



ROCK GREENLING (*Hexagrammos lagocephalus*)



Rock Greenling have elongated bodies with one cirri, or thin tuft, above each of their red eyes. They are brown or green with extensive red or orange mottling on males, and blue or light spots on females. The inside of the mouth and flesh is usually blue on adult fish. These fish are more likely to be caught by fishermen angling from rocky shores than by anglers on boats.

OVERVIEW

- **Oregon Conservation Strategy Species**
- **Size:** Up to 24 inches long
- **Weight:** Up to 4.7 pounds
- **Lifespan:** Unknown
- **Key Strategy Habitats:** Nearshore, Estuaries
- **Similar Species:** Other greenling species such as Kelp Greenling, Whitespotted Greenling.

RANGE AND DISTRIBUTION

In Oregon: Rock Greenling can be found throughout the state's marine waters and in estuaries.

Everywhere Else: Rock Greenling range from the Seas of northeast Asia (Yellow, Japan and Okhotsk) to the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands down along the coast of North America south to Point Conception, California. They are most abundant north of Morrow Bay, California.

FUN FACTS

Favorite Food: Crabs, shrimps, amphipods, worms, snails, bivalves, octopus, fishes, and fish eggs.

- The meat of Rock Greenling is often blue or green in color, but turns white when cooked.
- Females lay sticky eggs on algae.
- Rock Greenling are known to guard their nests.
- Rock Greenling are usually solitary and can be territorial, at least those along the North American coastline.

LIFE HISTORY AND ECOLOGY

Female Rock Greenling lay sticky eggs on algae in waters from intertidal to about 90 feet. Females lay three or more batches of eggs totaling between about 5,800 and 103,000 eggs per season. The spawning season is from June to September. Nest guarding of eggs has been observed. Embryos



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hatch after about a month. The larvae live as plankton in the water column but little is known about the planktonic stage of juveniles. There is a general lack of definitive knowledge about the life history characteristics of this species. Rock Greenling along the coast of North America are thought to be solitary and perhaps territorial.

Known predators of Rock Greenling include Coho Salmon, Pacific Cod, Arctic Terns, Aleutian Terns, Horned Puffins, Tufted Puffins, Rhinoceros Auklets, Bald Eagles, and Steller Sea Lions. Humans also eat Rock Greenling. They are caught by fishermen angling from rocky shorelines in nearshore waters. There is a long history of use of Rock Greenling by Native Americans.

DIET AND FORAGING

Rock Greenling eat a wide variety of prey that includes brittle stars, worms, shrimps, crabs, amphipods, snails, bivalves, fishes, and fish eggs.

HABITAT CHARACTERISTICS

Adult Rock Greenling live in rocky habitats including manmade structures such as jetties usually in areas with algae. They are found both in the nearshore ocean and in estuaries. Those off North America are generally found in water shallower than about 66 feet.

CONSERVATION AND MANAGEMENT

Threats: Their nearshore habitat preference puts them in habitats that can be heavily influenced by human activities.

Conservation and management: Fisheries for Rock Greenling are managed by the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife. No stock assessments have been done for this species in Oregon waters as it is seldom caught from boats. There is relatively little known about the life history of this species in Oregon waters.

REFERENCES

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