



Yelloweye Rockfish – *Sebastes ruberrimus*

Protection status: *Washington State endangered species listing*

In Washington State, yelloweye rockfish are found offshore along the coast, and rarely are observed in Puget Sound. Yelloweye are a very large rockfish species that can reach up to 3.5 feet (~1m) in length and 39 pounds (18kg). Their color ranges from orange-red to orange-yellow, and there may be black on their fin tips. Adults usually have a light to white stripe on the lateral line; juveniles have two light stripes, one on the lateral line and a shorter one below the lateral line.



Photo: G. McIntyre

Life history

Yelloweye rockfish are among the largest and longest-lived rockfish, with some individuals exceeding 100 years of age. This slow-growing species matures late: both males and females reach sexual maturity at about 20 years of age. Mating occurs once a year. Females produce between 1 and 3 million eggs per season, internally storing sperm for 4- to 6 weeks while their eggs develop; and after fertilization, embryos develop for about five weeks before being released. Once the larval young are released they may remain in the surface waters over a wide area, potentially extending several hundred miles offshore. Larval rockfish feed on diatoms, dinoflagellates, tintinnids and juveniles consume copepods and euphausiids of all life stages. Adult yelloweye rockfish eat invertebrates and small fishes including other species of rockfish.

Habitat use

Yelloweye rockfish live in complex rock and wall habitats along with kelp canopies and artificial structures such as oil platforms and piers at depths ranging between 130 and 1,800 feet (40 to 550 m), however they are most commonly found between 300 and 590 feet (91 to 180m). Once fully developed adults, they typically are bottom-dwelling fish, generally found just on or above rocky substrates, and are thought to develop strong associations to particular sites because of their sedentary nature.

Why are yelloweye rockfish included in the Aquatic Lands HCP?

The Aquatic Lands Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP) addresses 29 animal species that depend on submerged or intertidal lands for either all or a significant portion of their life cycle. Specific threats that warrant protection of yelloweye rockfish include:

- Changes in habitat structure
- Increase in predation
- Decline in water and sediment quality
- Physical harm or harassment from covered activities

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The Aquatic Lands Habitat Conservation Plan

The Washington State Department of Natural Resources (DNR) is the steward of more than 2.6 million acres of state-owned aquatic lands beneath Washington's navigational lakes, rivers, marine waters, and estuaries. DNR sustainably manages these aquatic lands on behalf of the people of the state—to protect fish and wildlife and to provide opportunities for commerce, navigation, and public access.

The increased demand for the human use and modification of aquatic lands can be harmful to aquatic habitats and species. To encourage a balanced approach to managing and protecting these lands, DNR is developing an Aquatic Lands **Habitat Conservation Plan** (HCP). The HCP will provide a framework for managing the aquatic lands under DNR's stewardship to ensure the continued health of our state's marine and fresh waters and the species that inhabit them.

Learn more

For more information about DNR's Aquatic Lands HCP and the other species that are covered in the plan, visit: www.dnr.wa.gov/aquaticHCP

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