

MARINE RESOURCES PROGRAM

March 2016



Deacon Rockfish & Blue Rockfish FAQ

What is a Deacon Rockfish?

This newly designated species was known prior to 2015 as the “solid” version of Blue Rockfish. The “blotched” version will continue to be called Blue Rockfish. The two species differ in pigmentation, anatomy, genetics and distribution; their ovaries are even different colors. Both species are found in Oregon, with Blue Rockfish more common to the south and Deacon Rockfish ranging farther north. The scientific names are *Sebastes diaconus* (Deacon Rockfish) and *Sebastes mystinus* (Blue Rockfish).

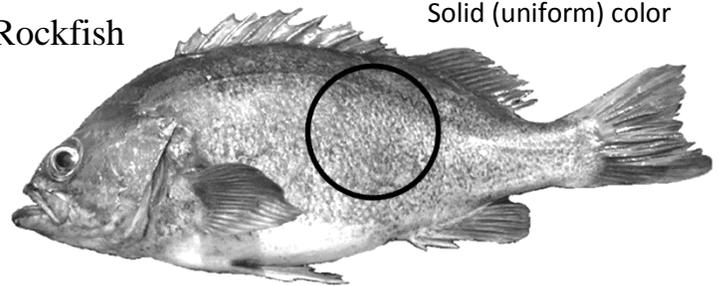
Read a news release from Oregon State University at <http://goo.gl/TT8HPz>

What if I catch one?

There is no need for fishermen to sort or otherwise differentiate between the two species for now. Any regulation – sport or commercial – that refers to Blue Rockfish applies to Blue Rockfish and Deacon Rockfish combined.

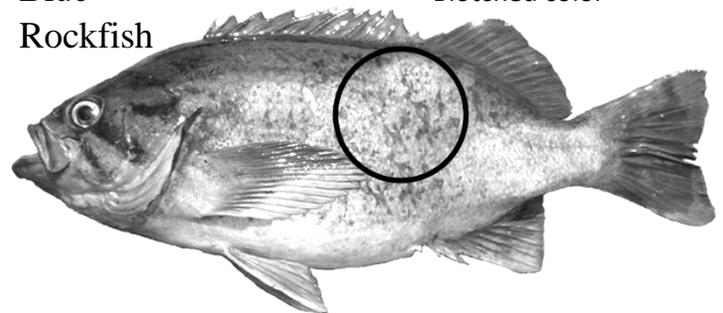
For example, in the sport fishery, when the daily bag limit is 3 Blue Rockfish, an angler could keep 2 Blue Rockfish and 1 Deacon Rockfish or keep 0 Blue Rockfish and 3 Deacon Rockfish. In the commercial fishery, when the two-month cumulative trip limit is 30 pounds, a fisher could land 15 pounds of one and 15 pounds of the other.

Deacon
Rockfish



Solid (uniform) color

Blue
Rockfish



Blotched color

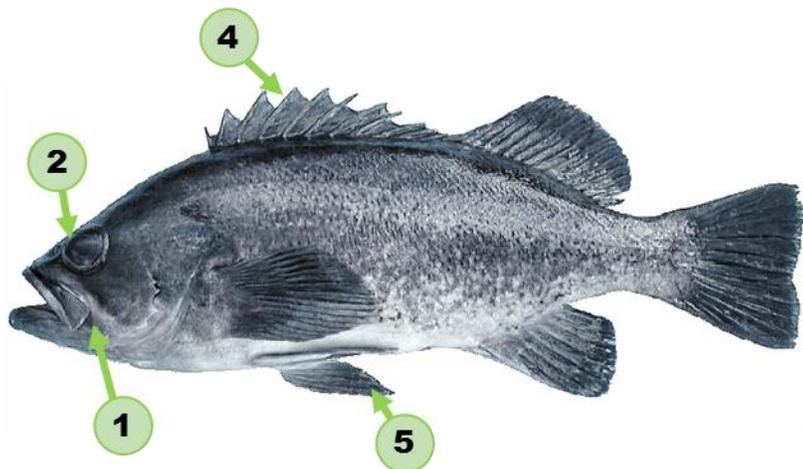
How is ODFW treating the new species?

Biological data, like length and age, are now being collected separately from the two species, just as data are collected from other rockfish species. This is the first step in assessing populations. Until more is known, however, the two species will continue to be managed together.

OK, so I don't need to know the difference, but what if I want to?

We love fish identification and are glad you do, too. See the other side for tips.

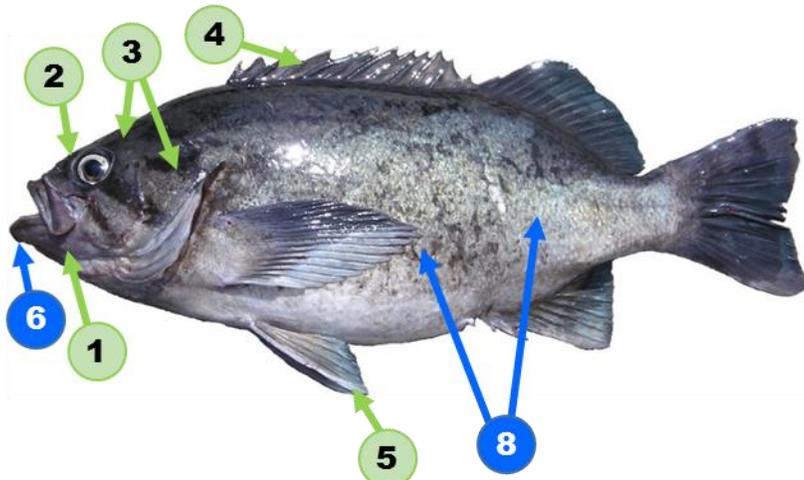
Black Rockfish



Common traits of Blue Rockfish and Deacon Rockfish that distinguish them from Black Rockfish

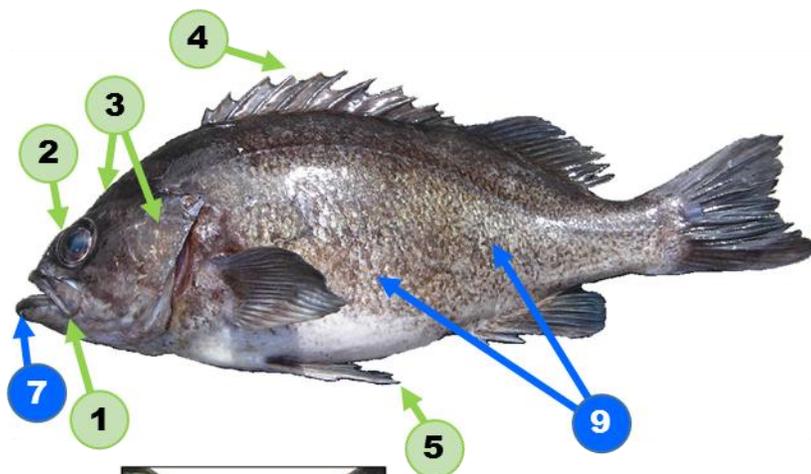
- 1 Maxillary (upper jaw) does not extend past the middle of the eye in Blue or Deacon Rockfish while it extends to the end of the eye in Black Rockfish.
- 2 Blue and Deacon Rockfish have an enlarged "hump" in the orbital bone around the eye (must feel for hump in upper forward quarter of the orbit). Black Rockfish have only a slight flattening of the orbital bone in the same area.
- 3 Prominent head stripes in Blue and Deacon Rockfish (which fade shortly after harvest). No head stripes in Black Rockfish.
- 4 No spots in dorsal fin of Blue or Deacon Rockfish. Spots prevalent in dorsal fin of Black Rockfish.
- 5 Pelvic fins have blue ends in Blue and Deacon Rockfish, but not in Black Rockfish.

Blue Rockfish



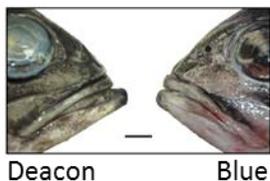
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Deacon Rockfish



Differences between Blue and Deacon Rockfish

- 6 Blue: Jaws meet together when mouth is closed.
- 7 Deacon: Lower jaw extends beyond upper jaw when mouth is closed ("underbite").
- 8 Blue: Large irregular dark blotches along body sides.
- 9 Deacon: Uniform dark coloration along body sides.



Comparison of jaws (Frable et al 2015)