

#3

Everyone thinks all lobsters have large claws, right? Not always! The lobster you're probably thinking of is the East Coast cold water lobster, often referred to as the American or Maine lobster. The West Coast lobster (or spiny lobster) has no claws, but a big, delicious tail. Unlike the Maine lobster, which defends itself with its claws, the West Coast lobster uses its tail. The tail propels the lobster backward so it can escape quickly. The tail also has sharp spines that can puncture an animal (or a human hand!) if the lobster is captured and not handled a certain way. While the Maine lobster uses its claws to eat, West Coast lobsters must crush food in their powerful jaws.

Since lobsters have exoskeletons (a hard shell that encloses their body), they have to molt (shed their shell) in order to grow. They could not get any bigger if they could not get out of and rebuild their exoskeleton. Crabs and shrimps also molt to grow, unlike other invertebrates (squid, urchins, scallops) and finfish. Although animals that molt get the benefit of a new strong, clean shell, molting can be dangerous. Until their new shell hardens, lobsters and other animals that are more vulnerable to predators.

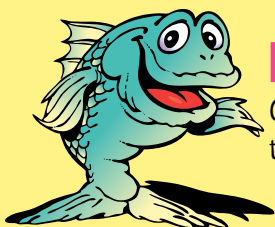


West Coast Lobster

AVAILABILITY OF SEAFOOD

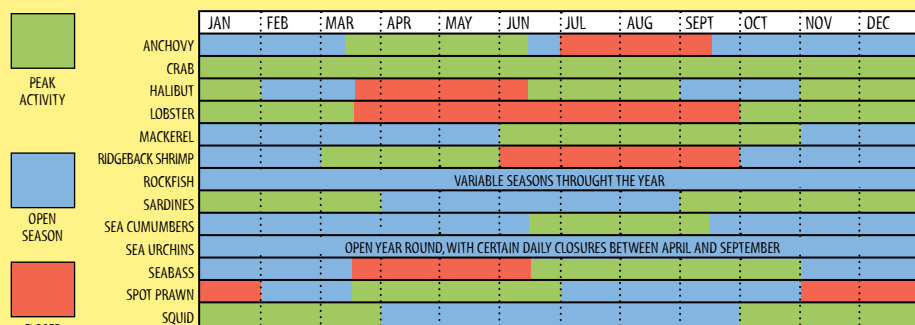
Did you know that the availability of seafood is similar to that of crops? Like crops, not all varieties of seafood are available throughout the year. Regulations protect most fish during certain times of the year. See the chart below to determine the peak seasons when your desired local seafood is typically available.

Remember though, that if the weather is bad, such as high winds and big swells, fishery participants may not be able to go out and fish. Ocean conditions may also change, triggering fish to move to another location. *If the fishermen can't find 'em, they can't fish 'em.* Don't be disappointed if the fish you wanted isn't available the day you want it. Rather, be understanding and adaptive by trying another product or by coming back another day.



DID YOU KNOW?

Commercial fishing is one of only a few remaining industries that provides food by "hunting and gathering" methods.



SOURCE: Modified from chart provided by the Joint Oil/Fisheries Liaison Office, Santa Barbara, California.
 NOTES: 1. Many other species are available. Highlighted here are just those discussed in this special section.
 2. The seasons illustrated here are based on 2007 regulations and typical local fishing activity.
 3. Fishing seasons do not necessarily open or close on the 1st or 15th as could be interpreted from this chart. Please check the commercial fishing regulations if you would like to know specific dates.

SPOT PRAWN AND



Did you know that the No. 1 seafood consumed in the United States is shrimp? It is also a favorite of the Fin-atic Reporters! There are two really delicious and high-quality shrimp fished in our region. Spot prawns are large and brightly colored. They are sold alive, bringing the fishery participants a premium price per pound. Ridgeback shrimp, also known as 'peel and eat' shrimp, are smaller but very popular among seafood consumers.

Spot Prawn

