

Responsible Fishing Counts

There are 38 species of rockfish along the coast of BC — some living for over 100 years! Long-lived and slow to grow and reproduce, rockfish don't stray far from home habitats, making them extra sensitive to fishing pressure.

Slow to grow and reproduce, some rockfish species are of conservation concern and more help is needed.

While commercial and recreational fishing restrictions have been in place in 162 Rockfish Conservation Areas (RCAs) since 2007, some species such as Yelloweye Rockfish continue to be of conservation concern.

More action is needed to help rebuild, protect and sustain rockfish populations.



Black Rockfish



Tiger Rockfish

Quillback Rockfish



Sharing Responsibility for Sustainable Recreational Fisheries in the Pacific Region

Protecting Rockfish

162 Rockfish Conservation Areas (RCAs)

covering 4,800 km² of coastal waters in BC are one of the largest marine networks of conservation-based fisheries closures in the British Columbia region. Most fishing activities, including recreational halibut and salmon fishing, are prohibited in all 162 RCAs.

 **Expect** to possess and use a descending device to release unintended rockfish catch.

 **Protect** rockfish by **avoiding** areas of high rockfish concentration when pursuing other species.

 **Respect** fishing regulations, catch limits and fishery closures.



Yelloweye Rockfish
Listed as "Special Concern" under the *Species at Risk Act (SARA)*



LOCATE FISHING INFORMATION ON YOUR MOBILE DEVICE, CURRENTLY AVAILABLE THROUGH THE SPORT FISHING INSTITUTE OF BC'S FISHING BC APP



PHOTOS: Courtesy of elkojonesphotography.com



Fisheries and Oceans Canada

Pêches et Océans Canada

Canada 

Survival rates improve when rockfish are quickly lowered and released with a descending device

How to Help Rockfish Survive Barotrauma



Always have a descending device on your boat and be prepared to use it on a spare rod or from your downrigger.



In under 2 minutes, lower unintended catch to near the depth of capture.

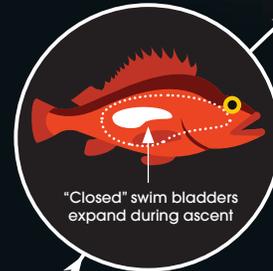


Limit handling and wear gloves to preserve the protective slime coating.



15-0 ft
4.5-0 meters

Rockfish with inflated swim bladders will need help descending below the surface or they will die.



"Closed" swim bladders expand during ascent

During ascent, rockfish experience a life-threatening expansion of internal gases, distending the swim bladder, bulging the eyes, and pushing the stomach into and through the mouth.

30-15 ft
9-4.5 meters



Rockfish have "closed" swim bladders

What is Barotrauma and Why are Rockfish at Risk?

Many bony fishes have swim bladders to regulate buoyancy and enable them to travel up and down the water column, but rockfish have "closed" swim bladders that don't adjust to rapid pressure changes during ascent, causing them to expand with gases.

60+ ft
18+ meters

Using a descending device to quickly lower rockfish to near the depth of capture allows expanded internal gases to recompress and swim bladders to return to normal.

Common types of descending devices

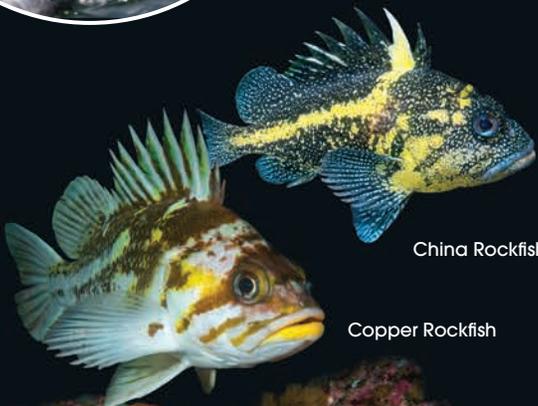
Pressure-release clamp is attached to the jaw and automatically releases when the depth is reached.

Spring-loaded clamp is attached to the jaw that releases the fish from a manually triggered clamp at the chosen depth.

Barbless inverted weighted hook is attached to the jaw and when the correct depth is reached and the rockfish has recovered, it swims off the hook.



Yelloweye Rockfish



China Rockfish

Copper Rockfish