Copper Rockfish vs. Gopher Rockfish and Canary Rockfish

Copper rockfish, gopher rockfish, and canary rockfish are often misidentified. This flyer offers features that can be used to differentiate between the three species.

**COPPER ROCKFISH:** LIMITED RETENTION IN CALIFORNIA

- Large Dorsal Fin Relative to Body Size
- Lighter Band on Last Two-thirds of Lateral Line
- Anal Fin Rounded
- White Belly

**CANARY ROCKFISH**

- Thick, Clear, Gray Band Extends from Head to Tail
- Black Spot Present on Smaller Fish
- Anal Fin Slanted

**GOPHER ROCKFISH**

- Lighter Area on Third to Fourth Spine
- Pink-to-Gray Blotches
- Strong spines above nostrils and eyes
- Tail Fin Slightly Forked
- Irregular Band on Lateral Line
- Anal Fin Rounded
**Angler Best Practices**

**Know your fish and educate others.** Familiarize yourself with the rockfishes in your area through resources such as fish identification books and guides, informational flyers, the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) website (wildlife.ca.gov/Fishing/Ocean/Fish-ID), game wardens, and port samplers.

**Minimize the fish’s injuries.** When rockfishes are brought up from depth, decreasing pressure may injure them. These injuries may cause the fish to float helplessly at the surface. Many anglers use a descending device to help a released fish regain depth. Visit wildlife.ca.gov/Conservation/Marine/Groundfish/Barotrauma for more information.

**Handle fish as gently as possible.** Use wet hands if possible (or wet towels, though they may remove protective slime) and do not touch the eyes. Get the fish back in the water quickly. Consider using barbless hooks, and avoid using treble hooks. Visit http://bit.ly/1e9EP4G for more information.

**Check before you go fishing!** For up-to-date information on rockfish regulations that pertain to your area, call the Recreational Groundfish Fishing Regulations Hotline at (831) 649-2801 or visit wildlife.ca.gov/Conservation/Marine/Groundfish.

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*Alternate communication format available upon request. If reasonable accommodation is needed call (916) 322-8911 or the California Relay (Telephone) Service for the deaf or hearing impaired from TDD phones at 1 (800) 735-2929 or 711.*

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