

ALL TIED UP

CRAB BOATS STAY ANCHORED AS STRIKE EXTENDS UP AND DOWN WEST COAST



Damian Mulinix/For EO Media Group

All packed up but nowhere to go is how many of the Ilwaco, Wash., crabbing fleet found themselves after a price strike put the brakes on heading out. Fishermen are waiting for processors to bring prices back up to \$3 a pound.

By PHOUNG LE
Associated Press

SEATTLE — Dungeness crab could be harder to come by if hundreds of fishing boats remain tied up at docks from California to Washington state by a dispute between crabbers and seafood processors over the price of the sought-after crustaceans.

Crab fleets that have been fishing in parts of Oregon and near San Francisco are now anchored, and other vessels in Washington state and Northern California have opted not to go out as their season gears up, said John Corbin, a commercial crab fisherman in Warrenton and the chairman of the Oregon Dungeness Crab Commission.

"We have about 1,200 boats that are tied up and are willing to stay tied up until processors bring the price back to \$3 (a pound)" from the latest offer of \$2.75, Corbin said Tuesday.

At Fisherman's Wharf in San Francisco, crab pots remained stacked up along the docks during what typically would be a busy season. From Half Moon Bay, California, to Westport, Washington, crabbers said they would stay put.

Larry Andre, a commercial crab fisherman in Half Moon Bay who had been fishing since November, said he supports the strike.

"We're tying up because they've asked us — other ports — to support them," Andre said.

Thousands of pounds

It doesn't sound like much, but a quarter drop in price is a lot when thousands of pounds of crab is involved, he said, adding that the situation is a lot harder on those who have not yet started crabbing.

The commercial Dungeness crab season along the West Coast opened in waves this year, and crabbers had been getting \$3 a pound, Corbin and other fishermen said. In some parts of Washington, Oregon and California, crabbing was delayed as state

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Dungeness crab sit in a bin near a boiler at Fisherman's Wharf Tuesday in San Francisco. Dungeness crab could be harder to come by if fishers from Canada to Northern California continue their strike over the purchase price. The strike started Dec. 28, after Pacific Choice Seafood in Humboldt County, Calif., offered to pay \$2.75 a pound for the tasty crustacean. Crabbers whose seasons had already opened had negotiated a price of \$3 per pound.



Annette Traverso of the Alioto-Lazio Fish Co. looks over near-empty tanks of Dungeness crab Tuesday.

AP Photos/
Eric Risberg

Wave of vehicle break-ins hits county

Sheriff's Office and police investigating

By ERICK BENDEL
The Daily Astorian

On Christmas Day, the Clatsop County Sheriff's Office was flooded with calls related to vehicle break-ins that occurred in Svensen and Knappa. In one case, a Svensen man lost about \$4,000 worth of custom-made steelhead fishing rods.

The string of thefts "probably happened Christmas Eve night and into the early morning hours of Christmas," Sgt. Jason Hoover, of the Sheriff's Office, said.

Then, on New Year's Eve, rural Warrenton from roughly Ridge Road to Sunset Beach got hit with more than a dozen similar crimes, including one involving a victim who had about \$500 in cash stolen.

More than 30 incidents of unauthorized motor vehicle entry have been reported since Christmas Eve — and those are just the county cases. Astoria, Warrenton and Seaside police are also investigating a series of thefts from vehicles, according to Hoover.

"Most of the time, when you have one or two, you start having kind of a surge of them," he said.

In all but a few cases, the victims left their vehicles unlocked, and in darkened driveways, according to a Sheriff's Office release.

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'This is one beautiful campus'

Museum will convert auto shop into a pond

By EDWARD STRATTON
The Daily Astorian

A sliver of commercial property off Marine Drive will become a pond for sailing model boats, part of the Columbia River Maritime Museum's vision for a park-like campus around the Barby Maritime Center.

The museum last week purchased North Coast Auto Service from owner Denis Renaud for \$850,000. The auto repair shop will operate for up to two years before the conversion.

"For us, this completes the campus," said Sam Johnson, the museum's director. "There's always more land here and there, but for us, this is one beautiful campus."

Long time coming

Johnson said the museum has been working with Renaud for several years to acquire the property.

"I think Mr. Renaud was finally interested in retiring, and we were concerned about the property," Johnson said. "He could have sold that property to any number of people for any number of uses."

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Pearl of Seaside hotel pleases city planners

Revised plan wins consensus

By R.J. MARX
The Daily Astorian

SEASIDE — The hurdles that stalled a luxury hotel plan on the Prom appear to have been overcome as the Planning Commission granted a variance to allow the proposal to move ahead.

Owner Antoine Simmons of Pearl Coast Lodgings LLC and architect David Vonada appeared Tuesday night with revised plans eliminating the most contentious parts of the

Pearl of Seaside project that was struck down by the City Council on appeal last summer.

Simmons, with his wife, Rocio, owns and operates four boutique hotels in Seaside and Cannon Beach, including Seaside's Gilbert Inn and the Inn at the Prom.

Plans for the Pearl called for three stories, a penthouse floor and tower roof.

A two-level parking garage on Beach Drive with 41 inside spaces would have been supplemented with an additional 10 outdoor spaces on Avenue A.

But minimum stall lengths, back-out and lane widths

required a variance from the Planning Commission. Simmons also requested a height variance of 7 feet because of grade differences on various parts of the property. After several months of testimony, the Planning Commission granted both variances.

The parking plan was ultimately rejected by the City Council after an appeal by neighbors.

'Back to drawing board'

The new plan eliminates the need for setback variances by reducing parking and



R.J. Marx/The Daily Astorian

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The proposed location for the new hotel, Pearl of Seaside.

