



Rock On, Rockfish!

Top 12+ Rockfish of the California coast

Fishinar 7/8/2015, Jonathan Lavan – Instructor

Questions? Feel free to contact me at jonathan@REEF.org

Photographs by: Janna Nichols and Jonathan Lavan

		<p><u>Blue Rockfish</u>- Common central California north, uncommon southern California south. In schools up in water column in Kelp forests. Often mixed with Black and other Rockfish. Two to four dark bands curve around front of head (<i>tear streaked fish is "blue"</i>). Upper lip of jaw extends only to midpoint of eye.</p> <p><u>Black Rockfish</u>- same distribution as Blue Rockfish. No dark bands on face. Upper lip of jaw extends to or beyond midpoint of eye.</p>
		<p><u>Kelp Rockfish</u>- Common southern California, occasional central California, rare northern California. Large eye set close to mouth (Kelp needs help). Color variable, fine brown mottling covers body. Also known as "Dumb Bass".</p>
		<p><u>Black & Yellow Rockfish</u>- Occasional southern California, occasional to uncommon central and northern California. Yellow membrane between third and fourth dorsal fin spines.</p> <p><u>Gopher Rockfish</u>- Common to occasional central California, occasional to uncommon southern and northern California. Pale blotch extends onto back from between third and fourth dorsal spine, another at mid-foredorsal fin and a third where spinous and soft dorsal fins meet. Different or incipient species?</p>
		<p><u>Olive Rockfish</u>- Common southern and central California becoming rare in extreme northern California. Several pale spots (olives) below dorsal fin and on back.</p> <p><u>Yellowtail Rockfish</u>- Common northern and central California becoming rare in southern California. Pale spots, same as Olive, but also dark speckling on sides.</p>

		<p>Copper Rockfish- Common all of California coast. Whitish well-defined stripe with relatively smooth edges on rear half of lateral line (plumber's copper pipe).</p> <p>Calico Rockfish- Occasional southern California, rare central California. Several irregular, rear slanting diagonal brown bands on back. Lateral line defined in white but not as evident as Copper.</p>
		<p>Brown Rockfish- Common to occasional northern to southern California. Dark spot on rear gill cover, may become faint with age.</p> <p>Grass Rockfish- Common to all of California. Head and back covered with small black spots and larger blotches. Fins dark compared to Brown. No dark spot on gill cover</p>
		<p>Vermilion Rockfish- Common northern California, uncommon central and southern California. Shades of red (<i>the color vermilion</i>), reddish-orange and mottled with gray. Fins usually dark edged. Anal and ventral fins rounded.</p>
		<p>China Rockfish- Occasional to rare northern and central California. Yellow stripe from foredorsal fin curves to run length of lateral line to tail (<i>Nike swoosh – think of Nikes made in China</i>). Yellow speckles on head and back.</p>
		<p>Canary Rockfish- Rare California. Yellowish orange. Markings very similar to Vermilion. Anal and ventral fins have a leading white edge and are pointed (<i>like a canary's beak</i>).</p>
		<p>Rosy Rockfish- Occasional California. Several large white spots (<i>white roses</i>) on back.</p>
		<p>Treefish- Common to occasional southern California, uncommon to rare north to San Francisco. Large bright red lips. Yellow with broad black bars (<i>think of them as 'tree trunks'</i>).</p>
		<p>California Scorpionfish- Common southern California, occasional to uncommon- north to central California. Brownish-red speckles throughout, hollow-looking eyes. Patterns on dorsal fins.</p>