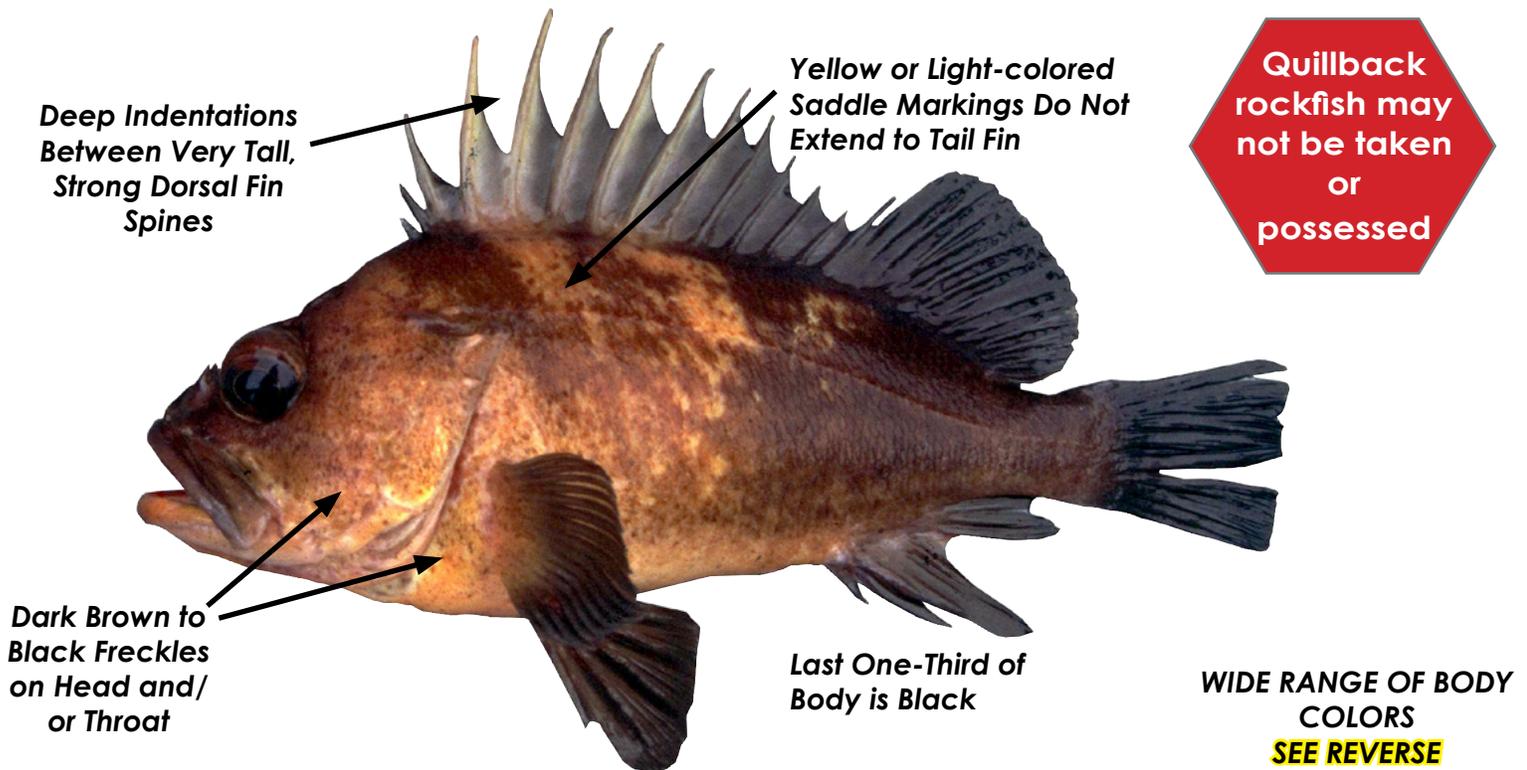


# Quillback Rockfish, Copper Rockfish, Gopher Rockfish

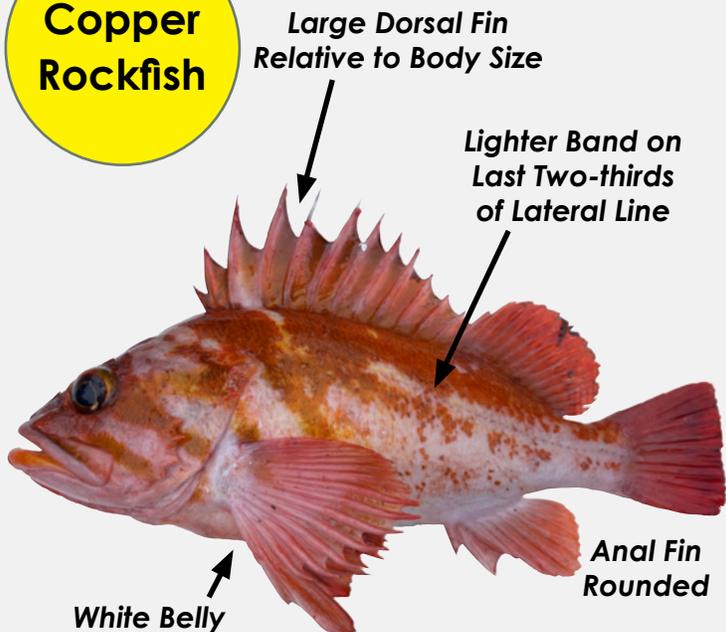
Rockfish Identification



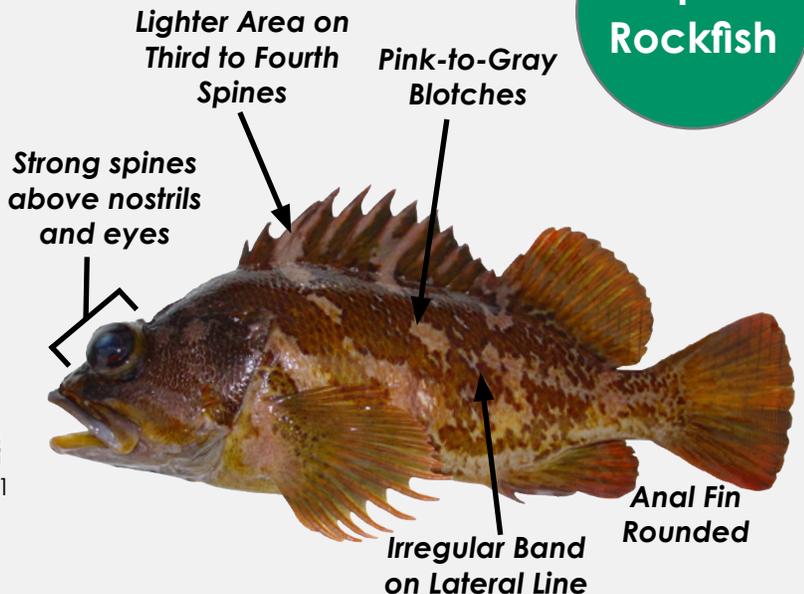
Quillback rockfish, copper rockfish, and gopher rockfish are often misidentified. This flyer offers features that can be used to differentiate between the three species.



## Copper Rockfish



## Gopher Rockfish

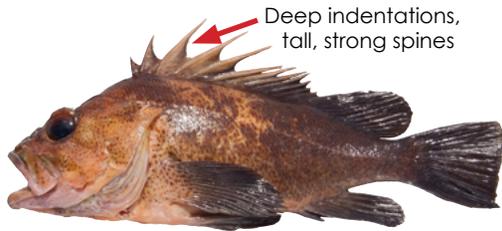


LIMITED RETENTION OF COPPER ROCKFISH IN CALIFORNIA

Rockfish coloration may vary, but some characteristics stay the same in each species.

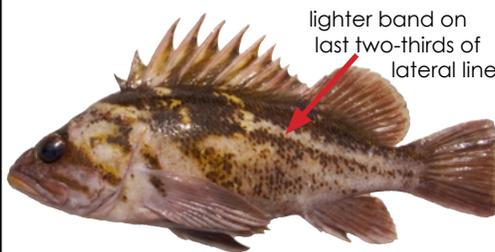
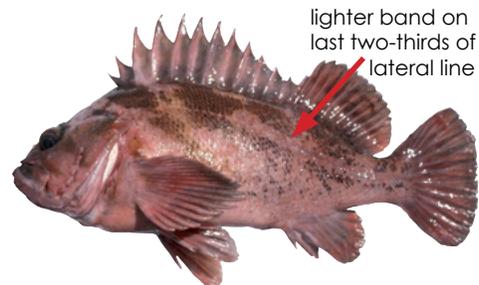
### QUILLBACK ROCKFISH

LOOK FOR: Deep indentations between tall dorsal fin spines, last one-third of body is black



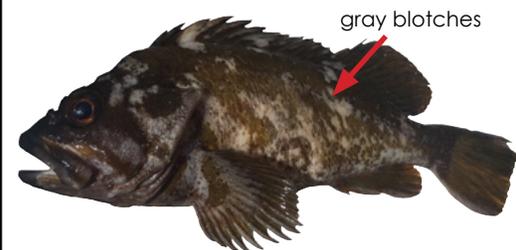
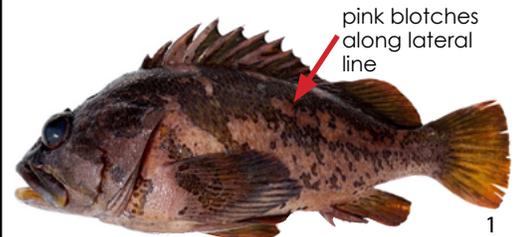
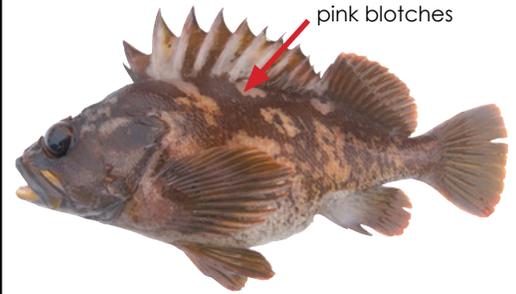
### COPPER ROCKFISH

LOOK FOR: Lighter colored band on last two-thirds of lateral line, white belly



### GOPHER ROCKFISH

LOOK FOR: Pink-to-gray blotches, irregular color on lateral line



### Angler Best Practices

**Don't fish where quillback rockfish occur.** If you encounter more than one quillback rockfish, move to a different fishing spot to reduce the number of fish caught that may not survive after being released.

**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 website ([wildlife.ca.gov/Fishing/Ocean/Fish-ID](http://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. **Descending devices** help a released fish regain depth and, as of 2024, boat-based anglers are required to have them readily available for use. Visit [wildlife.ca.gov/Conservation/Marine/Groundfish/Barotrauma](http://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.

**Check before you go fishing! For up-to-date rockfish regulations in your area, visit [wildlife.ca.gov/Fishing/Ocean/Regulations/Groundfish-Summary](http://wildlife.ca.gov/Fishing/Ocean/Regulations/Groundfish-Summary).**

Photo credits: 1- CDFW photo by E.W. Roberts III. All other photos courtesy of the CDFW California Recreational Fisheries Survey 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. Version 1 - April 2024

