Rockfish

Scientific Name
*Sebastes nigrocinctus*

Common Name(s)
Tiger Rockfish

Habitats
Caves and Crevices

Distribution
Alaska USA to California USA

Abundance in Puget Sound
Occasional

Scientific Name
*Sebastes caurinus*

Common Name(s)
Copper Rockfish

Habitats
Rocky, protected areas

Distribution
Alaska USA to Baja Mexico

Abundance in Puget Sound
Common

Scientific Name
*Sebastes melanops*

Common Name(s)
Black Rockfish

Habitats
Kelp forests to open water

Distribution
Alaska USA to S. California USA

Abundance in Puget Sound
Abundant
Sebastes nigrocinctus

Genus: Sebastichthys or Sebastodes

Taxonomy (Phylum, Class, Order, Family)
Chordata, Actinopterygii, Scorpaeniformes, Scorpaenidae

Similar species
Sebastes serriceps, Sebastes rubrivinctus, Sebastes dalli

Distinguishing Characters
Five dark bands on body. No bands on tail, whereas S. serriceps, S. rubrivinctus, and S. dalli have bands on tail.

Natural History Information
The Tiger rockfish is solitary and sometimes territorial. This species depends on the currents for food.

Sebastes caurinus

Genus: Sebastichthys or Sebastodes

Taxonomy (Phylum, Class, Order, Family)
Chordata, Actinopterygii, Scorpaeniformes, Scorpaenidae

Similar species
Sebastes dalli

Distinguishing Characters
Two dark bands below eye towards pectoral fin. Yellow behind eye, whereas S. dalli has no yellow behind eye.

Natural History Information
Copper rockfish are opportunistic carnivores that feed mainly on benthic organisms. This species feeds during the day and night, and prey varies with the season.

Sebastes melanops

Genus: Sebastichthys or Sebastodes

Taxonomy (Phylum, Class, Order, Family)
Chordata, Actinopterygii, Scorpaeniformes, Scorpaenidae

Similar species
Sebastes mystinus

Distinguishing Characters
Anal fin rounded. Knob on tip of lower jaw. Lower jaw extends to or past eye, whereas the jaw of S. mystinus extends only to mideye.

Natural History Information
Black rockfish gather in large schools and are aggressive feeders. This species is found on the bottom at night.
**Scientific Name**  
*Sebastes miniatus*

**Common Name(s)**  
Vermilion Rockfish

**Habitats**  
Rocky reefs and large boulders

**Distribution**  
Queen Charlott Is. to Baja Mexico

**Abundance in Puget Sound**  
Uncommon

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**Scientific Name**  
*Sebastes flavidus*

**Common Name(s)**  
Yellowtail Rockfish

**Habitats**  
Open water over reefs

**Distribution**  
Alaska USA to California USA

**Abundance in Puget Sound**  
Occasional

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**Scientific Name**  
*Sebastes emphaeus*

**Common Name(s)**  
Puget Sound Rockfish

**Habitats**  
Rocky areas with caves and crevices

**Distribution**  
Alaska USA to California USA

**Abundance in Puget Sound**  
Common
### Vermillion Rockfish

**Scientific Name:** *Sebastes miniatus*

**Synonymy:** Genus: *Sebastianthys* or *Sebastodes*

**Taxonomy (Phylum, Class, Order, Family):**
- Chordata, Actinopterygii, Scorpaeniformes, Scorpaenidae

**Similar Species:**
- *Sebastes pinniger*

**Distinguishing Characters:**
- Thin strip runs laterally from midbody to tail. Band below eye slopes toward pectoral fin. Dorsal, pectoral, anal and tail fins dark edged, whereas *Sebastes pinniger*’s fins not dark edged.

**Natural History Information:**
- Vermillion rockfish adults are usually found below 70 ft.

### Yellowtail Rockfish

**Scientific Name:** *Sebastes flavidus*

**Synonymy:** Genus: *Sebastianthys* or *Sebastodes*

**Taxonomy (Phylum, Class, Order, Family):**
- Chordata, Actinopterygii, Scorpaeniformes, Scorpaenidae

**Similar Species:**
- *Sebastes serranoides*

**Distinguishing Characters:**
- Pale spots below dorsal fin. One or two yellow streaks behind eye, whereas *S. serranoides* is without streaks.

**Natural History Information:**
- Yellowtail Rockfish commonly swim in schools right below the kelp canopy.

### Puget Sound Rockfish

**Scientific Name:** *Sebastes emphaeus*

**Synonymy:** Genus: *Sebastianthys* or *Sebastodes*

**Taxonomy (Phylum, Class, Order, Family):**
- Chordata, Actinopterygii, Scorpaeniformes, Scorpaenidae

**Similar Species:**
- None

**Distinguishing Characters:**
- Mottled strip runs laterally from pectoral fin to base of tail. Thin, pale lateral line from gill cover to tail.

**Natural History Information:**
- Puget sound rockfish can live from depths of up to 360 meters. They can be commonly found in loose congregations.
**Sebastes maliger**

**Common Name(s):** Quillback Rockfish

**Habitats:** Rocky reefs near areas of kelp

**Distribution:** Alaska USA to California USA

**Abundance in Puget Sound:** Common

**Sebastes auriculatus**

**Common Name(s):** Brown Rockfish

**Habitats:** Hard, sandy bottoms near rocks

**Distribution:** Alaska USA to Baja Mexico

**Abundance in Puget Sound:** Common

**Sebastes nebulosus**

**Common Name(s):** China Rockfish

**Habitats:** Rocky areas with caves and crevices

**Distribution:** Alaska USA to California USA

**Abundance in Puget Sound:** Occasional
### Sebastes maliger

- **Scientific Name**: Sebastes maliger
- **Genus**: Sebastichthys or Sebastodes
- **Taxonomy**: Chordata, Actinopterygii, Scorpaeniformes, Scorpaenidae
- **Similar Species**: None
- **Distinguishing Characters**: High spinous dorsal fin. Blotches of white to yellow or orange in areas on and below dorsal fin.
- **Natural History Information**: Quillback rockfish remain in the same area for years. They feed on schools of herring.

### Sebastes auriculatus

- **Scientific Name**: Sebastes auriculatus
- **Genus**: Sebastichthys or Sebastodes
- **Taxonomy**: Chordata, Actinopterygii, Scorpaeniformes, Scorpaenidae
- **Similar Species**: None
- **Distinguishing Characters**: Dark patch on gill cover behind eye.
- **Natural History Information**: Brown rockfish females can produce between fifty-five thousand and three hundred thirty-nine thousand eggs per season and are released April to June.

### Sebastes nebulosus

- **Scientific Name**: Sebastes nebulosus
- **Genus**: Sebastichthys or Sebastodes
- **Taxonomy**: Chordata, Actinopterygii, Scorpaeniformes, Scorpaenidae
- **Similar Species**: None
- **Distinguishing Characters**: Yellow speckling on head and body. “Nike” swoosh from dorsal fin to tail.
- **Natural History Information**: China rockfish only stay with a ten square meter territory. When confronted with an intruder this species erects its spines to look larger.
Scientific Name  
*Sebastes ruberrimus*

Common Name(s)  
Yelloweye Rockfish

Habitats  
Rocky reefs in protective recesses

Distribution  
Alaska USA to Baja Mexico

Abundance in Puget Sound  
Occasional

Scientific Name  
*Sebastes proriger*

Common Name(s)  
Redstripe Rockfish

Habitats  
Various bottoms near base of cliffs

Distribution  
Bering Sea to Monterey Bay USA

Abundance in Puget Sound  
Rare

Scientific Name  
*Sebastes pinniger*

Common Name(s)  
Canary Rockfish

Habitats  
Rocky reefs

Distribution  
Alaska USA to Baja Mexico

Abundance in Puget Sound  
Occasional
**Scientific Name** | **Synonyms**
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*Sebastes ruberrimus* | Genus: *Sebastichthys* or *Sebastodes*

**Taxonomy (Phylum, Class, Order, Family)**
Chordata, Actinopterygii, Scorpaeniformes, Scorpaenidae

**Similar species**
*Sebastes proriger*

**Distinguishing Characters**
Bright yellow iris. Spines located between eyesm and rough parallel ridges on nape, whereas *S. proriger* does not have spines or ridges.

**Natural History Information**
Yelloweye rockfish have very low resilience with a minimum population doubling time of fourteen years. The oldest of this species recorded is one hundred eighteen years old.

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**Scientific Name** | **Synonyms**
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*Sebastes proriger* | Genus: *Sebastichthys* or *Sebastodes*

**Taxonomy (Phylum, Class, Order, Family)**
Chordata, Actinopterygii, Scorpaeniformes, Scorpaenidae

**Similar species**
*Sebastes ruberrimus*

**Distinguishing Characters**
Pale stripe, bordered in dark red, runs laterally from gill cover to tail, whereas *S. ruberrimus* is without stripe.

**Natural History Information**
Redstripe rockfish are rarely found shallower than ninety feet. Little is known about the behavior of this deep water species.

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**Scientific Name** | **Synonyms**
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*Sebastes pinniger* | Genus: *Sebastichthys* or *Sebastodes*

**Taxonomy (Phylum, Class, Order, Family)**
Chordata, Actinopterygii, Scorpaeniformes, Scorpaenidae

**Similar species**
None

**Distinguishing Characters**
White stripe laterally from gill cover to tail. Bands below eye sloping toward pectoral fin.

**Natural History Information**
Young Canary rockfish live in shallow water, moving to deeper water as they mature. Adults of this species are found at depths between eighty and two hundred meters.
Scientific Name  
**Sebastes entomelas**

Common Name(s)  
Widow Rockfish

Habitats  
Offshore reefs, below 80 feet

Distribution  
Alaska USA to California USA

Abundance in Puget Sound  
Common

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Scientific Name  
**Sebastes paucispinis**

Common Name(s)  
Bocaccio

Habitats  
Wide range, along bottom

Distribution  
Alaska USA to California USA

Abundance in Puget Sound  
Occasional

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Scientific Name  
**Sebastes mystinus**

Common Name(s)  
Blue Rockfish

Habitats  
Kelp forests to open water

Distribution  
Alaska USA to Baja Mexico

Abundance in Puget Sound  
Common

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### Scientific Name | Synonyms
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**Sebastes entomelas** | Genus: **Sebastichthys** or **Sebastodes**

**Taxonomy (Phylum, Class, Order, Family)**
- Chordata, Actinopterygii, Scorpaeniformes, Scorpaenidae

**Similar species**
- *None*

**Distinguishing Characters**
- Dark membrane between pale rays of pectoral, ventral, and anal fins. Large pale spot on side of body above pectoral fin.

**Natural History Information**
- The Widow rockfish female is capable of laying over one million eggs. Females generally grow larger than males.

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### Scientific Name | Synonyms
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**Sebastes paucispinis** | Genus: **Sebastichthys** or **Sebastodes**

**Taxonomy (Phylum, Class, Order, Family)**
- Chordata, Actinopterygii, Scorpaeniformes, Scorpaenidae

**Similar species**
- *Sebastes brevispinis*

**Distinguishing Characters**
- Large upturned mouth, upper jaw extends past eye. *S. brevispinis* upper jaw only extends to rear of eye.

**Natural History Information**
- The Bocaccio larva are abundant in or near upwelling fronts.

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### Scientific Name | Synonyms
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**Sebastes mystinus** | Genus: **Sebastichthys** or **Sebastodes**

**Taxonomy (Phylum, Class, Order, Family)**
- Chordata, Actinopterygii, Scorpaeniformes, Scorpaenidae

**Similar species**
- *Sebastes melanops*

**Distinguishing Characters**
- Dark bands (2-4) curve around front of head. Rear edge of anal fin straight, whereas *S. melanops* anal fin is rounded.

**Natural History Information**
- Blue rockfish gather in large schools and are aggressive feeders. This species is found on the bottom at night.