

Best bets for clamming & crabbing on the Oregon Coast

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Clamming

In nearly every Oregon estuary, some species of bay clams can be found. However, abundances and variety of species is different for each bay depending on a number of factors. Size and shape of the bay are the most critical factors.

Tidal exchange, salinity, species ranges, and substrates also weigh heavily.

For your safety, call the Oregon Department of Agriculture Shellfish Safety Hotline before harvesting any shellfish at 1-800-448-2474 or check their website.

Go to our How to bay clam and How to razor clam articles to learn digging techniques that will increase your chances of success.

Summary of bay clam availability by area:

An image of the Oregon coast with bay clamming sites labeled

Necanicum Bay: softshells, purple varnish

Nehalem Bay: softshells, purple varnish

Tillamook Bay: gapers, butters, cockles, littlenecks, softshells, purple varnish

Netarts Bay: gapers, butters, cockles, littlenecks, softshells, purple varnish

Nestucca Bay: softshells, purple varnish

Siletz Bay: softshells, purple varnish

Yaquina Bay: gapers, butters, cockles, littlenecks, softshells, purple varnish

Alsea Bay: cockles, softshells, purple varnish

Siuslaw River: gapers, cockles, softshells

Umpqua River: gapers, softshells

Coos Bay: gapers, butters, cockles, littlenecks, softshells

Coquille River: softshells

Chetco and Rogue River basins have high freshwater influence, and therefore no accessible bay clams. In some of the south coast's rocky nearshore areas, littleneck and butter clams can be found under rocks and amongst gravel. Due to the tough terrain, very few clammers harvest on the rocky nearshore of the south coast.

Crabbing

In every Oregon estuary, some crab can be found. Tillamook, Yaquina and Coos normally provide the best year-round opportunities. Before heading out, be sure to have your shellfish license, a copy of the regulations (either paper or online), and check the tides.

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Go to our How to crab article to learn about different crabbing equipment and techniques.

An image of the Oregon coast showing locations to go bay crabbing

Species availability by area

Columbia River: Dungeness

Necanicum: Dungeness

Nehalem Bay: Dungeness

Tillamook: Dungeness, red rock

Netarts Bay: Dungeness, red rock

Nestucca Bay: Dungeness

Siletz Bay: Dungeness

Yaquina Bay: Dungeness, red rock

Alsea Bay: Dungeness

Siuslaw River: Dungeness

Umpqua River: Dungeness

Coos Bay: Dungeness, red rock

Coquille River: Dungeness

Port Orford: Dock crabbing can be found year round from the Port docks. Ocean (boat) crabbing areas are easily accessible.

Gold Beach (Rogue River) and Brookings (Chetco River): Crabbing in these estuaries may only be successful in the driest parts of the summer when the freshwater influence is minimal. Ocean (boat) crabbing areas are easily accessible.