

A shell of a good time

Don't let quarantine make you crabby

By **BARBARA B. COVELL**
For the *TODAY*

Are you feeling a little housebound? Do the “sheltering in place” and “social distancing” guidelines seem a little restrictive to your four walls at home? Lincoln County residents have a glorious option which also complies with the COVID-19 health and safety measures.

If you are resident here, chances are pretty likely you love the ocean. And while beachcombing offers great recreation and treasure hunting, there is another choice which includes bringing home dinner. Clamming and crabbing might seem daunting to a novice, but local expert Cameron Rauenhorst (a.k.a. Captain Clameron), is on hand to share the basics on how, when and where to go for the bounty of the sea.

Let's start with clamming. There are many species of clams in our coastal waters. The main ones harvested include razors, cockles, softshells, gapers and purple varnish clams.

“All clamming is to be done at low tide, the lower the better” Rauenhorst said. “Razor clams are harvested on the ocean shores, but the majority of other clams are found in bay estuary environments.”

Rauenhorst said one of his favorite spots to harvest bay clams is at the Alsea Bay in Waldport, but that Siletz Bay and Yaquina Bay offer easy access and clean estuaries, as well. Popular harvesting maps, directions for clamming access points and rules and regulations are on the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife's website at www.oregon.gov/odfw/Pages/default.aspx.

Rauenhorst said most clams require no special equipment, just a bucket and some sort of digging device.

“My favorite species are purple varnish clams, as they are easy to find, you can dig them up with your hands, and you can get up to 72 per person, per day,” he said, adding, “Plus, I like harvesting purple varnish because they are considered invasive species. I feel like

I'm doing my part to rid the bay of invasives, as well as feeding my family.”

Rauenhorst recommends doing research before heading out, so you know what to look for, what to expect, what to do, and how to dress. YouTube videos are plentiful and the ODFW website at <https://myodfw.com/crabbing-clamming/species/clams> gives more information on the species of Oregon clams, in addition to restrictions. As of this writing, harvesting razor clams is closed from Cascade Head to the California border.

Crabbing is a popular recreational pastime and commercial business on the Oregon Coast.

“Crabbing is to be done at high tide, and depending on what type of equipment is used, crabbing can sometimes begin a few hours before high tide and last a few hours after,” Rauenhorst said. “There are many different traps out there, but some require a boat or a deep enough place to drop them. I like to use traps that hook onto my fishing pole, that way I can cast them from the beach. And the stinkier the bait, the better — you

can use mink, fish heads, chicken backs, liver, etc.”

“As with clamming, everyone has their favorite spots for crabbing, and it depends on what type of traps you have, Rauenhorst added. “I have been successful crabbing in Taft, Newport, Waldport, and Brookings. I have even hunted crabs in the tide pools at Seal Rock — Red Rocks are dominant there, but you can find some Dungeness too if you're lucky.” He gives his clients a real-life demonstration on how to identify crabs and tell the difference between males and females — called “Sexing and Sizing 101.”

For more information on the types of species and regulations, go to <https://myodfw.com/crabbing-clamming/species/crabs>.

ODFW does require a shellfish license for everyone 12 and older. To purchase licenses, go to myodfw.com or go to a local vendor.

Rauenhorst has been educating the public about clams and crabs (and other topics on the Oregon Coast) since 2006 as a seasonal park ranger assistant for Oregon State Parks.



Daily limits

Razor Clams: 15

Bay Clams (Butter, littleneck, gaper and heart cockle): 20 in aggregate, only 12 may be gapers.

Softshell Clams: 36

Mussels: 72

Purple Varnish Clams = 72

Scallops: 24

Shrimp: 20lbs in the shell

Octopus: 1

Squid: No Limit

Dungeness Crab: 12 (males only) 5-3/4" minimum size straight line across back

Red Rock Crab: 24 of any sex any size

After 12 years, he branched out on his own to start Captain Clameron's Excursions. It is his passion to connect others to all of the valuable resources that the Oregon coast has to offer and treat them with respect.

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