

Sebastes borealis

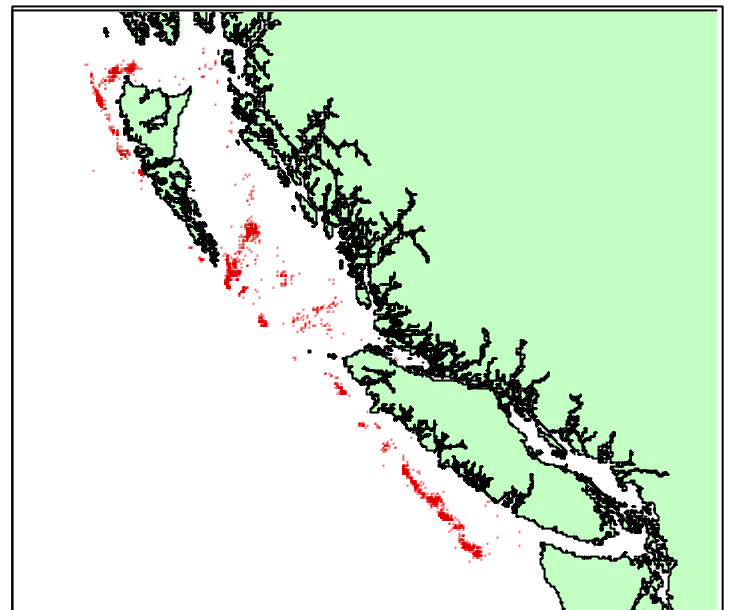
Shortraker Rockfish British Columbia Coast

Background

Shortraker rockfish (*Sebastes borealis*) are the largest of the slope rockfish, reaching lengths close to 1 metre. The name "shortraker" describes the stubby gill rakers. The species is easily confused with rougheye rockfish (*Sebastes aleutianus*).

Shortraker rockfish occur throughout the North Pacific, from Japan, the Okhotsk Sea, and southeastern Kamchatka to the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands and down to California. They have been collected from depths of 25 to 875 metres. Large individuals are probably solitary and live on silt or cobble bottoms near boulders.

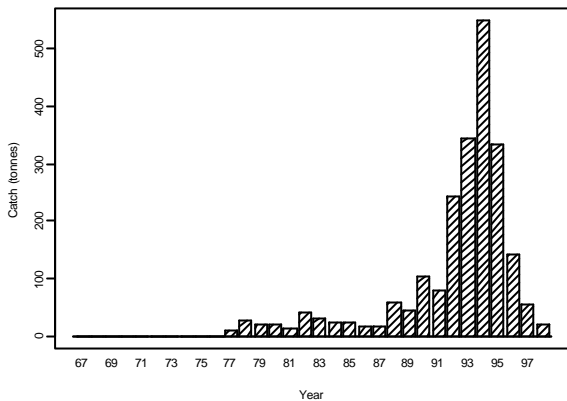
They have been aged as old as 120 years. Adults reach 50 % maturity at approximately 45 cm in length. Females spawn primarily in April. Mating occurs in the fall, and females generally release live larvae around April of the following spring. Fertilized eggs may obtain at least some nutrition from the female while in the ovary.



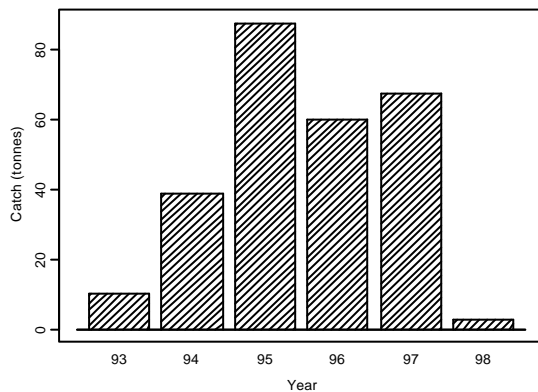
Canadian trawl catch locations of shortraker rockfish in British Columbia, 1996-98.

The Fishery

A foreign fishery for slope rockfish, including shortraker rockfish, was active coastwide between 1956 and 1982 with the largest catches landed between 1965 and 1970 by Japanese and Soviet trawlers. Historic catch statistics of shortraker rockfish are confounded by misidentification as rougheye rockfish with which they can be easily confused. However, shortraker rockfish catches have probably always been minor compared to catches of rougheye rockfish. Shortraker rockfish are captured by hook-and-line and trawl gear, with the largest trawl catches taken from the west coast of Vancouver Island and the largest hook-and-line catches taken from Goose Island and Mitchell's Gullies in Queen Charlotte Sound, and the west coast of the Queen Charlotte Islands.



Coastwide Canadian trawl catch of shortraker rockfish. Data for 1998 are not complete.



Coastwide Canadian hook-and-line catch of shortraker rockfish, 1993-98. Data for 1998 are not complete.

Resource Status

Shortraker rockfish occur at low abundance compared with other rockfish and have always been a minor component of the trawl fishery. Historically, the quotas for shortrakers have been established through analyses of catch history and abundance estimates (relative to rougheye rockfish) from biomass surveys.

Outlook

Shortraker rockfish abundance is not expected to increase in the near future and total allowable catch will remain low compared with other slope rockfish species.

For more information

Contact:

Jon Schnute
Pacific Biological Station
Nanaimo, B.C. Canada V9R 5K6
Tel: (250) 756-7146
Fax: (250) 756-7053
Email: schnutej@pac.dfo-mpo.gc.ca

Or:

Rowan Haigh
Pacific Biological Station
Nanaimo, B.C. Canada V9R 5K6
Tel: (250) 756-7123
Fax: (250) 756-7053
Email: haighr@pac.dfo-mpo.gc.ca

References

- Krieger, K. 1992. Shortraker rockfish, *Sebastes borealis*, observed from a manned submersible. *Mar. Fish. Rev.* 54(4):34-37.
- Love, M. S., M. Yoklavich, L. Thorsteinson and J. Butler. A guide to the rockfishes of the northeast Pacific. In prep.
- McDermott, S.F. 1994. Reproductive biology of rougheye and shortraker rockfish, *Sebastes aleutianus* and *Sebastes borealis*. M.S. thesis, Univ. Washington, 76 p.
- Richards, L.J. and N. Olsen. 1996. Slope rockfish stock assessment for the west coast of Canada in 1996 and recommended yields for 1997. *Can. Tech. Rep. Fish. Aquat. Sci.* 2134: 91p.
- Schnute, J. T., N. Olsen, and R. Haigh. 1999. Slope rockfish assessment for the west coast of Canada in 1998. *Can. Stock Assess. Sec. Res. Doc.* 99/16, 79 p.
- Westrheim, S.J. 1975. Reproduction, maturation, and identification of larvae of some *Sebastes* (Scorpaenidae) species in the northeast Pacific Ocean. *J. Fish. Res. Board Can.* 32: 2399-2411.

This report is available:

PSARC Secretariat
Pacific Biological Station
Nanaimo, BC V9R 5K6
Phone: (250) 756-7208
Fax: (250) 756-7209
E-Mail: psarc@pac.dfo-mpo.gc.ca
Internet Address: (www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/csas)

ISSN 1480-4913 (for English series)
ISSN 1480-4921 (for French series)

*La version française est disponible à
l'adresse ci-dessus.*



Correct citation for this publication

DFO, 1999. Shortracker Rockfish British Columbia Coast. DFO Science Stock Status Report A6-14 (1999).