



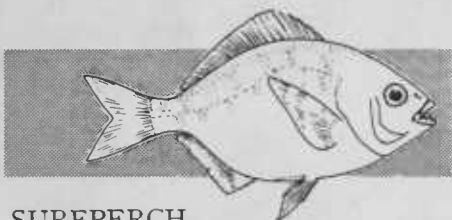
Bottomfishing Provides A Pleasant Change for Oregon Anglers

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Many people who come to the Oregon coast each year to fish for salmon miss a good bet by not also fishing for the less glamorous bottomfish. Bottomfishing has some real advantages.

There are many varieties of bottomfish, they are abundant, no license is required, there is no limit, and they are very good eating. In fact, some people prefer a fillet of lingcod to one of salmon.

Although bottomfish frequently are caught from boats fishing the near-shore reefs, they also are caught readily by casting from rocky headlands and from jetties along the Oregon coast.



SURFPERCH

The six species of mid-water surfperch are probably the fish most commonly caught off the rocks, beaches, and in the bays along the Oregon coast. Of the six species, three are the most commonly taken by sports anglers. They are the redbtail perch, pile perch, and striped surfperch.

The redbtail, easily recognized by its pale reddish pelvic fin and tail, is most commonly found in the surf zone along open ocean beaches, although it will be found occasionally in bays around rocks and pilings.

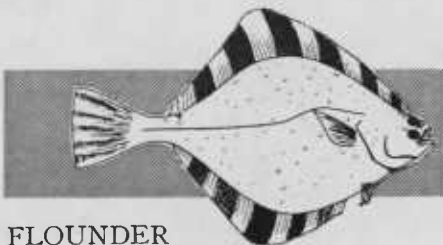
Fishing for redbtails in the surf requires a fairly heavy spinning rod cap-

able of casting two- to five-ounce sinkers. The terminal equipment is a two-hook "fish-finder" rig baited with mussels, pile worms, clams, or shrimp. (See diagram of "fish-finder" rig).

The pile perch—largest of the surfperches—is recognized by a dark vertical stripe on each side, while the striped perch is recognized by orange and blue horizontal stripes on the head and body. These two species are the most commonly caught surfperch in Oregon's bays. Both fish prefer rocks or pilings where they feed on the abundant marine life.

Fishing for pile and striped perch requires a different technique than fishing for redbtail perch. Around pilings or from a dock tie the hook (#4 or #6 baitholder) directly to the end of an eight- or ten-pound test monofilament line. Add one or two split shot weights 24" to 30" above the hook. After baiting with mussels, clams, pile worms, or mudshrimp, lower your bait directly alongside the pilings. Then watch your line closely because these fish have a light bite.

Around rocks a lighter version of the "fish-finder" rig (use as light a sinker as possible) works well.



FLOUNDER

There are many species of flounder found in Oregon waters but only two

are important to the sports fisherman: the starry flounder and the sand sole.

Both species are found in abundance in Oregon estuaries from late winter to mid-summer.

The sand sole is identified by sand-like skin and long, free rays on the forward part of the dorsal fin. The starry flounder is identified by rough plates on the skin and black-and-orange stripes on its fins.

Both fish are caught by using a light "fish-finder" rig baited with clams, shrimp, pile worms, mussels, or pieces of fish drifted over a sand or sand-mud bottom.

The starry flounder is a favorite of Oregon's bay fishermen because of its large size (up to three feet) and its excellent flavor.



BLACK ROCKFISH

Of the many species of rockfish found in Oregon waters, the black rockfish is most commonly caught by sports anglers because it frequents shallow, near-shore water around rocks, jetties, and kelp beds. It is also called sea bass, black snapper, or rock cod.

Black rockfish are popular with sports anglers because they readily take artificial lures. At certain times, particularly at night, they will take surface lures.

One of the most productive means of

catching black rockfish is to cast lead-headed, feathered, or plastic worm jigs over submerged reefs or jetties. The jigs are retrieved in short hops over the rocks (see diagram on jigs and jigging). Spoons, plugs, and at times even large flies are used successfully for catching black rockfish.

Herring, live shiner perch, shrimp, and pile worms are all natural baits used to take rockfish. These baits should be kept moving slowly over the bottom when fishing rockfish.



GREENLING

There are three common species of greenling, also called sea trout or kelp cod, taken by sports fishermen.

The greenlings are identified by small mouths, fleshy flaps on top of the head, and a long connected dorsal fin.

Greenling usually are found around rocks or kelp, sometimes several miles up a bay.

A light fish-finder rig using small #4 or #6 hooks, baited with ghost shrimp, pile worms, mussels, clams, or bits of fish, will take greenling. Occasionally small feathered jigs or wet flies worked slowly over the bottom will catch greenling.



LINGCOD

The most prized of all the fish taken from the rocks by sports anglers, a lingcod can give an exciting account of itself. Lingcod sometimes weigh as much as 75 pounds.

Lingcod are identified by a wide mouth, large teeth, and long, connected dorsal fin. They inhabit rocky areas and kelp beds. Unlike rockfish or surfperch, they are non-schooling.

Lingcod are quite aggressive and may be caught on a wide variety of baits and lures. Jigs, large spoons, plugs, or herring retrieved close to the bottom will all take lingcod. One special technique for fishing lingcod involves the use of live bait. Small (4" to 8") greenling, rockfish, or flounder are hooked through the lips or behind the dorsal fin and cast, without any added weight, over the rocky reefs lingcod frequent. As the small fish, hindered by the large hook (5/0 or 6/0), swims erratically towards the bottom it is tempting prey for a hungry lingcod. After a pickup the angler should wait a few seconds for the lingcod to swallow the bait before setting the hook.

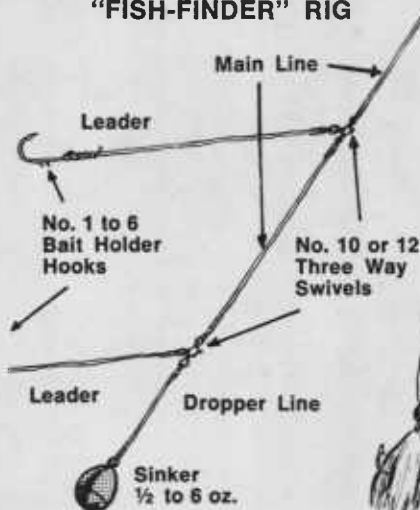
Because of the large size and the rocky areas lingcod frequent, most

anglers use stout rods and 20- to 40-pound test line when lingcod fishing.

OTHERS

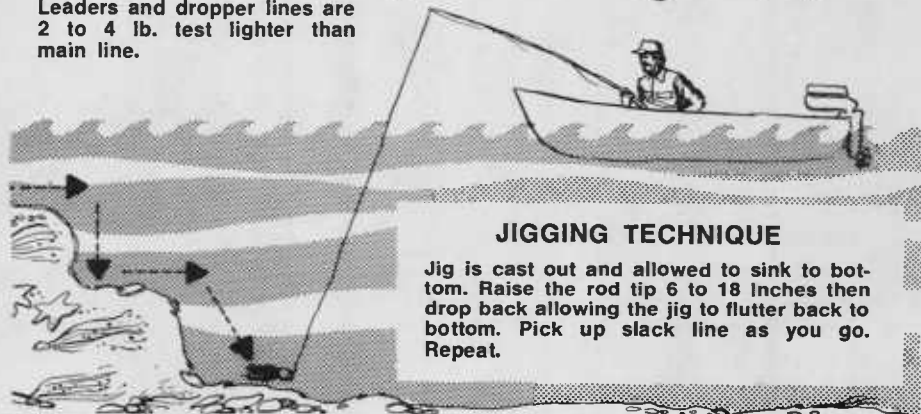
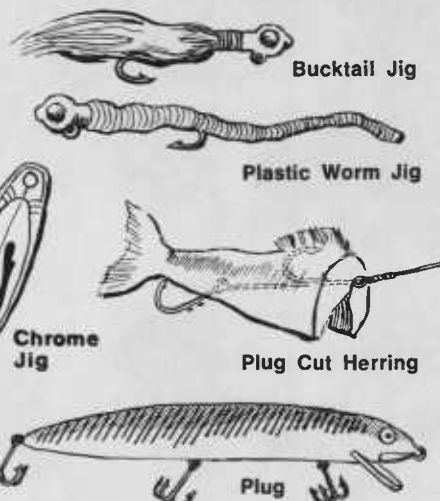
Although the species mentioned are the bottomfish most commonly taken by sports anglers near rocks and jetties, other species will be taken occasionally. They include sculpins, other rockfish, skates, tomcod, other surfperch, and blennies. A good source of identification for these fish is the *Field Guide to Common Marine and Bay Fishes of Oregon*, by Alan J. Beardsley and Carl E. Bond, Oregon State University Agricultural Experiment Station Bulletin #607. Single copies are available from your county Extension Office or from the Bulletin Mailing Office, Oregon State University, Corvallis, Oregon 97331.

"FISH-FINDER" RIG



Leaders and dropper lines are 2 to 4 lb. test lighter than main line.

LURES & BAITS



JIGGING TECHNIQUE

Jig is cast out and allowed to sink to bottom. Raise the rod tip 6 to 18 inches then drop back allowing the jig to flutter back to bottom. Pick up slack line as you go. Repeat.