

## Rockfish Species of Concern

### Canary

3 orange stripes across head. Lateral line in clear gray zone & orange mottling.



### Yelloweye

Brilliant yellow eye & raspy ridges above eye. Fins usually have black edges.



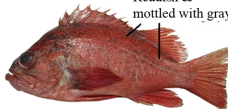
### Bocaccio



Lower jaw greatly projecting & elongated body.

### Vermilion

Reddish & mottled with gray.



## Accurately Identify and Report the Rockfish You Catch and Release.

Rockfish can be challenging to identify; anglers are encouraged to learn key features and use picture references to aid identification.

Accurate identification is crucial. Data from recreational anglers is critical to scientific evaluations that determine population health.

To support rockfish conservation and science, it is important anglers report all rockfish caught and released to WDFW port samplers.

Also, beginning in 2013, port samplers in some areas will be asking anglers if they used a descending device to release yelloweye or canary rockfish.

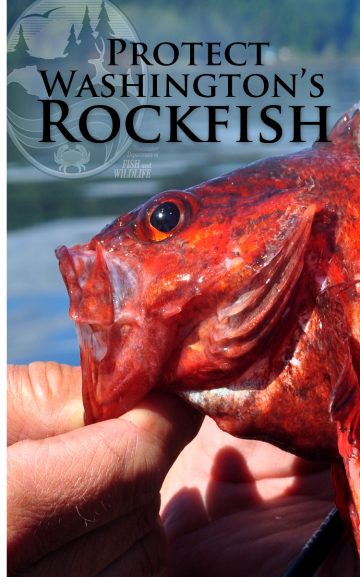
### Protect Washington's Rockfish January 2013

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**FISH and  
WILDLIFE**



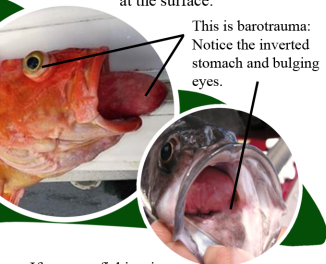
# PROTECT WASHINGTON'S ROCKFISH

- Avoid prohibited rockfish species
- Release rockfish at depth
- Accurately identify & report your rockfish catch

## Why Protect Rockfish?

Washington is home to many species of rockfish. Some populations are healthy, but others such as yelloweye, canary and bocaccio are not. Regulations intended to aid their recovery prohibit keeping **canary** and **yelloweye** in all areas and **bocaccio** in Puget Sound.

Rockfish suffer **barotrauma** when brought to the surface. Gases in the swim bladder expand, causing the stomach and eyes to bulge. This expansion makes descent difficult when the fish are released at the surface.



This is barotrauma: Notice the inverted stomach and bulging eyes.

If you are fishing in an area where you are catching fish you can't keep, it's best to move to another location. The best protection is always avoidance. However, you will encounter prohibited rockfish even when you do your best to avoid them.

Read on to learn how you can help improve the survival of released rockfish.



SEND  
THAT  
FISH  
DOWN

Releasing rockfish at the depth of capture recompresses them and improves their ability to stay down.

There are a variety of devices that you can use to release rockfish below the surface:



**DEPTH PRESSURE RELEASE**  
These devices grasp the fish on the jaw and release automatically once your desired depth is reached.

**INVERTED HOOK**  
An inverted barbless hook is inserted in the lower lip. Once back to depth, release the fish with a sharp jerk on the line.



**BOTTOM CONTACT RELEASE**  
A weight secures the grip as the fish descends. Once the weight contacts the sea floor, it releases the fish.



### DO NOT VENT

Puncturing the fish's swim bladder or bulging organs is not recommended as it can cause serious injury or introduce infection.

tips

## Effective Rockfish Release

- **Get the rockfish down quickly**-have your descending device ready to use. **Fish returned to depth within 2 minutes have a much better chance of survival.** Survival can decrease in half for every 10 minutes the fish is out of the water
- **Avoid rough handling**-avoid dropping fish; touch fish as little as possible. Use a wet towel or wet your hands to avoid removing the protective slime coat.
- **Return fish back to the depth of capture or at least 60 feet.**
- **Use the descending device that works for you**- consider the fishing location, depth, and type of boat you have.

