

Next evening razor-clam dig tentatively set to begin Jan. 27

Local News

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After a stormy New Year's opener, razor clam diggers will get another chance to hit the beach for a five-day opening scheduled to begin Jan. 27 if marine toxin tests show the clams are safe to eat.

The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) also announced tentative plans for a razor-clam dig in late February, pending the results of another round of marine toxin tests. For the dig planned this month, Long Beach and Twin Harbors are tentatively scheduled to open on evening tides Jan. 27-31, with digs also planned at Copalis and Mocrocks beaches Jan. 29-31. In addition, the National Park Service has scheduled a two-day dig Jan. 30-31 at Olympic National Park's Kalaloch beach to coincide with those at the other beaches. Digging at all five beaches will be restricted to the hours between noon and midnight.

Dan Ayres, WDFW coastal shellfish manager, said final word on the dig will be announced once test results show whether the clams are safe to eat. If the dig is approved, he advises clam diggers to check weather and surf forecasts before heading out.

"With the rough weather we had during the last opener, digging dropped off significantly as people played it safe," Ayres said. "On the plus side, there are likely enough clams remaining in the quota to offer more digs later."

Olympic National Park Superintendent Karen Gustin also urged diggers to take safety precautions during night digs, especially at Kalaloch.

"Kalaloch is considerably more remote than the other clamming beaches, and visitors should be prepared for primitive conditions," she said. "With no streetlights or lighted buildings in the area, flashlights or lanterns are a necessity."

Under WDFW rules, harvesters may take no more than 15 razor clams and must keep the first 15 taken, regardless of size or condition. Each digger's limit must be kept in a separate container. All diggers must have an applicable 2009-10 fishing license to dig razor clams on any beach. A license is required for anyone age 15 or older.

Anglers can buy a combination license or an annual shellfish/seaweed license. Also available are razor-clam only licenses in annual or three-day only versions. Descriptions of the various licensing options are available on the WDFW website at <https://fishhunt.dfw.wa.gov>. A list of state license vendors is available at <http://wdfw.wa.gov/lic/vendors/vendors.htm>.

Tentative digging days and tides for this month's opening are:

Wednesday, Jan. 27, (4:24 p.m., -0.5 ft.) Long Beach, Twin Harbors
Thursday, Jan. 28, (5:13 p.m., -1.1 ft.) Long Beach, Twin Harbors
Friday, Jan. 29, (5:58 p.m., -1.5 ft.) Long Beach, Twin Harbors, Copalis, Mocrocks
Saturday, Jan. 30, (6:41 p.m., -1.5 ft.) Long Beach, Twin Harbors, Copalis, Mocrocks, Kalaloch
Sunday, Jan. 31, (7:23 p.m., -1.2 ft.) Long Beach, Twin Harbors, Copalis, Mocrocks, Kalaloch

In addition, WDFW has tentatively scheduled a late-February dig on the following dates and locations:

Friday, Feb. 26, (4:49 p.m., -0.7) Twin Harbors, Copalis, Mocrocks

Saturday, Feb. 27, (5:34 p.m., -0.9) Long Beach, Twin Harbors, Copalis, Mocrocks, Kalaloch

Sunday, Feb. 28, (6:16 p.m., -0.8) Long Beach, Twin Harbors, Copalis, Mocrock, Kalaloch

Beaches scheduled to open are:

Long Beach, which extends from the Columbia River to Leadbetter Point.

Twin Harbors Beach, which extends from the mouth of Willapa Bay north to the south jetty at the mouth of Grays Harbor.

Copalis Beach, which extends from the Grays Harbor north jetty to the Copalis River, and includes the Copalis, Ocean Shores, Oyhut, Ocean City and Copalis areas.

Mocrocks Beach, which extends from the Copalis River to the southern boundary of the Quinault Reservation near the Moclips River, including Iron Springs, Roosevelt Beach, Pacific Beach and Moclips.

Kalaloch Beach, which extends from the South Beach Campground to Brown's Point (just south of Beach Trail 3) in the Olympic National Park.