



# REDTAIL SURFPERCH

## (*Amphistichus rhodoterus*)



Redtail Surfperch, like other members of the surfperch family, are deep-bodied, meaning they are bigger from back to belly than they are side to side. They are generally silver and a bit brassy in color. Redtail Surfperch have between 8 and 11 red or brown vertical bars on their sides and their fins are reddish colored.

### OVERVIEW

- **Oregon Conservation Strategy Species**
- **Size:** Up to about 16 inches long
- **Weight:** Up to about 4.1 pounds
- **Lifespan:** Up to at least 13 years
- **Key Strategy Habitats:** Nearshore, Estuaries
- **Similar Species:** Other members of the family Embiotocidae, which are typically known as perch, surfperch, or seaperch. Strategy Species in this family include Pile Perch, Shiner Perch, and Striped Perch. Calico Surfperch are another similar species.

### RANGE AND DISTRIBUTION

**In Oregon:** Redtail Surfperch can be found in shallow sandy bottom ocean waters and in estuaries.

**Everywhere Else:** Redtail Surfperch range from Vancouver Island to central California.

### FUN FACTS

**Favorite Food:** Amphipods. They also eat small fish, clams, crabs, worms, shrimp, and barnacles among other things.

- Redtail Surfperch are members of a family of fishes, Embiotocidae, that have internal fertilization and give birth to live young.
- Young fish are about 3 inches long when they are born.
- This species is one of the favorites of recreational fisherman who cast into the surf on open beaches.
- There has been a small commercial fishery for this species in Oregon and California.

### LIFE HISTORY AND ECOLOGY

Redtail Surfperch, like other members of their family, have internal fertilization during mating and embryos that develop inside females that are then born live. Mating takes place during the winter. Females give birth to between 1 and 51 young that are about 3 inches long. The young are born from at least June through September. Females mature between 3 and 6 years old when they are from 9 to 11 inches long. Males mature when they are between 8 and 11 inches long which can be as early as 2 years of age and all are mature by age 3. Redtail Surfperch can live to at least 13 years old.



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Known predators of Redtail Surfperch include harbor seals and humans. Surfperch were caught by Native Americans along the coast of both Oregon and California. Redtail Surfperch frequently are caught by recreational anglers along the west coast fishing from sandy beaches casting into the surf zone. Relatively small amounts of Redtail Surfperch have been harvested in commercial fisheries in Oregon and California. There are also a small number taken for display in aquariums.

### DIET AND FORAGING

Redtail Surfperch eat a variety of crustaceans, especially amphipods but also crabs, shrimps, mysids, and barnacles. They also eat small fish, clams, and worms.

### HABITAT CHARACTERISTICS

Redtail Surfperch are generally found in shallow open ocean waters over sandy bottoms. They are also sometimes found over low lying rocky bottoms. Redtail Surfperch are known to go into estuaries where some females give birth.

### CONSERVATION AND MANAGEMENT

**Threats:** Redtail Surfperch may be vulnerable to overfishing because of their limited reproductive output and the limited information available on population status and trends. This species may also be vulnerable to pollution and changes in ocean regimes.

**Conservation and management:** Redtail Surfperch are entirely under state management and are not part of any of the federal fishery management plans. There have been no formal stock assessments for Redtail Surfperch. The limited information about population status or trends comes from what is gathered by state agencies. These data come from monitoring fisheries. Fisheries for all species in this family are considered data-poor. Most of the catch coastwide is from recreational fisheries. The only commercial fisheries currently targeting surf perch occur in southern Oregon and California where they are a small part of the total catch.

### REFERENCES

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