These crab could be going home with you when the season opens!

The length of a crab pot rope varies greatly depending on the location that you are crabbing in Puget Sound. A minimal crab pot line should be from 100 to 150 feet in length. I know there are some crabbers that put pots at 200 to 300 feet. My own personal crab pot lines are 150 feet long. If you are pulling pots by hand, I recommend 5/16" lead rope. If you use an electric crab pot puller, I would recommend either 1/4" or 5/16" lead rope. Really, do not use the inexpensive yellow poly non-lead rope since it easily tangles and weight is still needed to be attached to the rope to meet regulation standards.

When crabbing be certain the crab rope is at least 25 feet longer than the depth you are setting the crab pots. Don't risk losing your crab pot by trying to set the pot near the length of the rope. Take in account that a crab pot does not go straight to the bottom when you throw the pot over the side of the boat. Remember your old high school geometry? Bet you never thought you would use it again. Some good advice: Hang on to the crab pot line until you feel the pot hit the bottom.

Now that I have described the pot and the rope set-up, I am now at the end of my rope. (no pun intended) This is where many crabbers just want to cut corners on expense and, you know, I just don't get it? Please please do not use a single standard size red/white buoy. If you do use a single buoy, the chances of the rope dragging the buoy under the surface for hours is pretty darn good. Many crabbers think that their pots have been stolen when, in fact, their crab pot buoys are thirty feet below the surface and will not return to the surface until the tide slows down. To properly rig 100 feet of lead rope with a buoy use one of the magnum red/white buoys. The SMI magnum red/white crab pot buoys are equal to three of the standard size red/white buoys. The magnum buoy will never allow the rope to pull the buoy underwater at anytime.

Now Let's Talk Crab Pots

There are three basic crab pot designs: Round, octagon and folding. The folding pots have a limited life of

approximately five years. If you want to make short crab pot soaks, the folding pots are about as good as any pot for catching crab. The only drawback to folding pots is that the crab can enter these pots and leave just as easily. The SMI round crab pot (19035) and the SMI Octagon crab pot (19037) are the best crab pots for durability and crab catching ability. These pots have ramp style entrances that make it difficult for a crab to leave the pot once they enter the pot. The round and octagon pots also have a built-in bait tube that makes baiting the trap easier.

A very important part of choosing a crab pot is to make sure the entrance doors of the crab pot are at least 9 to 10 inches wide. Think about this: if the entrance doors restrict the crab size entering the crab pot, the doors are basically sorting out the size of crab entering your pot. With so much crab gear in the water, you want to be certain crab can easily enter your crab pot. If crab get discouraged from entering your crab pot the same crab can easily travel to a nearby pot and get caught by a pot that is more easily accessible.

Properly Baiting a Crab Pot for Maximum Yield

There are three types of bait to put in a crab pot:

- 1) Bait that is attracting scent
- 2) Hanging bait for the crab to eat
- 3) Bait that is put in cages which crabs cannot easily tear apart.

Attracting bait to be used as scent can include Pro Cure Crab and Shrimp



attractant or liquefied bait that is ground up in a food processor or canned fish such as Mackerel or Salmon. The fish oil bait attractants can be used to soak crab bait such as chicken or turkey for at least a day before using as crab bait. This will add more scent to the crab bait. Canned fish or ground up fish can also be used as a crab attractant. This type of crab bait can be put in a bait jar so the crab cannot eat finely ground up bait.

Hanging bait such as fish heads or fish tails can be hung from the top of the crab pot with a bait pin. This bait should hang low enough so that crabs have some food which is easily accessible when entering the crab pot. If you don't have any fish heads in your freezer go to your local Asian food mart and purchase Carp heads or any other kind of fish that they sell. Some local grocery stores will sell salmon heads.

Caged bait is put in the pot for the same reason as the other two baits. The purpose of this bait is threefold:

- 1) Used for scent
- 2) Used for crab food
- 3) Keep the crab interested once they are in the crab pot.

This bait keeps working longer than other baits and therefore keeps the crab in the crab pot and keeps attracting crab from outside the crab pot.

I use all three types of bait when I am crabbing. I am convinced the more bait and scent in a crab pot the more crab that I will catch and I will catch them at a faster rate.

Best Crabbing Depths

The simple answer to the best crabbing depth is that there is not a single depth better than another. Dungeness crab freely roam around with the tide going from shallow depths at high tide to deeper depths at low tide. If I were to pick a single depth to recommend it would be 60 feet. As the season progresses and the crab start getting picked over at 100 feet and less, I would advise setting your crab pots in 120 to 150 feet of water if you are not catching crab at the shallower depths.

[Rigging Crab Pot Video](#)

Recommended Crab Gear

[Crab Pot Complete Set-up](#)

[SMI Octagon Crab Pot](#)

[SMI Round Crab Pot](#)

[Leaded Rope](#)

[SMI Heavy Duty Crab Pot Harness](#)

[Red/White Magnum Buoy](#)

[SMI Bait Cage](#)

[SMI Bait Tube](#)

[Pro Cure Crab and Shrimp Attractant](#)

And Finally, "John's Thought for the Day..."

Just remember better days are coming...They're called Saturday and Sunday and if you can upgrade, take Monday off too. Weather is great and fishing WILL get better.

[Crabbing and Fishing Maps Click Here](#)

Free Fishing Weekend!

June 10-11, 2017

"Free Fishing Weekend" is June 10-11, 2017, when fishing licenses are not required of anyone to fish in Washington. Free Fishing Weekend in Washington is always the first weekend after the first Monday in June. [Click Here for more details](#)

Chinook at Tulalip Bubble

If you are looking to hook-up with a Chinook and are tired of waiting for Area 9 and Area 10 to open, please head on over to the Tulalip Bubble. The Bubble is now open every Friday-Saturday-Sunday and until Noon on Monday. I know your first reaction,"ya but it's not so good." Ya, but! The Bubble has had some good days lately. Take a second look at this Chinook fishery because you might be surprised.

Gear for the Bubble should include a Gibbs Red Racer flasher rigged with a Gibbs Cop Car 3.0 spoon or a Goldstar 3.5 Cookies n Cream spoon.

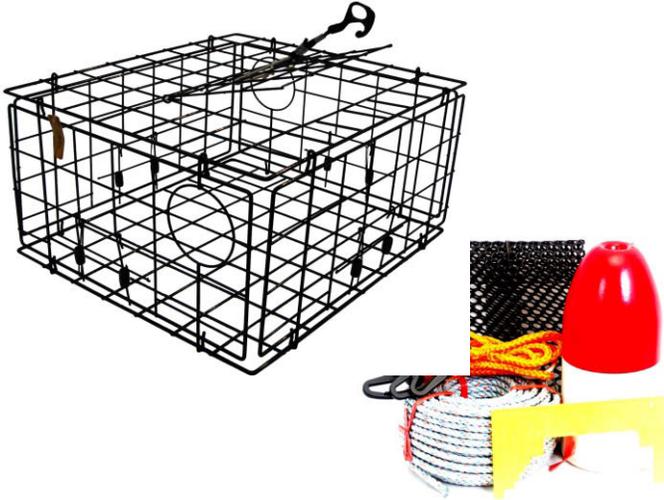
The Bubble can be fished by fishing near the bottom in 100-120 feet of water or fishing for suspended Chinook in 50 feet of water and only fishing 30-40 feet deep. Either method is equally effective.

Don't write the Bubble off because you might be missing out on some good fishing.

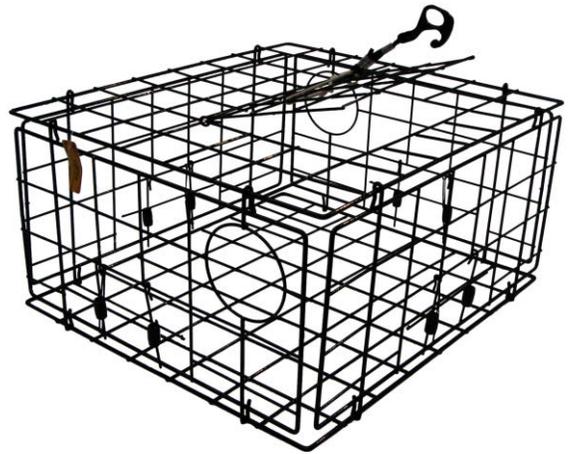
Special Purchase

Tackle For The Serious Angler

Crab Pot Sale June 1-30



Crab Pot Complete
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Bait Bag, Buoy,
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SMI 19019 Folding Crab Pot
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100ft Leaded 5/16" Rope
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Reg. Price \$14.95



SMI 19037 Sale Price \$79.00
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Reg. Price \$89

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