



Oregon Sea Grant Extension
Sustainable Tourism &
Outdoor Recreation Program

Interpretative Fact Sheet Lingcod (*Ophiodon elongatus*)



The following short article is from the [Oregon Coast 101 Species](#) collection used by the Guide and Outfitter Recognized Professional (GORP) training program. These articles are intended to provide interesting facts you can share with your clientele and add value to your services.

An Interpretive Fact Sheet has been written about each species. We are currently uploading these blogs and creating the links.

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**Tourism and Business Development College of Business,
Oregon State University Extension - Oregon Sea Grant at**

<http://tourism.oregonstate.edu/>

Guide and Outfitter Recognized Professional Program

<https://www.GORPguide.org>

For more information about the GORP training program see:

<https://www.gorpguide.org/become-a-gorp-certified-guide>

Lingcod (ophiodon elongatus)

 tourism.oregonstate.edu/lingcod-ophiodon-elongatus/

By colliiek2

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When a fish smiles...

Lingcod (ophiodon elongatus) are almost primeval looking with large, gaping mouths and 18 large, sharp canine-like teeth. The term “ophiodon” means “snake-toothed.”



Lingcod can sometimes be blue. Photo courtesy of NOAA.

This fish was given the name ‘Lingcod’ because it looked a bit like both a ling and a cod fish. Not because it was either or even related. Lingcods belong to the greenling family (Hexagrammidae).

Description



Lingcod colors can vary. Photo courtesy of NOAA.

This voracious predator can grow to be 5 feet long and weigh up to around 130 pounds. Average size along the Oregon coast is around 2-3 feet (or around 5-10 years old).

The fish has a sinuous body with two successive long fins. They are typically dark gray, brown, or greenish on the back with some copper-colored mottling or spotting along the upper back, and sometimes blue.

Territory

Lingcods are native to the North American west coast from the Gulf of Alaska into Baja California, Mexico. Adults like to be near rocks, inshore up to 230-fathoms deep. Young lingcod prefer sandy or muddy bay bottoms and inshore areas.

As adults Lingcod are fairly sedentary and non-migratory. Males migrate to nearshore spawning grounds in late fall to establish and aggressively defend nest sites. Preferred sites have strong currents and are near rock crevices and ledges.

Spawning occurs in winter. Mature females leave the spawning ground after depositing the eggs.

Male Lingcods guard the nest until hatch (about 8- to 1-weeks later). Successful spawning would not be possible without this protection. Rockfish, sculpins, kelp greenlings, Sea Stars, and other cod will quickly destroy an unguarded nest.

Prey & Predators

Adults are aggressive predators that will eat just about anything they can fit into their large gaping mouths. Prey includes smaller lingcod, squid, octopi, crab, and large rock fish. Predators include sea lions and harbor seals, along with sharks and larger lingcod.

Fishing

Lingcods are prized by ocean sport and spear anglers, and have been an important part of local cultures.

Restrictions to protect habitat can involve seasons, areas, and equipment. Be sure to check Oregon Sport Fishing regulations and seasonal changes, licensing, and limits.

Lingcods harvested nearshore are often larger and tastier. Going out beyond the bay could be well worth the journey.

The smile...

Fish don't smile. Mind the fingers...

REFERENCES:

- National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (<https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/species/lingcod>)
- Oregon Dept. of Fish and Wildlife, Lingcod (<https://myodfw.com/fishing/species/lingcod>)
- Fishing Booker (<https://fishingbooker.com/fish/lingcod/us/OR>)
- Wikipedia, Lingcod (<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lingcod>)