

Port Walk #8



Dungeness Crab

The prime symbol of Fisherman's Wharf is the Dungeness crab, which has been fished here since the 1840s. Crab fishing continues today, with crab season traditionally lasting from mid-November to the end of June.



Crab Pot

Steel-mesh traps called crabpots are used to catch Dungeness crabs feeding along the ocean floor. Bait entices the crabs to enter the trap through a one-way tunnel, while special openings allow undersized crabs to escape. Fishermen mark their crabpots with colored buoys and check them for crabs on a regular basis.



Dungeness Crab

Dungeness crabs live on sandy and muddy seafloors in cold water and feed on fish and shellfish. They grow by molting – shedding their hard shells and legislation in 1897 requiring that all female crabs be released. In 1903, a size limit for male crabs, close to today's minimum, was put into effect. Other regulations continue to be developed by the fishing industry in order to protect this valuable resource.



Frank D'Amato, Fisherman

"I fished crab here for 50 years. If you want to be good at it, you have to put your heart and soul into it. And, you've got to stay on top of the weather because you're out there 10 to 12 hours a day. We go out and string our pots in long lines, 200 to 300 pots. Then we check the pots and get the crabs. We're real careful about the crabs and the pots have an escape panel with cotton that rots away if the pots get lost. We've got to watch the crabs today so there's some for tomorrow."