

Crab Fishermen Interviews
August-September 1963

*Opinion to
File*

As requested, crab fishermen, processing plants, boat moorages, and chambers of commerce along the Oregon coast were interviewed to obtain their thinking on crab seasons and regulations. The interviews were made by Darrell Demory in Astoria and Tillamook, Gene Stewart at Coos Bay, Winchester Bay, Alsea, and Siletz bays, and Dale Snow conducted the interviews at Newport, Bandon, Gold Beach, and Brookings. In order to standardize the interviews, the following two statements were written up prior to the interviews and were used to open and close each discussion: "The Oregon Fish Commission will hold a public hearing at Portland in October and will consider all crab regulations, both personal use and commercial. Of primary concern will be season dates, gear restrictions, minimum sizes and other regulatory measures. Do you have any opinions you would like to express on present regulations or would suggest any new regulations?"

The interviews were terminated as follows: "You may submit your views to the commission in writing prior to the meeting or appear in person at the meeting and express your opinions. Your comments here today will be submitted to the commission for their consideration. I cannot at this time say that I will personally support or oppose your views. My position will be based on the best present available information on the biology of the crab and what I feel is best for the animal and the resource on a sustained yield basis."

Because of the short period of time available for the interviews and the fact many crab fishermen are in Alaska or fishing for albacore or salmon, only a limited number of fishermen were interviewed. However, it is believed that an adequate sample of the feelings of these people was obtained. The following are the results (in brief) of the interviews.

Astoria-Seaside

Don Olson, boat "Triad": Uniform season. Prefers December 1 to September 15, but would settle for January 1 opening. Don't shorten season. Retain size difference between bay and ocean. (Doesn't fish late summer, but wants season for those that do.)

Andy Olson, boat "Lela E.": Uniform season generally December 1 to September 15, but since there are no two years the same would prefer that seasons be based on test fishing. Keep Columbia as is; Sigurdson's only one interested and crabs not too good anyway. Hearings a waste of time because no one has a chance to say anything.

Gene Dupre, "Zore": Uniform season; prefers December 1 to September 15. Leave Columbia as is.

San Juan Packing Company: Uniform season.

Seaside Clam and Crab Company: Too busy to comment.

Bellbuoy, (Henry Sigurdson): No season needed. Make fishermen throw soft-shells back. Open river because nets and sports anglers provide the season. (All for a uniform opening of November 15.)

Jon Perry, boat "Blue Sea": Uniform season.

Seaside Chamber of Commerce: Uniform season.

Ed Smotherman, boat "Meteor": Uniform season. Prefers December 1 to August 15, but would settle for January 1 opening. Leave Columbia as is. Dragners doing much damage to crabs at mouth of Columbia and would like to see them kent out.

Vern Hart, boat "Elouise": Uniform season December 1 or January 1 until March and July 15 to September 15. Open river because crabs smaller here and do not go to ocean. Commission should test fish. Draggers killing crabs at mouth of river and would like to see them kept out of this area.

Jack Webb, boat "Lou Ann": Mr. Webb's remarks were generally abusive and offer little in the way of help. Does not care for commission or biologists; do away with all and start over again from scratch; hearings a waste of time because decisions already made; no chance to say anything; biologists have to say certain things or be fired; draggers killing all the crabs; etc., etc., etc.

Garibaldi-Nehalem-Netarts

Basil Edmonds: Season uniform. January 1 to September 15. Don't cut off the end even if most of the crabbers have gone trolling. Season should be stable, not flexible. Hearings a waste of time because decisions have already been made no matter what the fishermen say or think.

Hoy Brothers: First said that no season was necessary, but later agreed that a few would take advantage of the situation. December 1 to September 15 was preferred, but would settle for January 1. Uniform opening most important. Season should be flexible and not stable, but had no plan for such a season. Don't shorten season. Retain size differential between bay and ocean. 1/ Hearings a waste of time because decisions made before meeting.

Nehalem Moorage: No crabbing from this moorage. Interested parties sent to other moorages.

Del Curtis Moorage: Too many pots around river mouth and would be in favor

1/ Hoy and Edmonds were named by an O.S.P. officer earlier this year as taking advantage of the size differential.

of limiting number of pots commercial fishermen could use. Would like to see areas set aside for sport fishing and commercial. Standard size buoy marker for sport gear so boaters can see it better. Some use buoys so small they can hardly be seen.

Snider's Moorage: Retain present bay regulations.

Easton's Moorage: Why rings only in Nehalem? Would prefer 6-inch minimum inside and 6 1/4-inch outside.

George's Dock: Too many pots around the river mouth and only small crabs get through, therefore favors 5 3/4-inch bay crab size. Would like rings only in all bays.

Chuck's Boats: Satisfied as is.

Jerry Cressi Moorage: Retain size differential between bay and ocean.

Jetty Fishery: Satisfied as is.

Tillamook Chamber of Commerce: No comment. Will pass the word around about the hearing.

Siletz-Denoe Bay

Chinook Harbor, W. H. Kidden Mgr.: Satisfied with present regulations.

What is going to be done about mud shrimp?

Bailey's Moorage, Mr. and Mrs. Russell Bailey: Satisfied with present regulations.

Siletz Moorage, Alden Vickstrom: Satisfied with present regulations.

Stones Bait and Boats, Jerry Spencer: Would like to see bay crab size reduced for sportsmen. Otherwise satisfied with present regulations.

Depoe Bay Fish Company, Depoe Bay, Oregon; Mrs. Eldon Bates: Season should open November 15. OFC should test fish all areas in October. Oregon, Washington, and California should get together on opening dates.

Newport

New England Fish Company, Joe Fenander: December 1 late enough for opening. Quality good for last 2 years on the December 1 opening. Biologically and economically, this is the best date. July 1 would appear to be best closing time. Past that date, crabs are mating, shedding, and of poor quality and should be protected. Bay and ocean minimum size should be the same. OFC should take closer look at underwater explosion work by oil companys.

Point Adams Packing Company, Ray Gildner: If the whole coast opens simultaneously, it will be suicide for the industry. Mistake to open the same time as Washington and California. However, Oregon should open uniformly, preferably before other states. Best opening date November 15. Transportation problem killing the Newport fishery. Would prefer season open on sampling basis each year, take crabs when ready. Need no laws, take when ready. Should be harvested at 6 1/2 inches.

Yaquina Bay Fish Company, Harold Penter: Maintain split opening. Northern crab develop later. No opening later than December 1. Prefers November 15. Present size about right, other regulation okay.

Bumble Bee Seafood, Tate Cloe and Joe Pepper: Opening should be no earlier than December 1. Later opening would not hurt feelings. Closing date should be earlier (no specified time). Tate Cloe had no comment on minimum size. Joe Pepper felt minimum size should be 6 1/2 inches. If opening no earlier than December 1, uniform season acceptable.

Olson's Moorage, Harry Strause: Satisfied with leaving management up to the biologists. Satisfied with present regulations. Thinks commercial bay crabber would be out of business if minimum size went to 6 1/4 inches.

Sea Gull Landing, Harold Horn: Satisfied with present regulations. Increase to 6 1/4 inch would probably wipe out commercial bay crabber. Shorter commercial season in ocean might have value. No season needed for bay crabbers.

Moore's Landing: Satisfied with present regulations.

Sawyers Moorage, Mr. Whitney: Satisfied with present regulations. Should concentrate on keeping pollution out of bays.

"Dutch" Niemi, boat, Sea Lion III: Prefer seasons be set by sampling program. Increase minimum size by 1/8 inch and require escape rings of at least 4 3/8-inch minimum size.

Abbey Moorage, Rich Wisner, owner: No comments at this time.

Alsea

R. Leeper, (operates crab pot and fishes bay crabs): Satisfied with present regulations. Prefer that it was enforced or regulated so sports fishermen took only hard-shell crabs.

John Hines, (bay crabber): Satisfied with present regulations. Like to see personal-use fishermen forced to take only hard-shell crabs.

Wally Thomas, Mgr. Meachams Landing: Well satisfied with present regulations. Wants closure off river mouth to stay in force.

Mike Moulton, bay crabber: Satisfied with present regulations. Would like to see offshore closure enforced.

Winchester Bay

Winchester Bay Fish Company, Mr. and Mrs. Neil Spencer: New in the business and had no comments. They were invited to write or attend meeting.

North Bend-Empire-Charleston

Eureka Fisheries Inc., Mr. Larry Nelson: No comments at this time. Would attend meeting.

Hallmark Fisheries, Ruth Day: Satisfied with present regulations. Any change now would be based on pressure. If change made, let it be on condition of crabs—determined by testing. Prefer staggered opening—economic reasons. Wouldn't object to closing July 15 or August 1. Wouldn't object to increase in inside and outside minimum size. Like to see a pot limit.

Fishermens Co-op, Mgr., Jerry Sinclair: Pretty well satisfied with present regulations. Prefer larger minimum size—economics. Likes present openings—economic reasons.

Peterson's Seafoods, Tom Peterson: Satisfied with December 1 opening and possibly November 1 opening this year. Opposed to any later opening. Coast should be divided into areas and opened and closed on condition based on testing. Would like poundage quota on bays. Need pamphlet for sportsmen explaining hard and soft crabs.

Bandon

Mr. Ernest Neal, Representing Bandon Chamber of Commerce: Limit Coquille Bay to ring nets only. Sportsmen using pots exceeding bag-limits, giving crabs away.

Port Orford

Depoe Bay Fish Company (Port Orford), Mgr. Stan Anderson: Takes too long to

get fishing licenses. Mid-September salmon fishing over with. October-November the small boat operators have no income. Opening should be no later than December 1. Would prefer November 15 as this date allows them to determine market conditions. Should standardize crab measurement in Washington, Oregon, and California. Commercial size inside and outside should be same. Past year different than all others; should leave regulations alone for another year. Five fishermen sat in on this and agreed with Stan.

Port Orford Chamber of Commerce, Fred McWilliams: No change in thinking since letter submitted to commission for last hearing. Any delay in the season opening means lost money to the community. They were in complete accord with whatever the fishermen wanted.

Gold Beach

No fishermen were available (mostly Brookings fishermen land there and truck to Brookings). Unable to learn Chamber of Commerce president's name. No interviews.

Brookings

Warrenton Seafoods, Art Anderson: Prefers a November 15 opening; opposed to any opening later than December 1. Closing date of no concern in Brookings. Fishermen quit by May-June. Would like to try 6-1/2 inch minimum size crab. More meat and better quality. Would like a pot limit.

Ed Erb, shipper of "Liz-L": Season should open November 15 and absolutely no later than December 1. Would like to see same measurement in Oregon and California.

Harold Powell, boat "Pacific Lady": Season should open November 15. Does not want a December 1 opening. Probably should close August 1. Present size all right; however, would like to see the measurement the same in Oregon as in California.

Leo's Sporthaven, Leo Shurtlelle: Season should open uniformly on December 15 and close by July 1.

Bob Clarke, boat "Jefferson": Season should open uniformly with California on December 1. Salmon boats out of work too long if season opening delayed too long. Would like 6-1/2 inch minimum size measured as California does. Like to have poundage reporting the same as California's. Would like to see a shrimp season from April 15 to November 15.

Brookings Chamber of Commerce, Ray Niddifer, president: Opposed to a January 1 opening. They would back the fishermen in whatever they want. I told Mr. Niddifer that I did not know where the fishermen got the idea we were recommending January 1 as the opening date. I was merely soliciting ideas; our recommendations would be based on our data. Apparently Bob Clarke is talking a January 1 date to arouse some interest.

Archie McVey, Port owner: Would like to see season open November 15. Would settle for December 1. Closing date should be earlier (no specific date mentioned; did comment that crabs started appearing soft in June).

The following is a brief breakdown of the major items commented on during the interviews and the classification of people interviewed.

People Interviewed

Crab Fishermen	22
Plant Operators	16 (no opinion from 2)
Chambers of Commerce	5
Moorage Operators	<u>18</u>
Total	61 (3 or 4 people were both plant operators and fishermen)

Seasons

<u>Opening Date Preferred</u>	<u>No.</u>	<u>Would Agree to</u>	<u>No.</u>
November 1	1	December 1	1
November 15	9	December 1	6
December 1	8	January 1	3
December 15	1	---	-
January 1	1	---	-

Columbia River Season

	<u>Number</u>
Leave as it is	3
Open to year around fishing	2

Opening Date

Favor uniform opening	14
Oppose uniform opening	2
No opinion	2

Closing Dates

Close September 15	3
Close anywhere from July 1 to August 15	3

Bay crabbers at Waldport and moorages at Nehalem were all opposed to changing the regulation on restricting commercial fishing off the mouths of Alsea and Nehalem bays. Otherwise they were satisfied with current crab regulations.

Ocean crabbers on the north coast appear strongly united on a uniform opening date. The south coast does not feel so strongly on the uniform opening, however, they are nearly unanimous in wanting the season to open no later than December 1.

A few months ago the northern fishermen were talking in terms of a January 1 opening. Rumor along the waterfront indicates that these people felt the south coast opposition was too strong so they joined the southern area in asking for December 1 for support on a uniform opening date, but, they do not want to give up the late season fishing either.

C. Dale Snow
Shellfish Investigations
September 18, 1963