



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Contact: Randy Quezada, Director of Communications: media@sfport.com

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***** PRESS RELEASE *****

Off Boat Dungeness Crab Sales to Commence in Fisherman's Wharf

Just in time for New Year's celebrations local fishers will begin selling freshly caught Dungeness crab to the public at select locations in Fisherman's Wharf through new pilot program

San Francisco, CA - The Port of San Francisco announced that live Dungeness crab sales direct from fishing vessels in Fisherman's Wharf will begin today with the start of the commercial crab season. Off-the-boat crab sales will begin at 3:00 P.M.

This is the first crab season in San Francisco where consumers will be able to purchase live crabs directly from local fishers. Off-the-boat crab sales were authorized for a one-year pilot program by the San Francisco Port Commission on November 9, 2021.

"The kickoff of San Francisco's commercial crab season is a highlight for so many of us, especially with it coming just in time for New Year's Eve," said Mayor London Breed. "This new program will support our family-run businesses and provide the incredible experience of being able to buy directly off the boats from the fisherman who are out there on the water. We hope buying direct from the boat will be the start of a new tradition for residents and visitors, and yet another reason to come on down to Fisherman's Wharf and celebrate San Francisco."

Local residents and visitors may purchase Dungeness crab directly from permitted fishers participating in the pilot program. Currently there are five fishers participating in the program. All fish and crab sold under this permit are to be sold whole (uncooked, whole fish, gilled and gutted only), and in accordance with all Health Code regulations. All fish and crab sales must occur from the vessel. No selling stations will be allowed to be set up on or in any dock, wharf, parking area, or other structure.

"The Port of San Francisco is excited to launch this pilot program that creates new opportunities for local fishers and Fisherman's Wharf," said Elaine Forbes, Executive Director of the Port of San Francisco. "Through this program local residents and visitors will be able to meet the courageous men and women who take to the seas so that we can enjoy the finest seafood in the country."

Permitted fishers will sell crab directly from their vessels in Fisherman's Wharf's inner and outer lagoons. Participating vessels and their locations will be listed on the Port's website here: sfport.com/crab. Individual fishers will use the Fish Line mobile application to provide details about when and where they will be open to the public for crab sales. Additionally, information will be available on the [San Francisco off the boat sales](#) Facebook group page.

“I’m happy to have the drop and pull days finally set. Crab fishermen are hoping for a prosperous and safe season, and I’m sure the public is excited to get fresh local crabs on their table,” said John Barnett, President of the Crab Boat Owners Association. “This will be the first season in San Francisco that the public can actually buy live crabs from the fishermen off the boat. Good for the consumer, the fishermen, and the environment. They can also be purchased the same way as before at your favorite grocery store or fish market.”

The beginning of the commercial crab fishing season was delayed this year, as it has in recent years, in efforts to protect whales and other endangered species such as leatherback turtles from entanglements in the fishery. The delayed start to this season follows a series of hardships that local fishers have endured including the May 2020 Pier 45 Shed C fire that destroyed equipment and the ongoing impacts of the pandemic on the industry.

“Crabbers were hit hard by the double tragedy of the Pier 45 fire and the COVID shutdown,” said Supervisor Aaron Peskin, who co-lead relief efforts with the Port. “I’m thrilled to safely welcome locals and visitors alike back to the Wharf to engage in a classic San Francisco tradition: buying crab fresh off the boats. The pipeline of boat-to-table interdependence also extends from individual home chefs to our local seafood restaurants, small wholesalers and caterers. I can’t wait to get my New Year’s crab to mark the hopeful beginning of a better new year.”

Off-the-boat fish sales are one way to help support local fishers and the growing Bay Area demand for locally sourced, sustainable, seafood. Permitting the sale of Dungeness crab at Fisherman’s Wharf will be a new draw for locals and visitors alike. The new pilot harkens back to a lost tradition of direct sales from fishers to the public.

For more than 100 years, Fisherman’s Wharf has been a working commercial fishing hub. Today, San Francisco maintains the largest fishing center along the California coast, and the commercial fishing industry has been centered at Pier 45, the northernmost historic pier in the Embarcadero Historic District.

The Port Commission authorized an off the boat retail fish sales pilot program in 2017 to expand commercial opportunities for fishers and to provide more customer experiences in Fisherman’s Wharf. In 2021 the Port Commission authorized a one-year pilot program adding Dungeness crab to the list of species that may be sold off the boat.

“Expanding opportunities for our local fishers is a priority for the Port Commission,” said Kimberly Brandon, President of the San Francisco Port Commission. “The fishing industry is the heart and soul of Fisherman’s Wharf and we’re excited to grow this program that creates opportunities for fishers and residents.”

Members of the media are welcome to join the Port as it celebrates the opening of crab season and the first sales of Dungeness Crab to the public at Fisherman’s Wharf, Pier 47 Slip 70 at 3pm.

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