



# Vermilion Rockfish vs. Canary Rockfish



Vermilion rockfish and canary rockfish are often misidentified.  
This flyer offers features that can be used to differentiate between the two species.

## VERMILION ROCKFISH: **LIMITED RETENTION** IN CALIFORNIA

Body Color:  
**ORANGE-RED to RED**  
with dark mottling

May Have  
Black-Tipped Fins

VERMILION  
ROCKFISH

Rough  
Chin and  
Maxillary

Tail  
Fin Straight

Anal Fin  
Rounded

Thick, Clear Gray-  
White Band Extends  
from  
Head to Tail

Black Spot Present on  
Smaller Fish

CANARY  
ROCKFISH

Smooth  
Chin and  
Maxillary

Tail  
Fin Slightly  
Forked

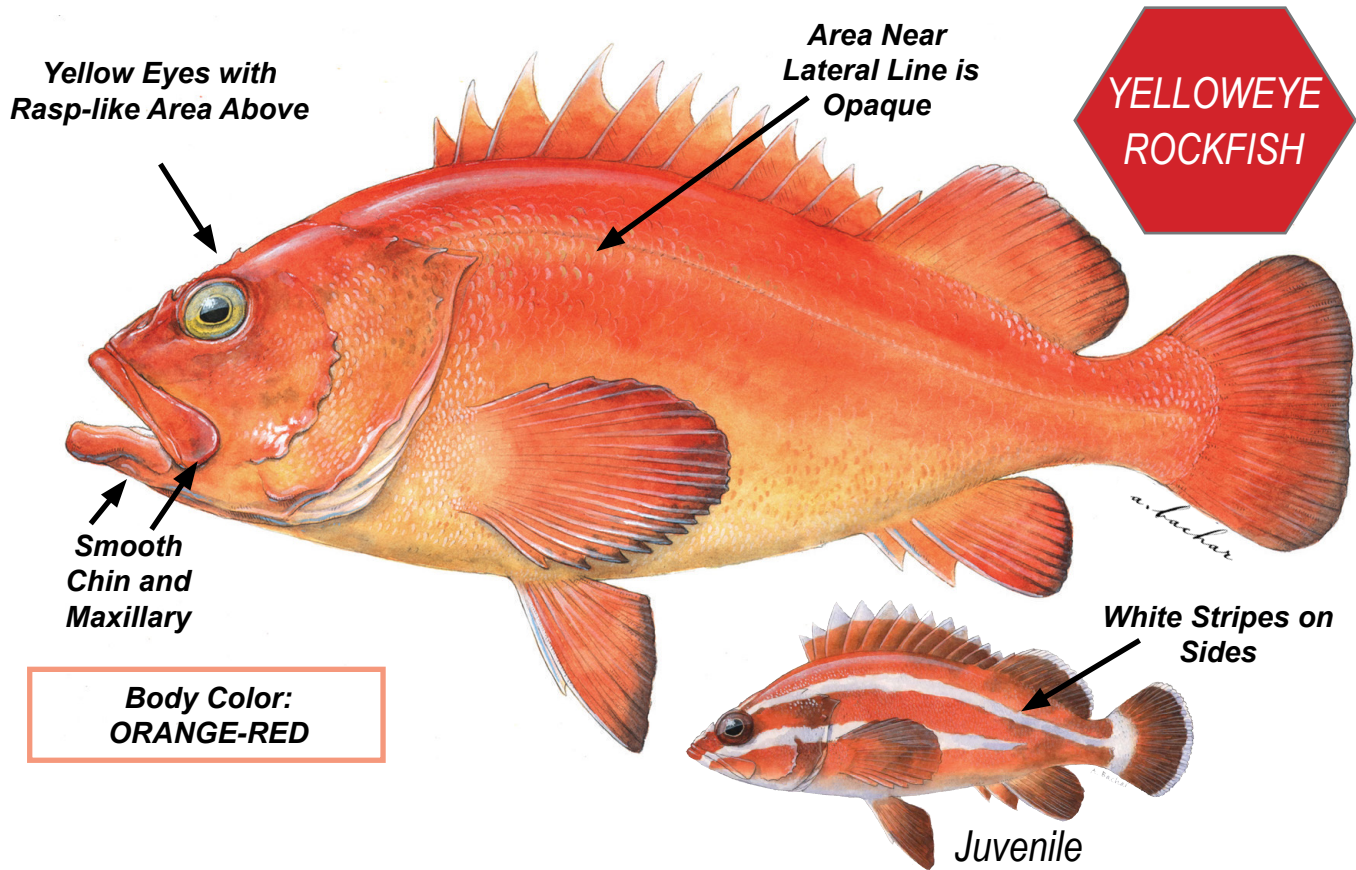
Anal Fin  
Slanted

Body Color:  
**BRIGHT ORANGE**



## YELLOW EYE ROCKFISH MAY NOT BE RETAINED IN CALIFORNIA

Yelloweye rockfish are sometimes misidentified as other reddish-colored rockfishes.



### “Overfished Rockfishes”... How You Can Help

Beginning in the 1990s, some rockfish populations dwindled to very low levels due to a combination of poor ocean conditions and increased fishing pressure. These populations were declared “overfished” by the federal government, and rebuilding plans were implemented to rebuild depleted populations as quickly as possible. Most species of rockfish have

recovered well under their rebuilding plans, such as canary rockfish. Anglers may keep canary rockfish and many other species as prescribed in current fishing regulations. Yelloweye rockfish is the last “overfished” rockfish species but is expected to recover by the year 2025. While the cowcod population has recovered, the allowable harvest limit is still too low to allow retention.

It is illegal to keep either of these species in California, and violators are subject to fines. Yelloweye rockfish and cowcod must be returned to the water immediately after being caught to increase their chances of survival. Here are some things you can do to reduce your impacts on overfished or recovering rockfish species, which may also increase your future fishing opportunities:

**Don't fish where overfished species occur.** If you encounter more than one individual of an overfished species, 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 rockfish in your area through resources such as fish identification books and guides, informational flyers, the CDFW 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 rockfish 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 an inverted, weighted plastic crate with a rope attached to the bottom to help the fish regain depth, or a weighted, inverted barbless hook or commercially available fish descending device. 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 (not towels, which may remove protective slime) and do not touch the eyes. Get the fish back in the water quickly. Use 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](http://wildlife.ca.gov/Conservation/Marine/Groundfish).