



KAYAK ANGLING
By Bruce Molenkamp

Kayak Fishing's Tastiest Catch

If you've been following this column, I'm sure you've noticed that kayaks are really effective ways to fish. They also work well for other types of "fishing" too, like crabbing. Most fishing kayaks are big on utility and have lots of room for gear. So when crab season comes along, they can provide a great platform to haul up a few Dungenies for the day or add a side of crab to your salmon catch.

GEAR There are two main types of traps that work well on kayaks; both are foldable, saving space on your deck. There are box-type traps, like the Danielson or Promar, and simple crab rings. I like box traps since the crab stay put once inside and they let you soak it longer for more Dungenies come pot-pulling time. They also allow you pay attention to other things, like salmon fishing, after you've dropped the traps.

To start crabbing, you'll need about 75 feet of leaded rope, a crab float, a bait cage, a 2- to 5-pound weight and a crab gauge. Most of the gear is affordable and available at local tackle shops. I do, however, like to save a few bucks and stop by the thrift store for old weight-lifting dumbbells to keep the traps in place. Likewise for bait, I freeze my old salmon carcasses.



It may be a little difficult to secure traps on the kayak, as they are big and tend to slide around. An easy way to do so is to make a simple rack with two lengths of 1/2-inch PVC. Wrap duct tape 6 inches from the bottom end to create a collar about 1/2-inch thick. With the long side up, put those in your scupper holes in the tankwell and then thread your folded traps onto them (see picture).

Finally, two important things for crabbing are a fish finder and GPS. To get a limit it's important to find the right depth and bottom surface. Being able to mark where your traps are set on the GPS saves a lot of time too.

STRATEGY Scan for an area between 30 to 50 feet deep and then make sure it's all sand. Dungeness like sand, but if you get too close to rocky areas, other creatures will steal your bait.

Once you find a spot, take a trap from the back and set it in front of you. Next, open it, bait it, attach a harness, a rope and add a weight. Then set it in the water and use the side of the kayak to ease it down. During this step it's a good idea to straddle the kayak to keep steady.

Next, either go hang out on the beach while your pots soak or try salmon fishing. Ah, decisions, decisions.

When it's time to bring in the traps, start pulling line against the side of the 'yak and throw it over the other side, back into the water. If you'd like to make it a little easier, Scotty makes a "Trap-Ease" pulley system which fits in most rodholder mounts.

Once the trap is up, place it in front of you, coil the rope, pop the trap open and get to sorting. Store keepers in a wet burlap bag and throw it in the tankwell. Next, either drop the traps down for another soak or head in for a feast!

Oregon bays are open now, and in Washington, crabbing opens out of Neah Bay, Sekiu and Olympia June 18. Season will open out of Port Angeles, Port Townsend, Edmonds, Everett, Oak Harbor, Seattle, Bremer-ton and Tacoma July 1 for Weds.-Thurs. crabbing.



Kayak-crabbing pioneer Chuck Espiritu with a solid haul.