Crabbers prepare as season nears

By ANDREA CASTILLO

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Joe Tomasello said he has been crabbing since 1957. For the past week, he, and everyone Dan Owens have been preparing 350 crab pots for the new season, down from 500 pots from previous years.

“There’s a lot that goes into this,” he said. “These stacks of crab pots are arranged so that each pot has a specific length of rope corresponding to the order in which we set them out. There’s a lot of work that goes into that order.”

Tomasello said on Friday he caught word that the year will be a good year.

“They are saying the crabs are out there and I heard Oregon is getting even stronger reports,” Tomasello said.

A group of crabbers met recently back home about 20,000 pounds of crab. Such a haul would be good news to many who regularly include the 10-legged crustaceans in their holiday feasts.

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Joe Tomasello prepares crab pots in the Santa Cruz Small Craft Harbor Friday. As the commercial crab season opening date of Nov. 15 nears.

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A year after Irene, East Coast prepares for big storm

Hurricane Sandy, moving north from the Caribbean, was expected to make landfall Monday night near the Delaware coast, then hit two winter weather systems as it moves inland, creating a hybrid monster that could cause more than $15 billion in damage and could wind up making nearly a foot of rain, high winds and up to 2 feet of snow. Experts said the storm would be wider and stronger than last year’s Irene, which caused more than $11 billion in damage, and could make the worst East Coast storm on record.

Officials did not mince words telling people to be prepared for several days without electricity. Jersey Shore beaches began issuing voluntary evacuation notices and putting boardwalks up, Atlantic City residents were ordered to close, and officials advised towns began issuing voluntary preparations. Patrick and Heather Peters pulled into their driveway in Bloomsburg, Pa., with a hurricane kit, 12 gallons of water, paper plates, batteries, flashlights and the last lantern on Wal-Mart’s shelf. They’ve also rented a U-Haul in case the forecast gets worse over the weekend.

“I’m not screwing around this time,” said Heather Peters, whose town was devastated last year by flooding following Hurricane Irene. “Be forewarned,” said Governor Dannel P. Malloy. Connecticut Gov. Dannel P. Malloy. “Assume that you will be in the eye of the storm.”

Farther north, residents started to roll in. Jumper, whose first floor took on nearly 5 feet of water during Irene, was tying down his patio furniture on Friday and moving items in a wood shop to higher ground.

“Terrorized last year,” Jumper, who came 58 on Saturday, said through tears. “We don’t need this again.”

The storm threatened to hit two weeks before Election Day, while several states were heavily involved in campaigning, campaigning and get-out-the-vote efforts. Republican presidential nominee Mitt Romney and Vice President Joe Biden both faced new crises in Virginia Beach, Va., though their events in other parts of the states were going on as planned. In Florida, island politicians asked supporters to take down yard signs for fear they might turn into projectiles in the storm.

After Irene left millions without power, utilities were taking no chances and were lining up extra crews and tree trimmers. Wind threatened to topple power lines, and trees that still have leaves could be weighed down by snow and fall over if the weight becomes too much.

In update New York, Rich ard Ball was plucking carrots, potatoes, beets and other crops from the ground as quickly as possible. Ball was still shaky three weeks after Hurricane Sandy ruined, crops and killed livestock last fall. Farmers were moving tractors and other equipment to high ground, and some families pointed moving furniture to upper stories in their homes.

“The fear we have a similar recipe to Irene has really instilled anxiety in town,” Ball said Friday. “I had them kill at least 40 people in the Caribbean, and just left the Bahamas.”