

Fish Topic by Species

Lingcod

Have You Caught a Lingcod This Year?

Lingcod are one of the Pacific Coast's most prized saltwater species caught from charter boats fishing for bottom fish. They are extremely aggressive ambush predators that will attack and consume fish nearly their own size. Lingcod feature an elongated body with a large head. A lingcod's mouth is extremely large and filled with razor sharp teeth. Lingcod will regularly attack Greenling, Rockfish, Flounder and even other Lingcod that have been hooked by bottom fish anglers. It is not uncommon to pull both a hooked Rockfish, and the attached Lingcod all the way to the surface and into the net.

Lingcod are considered a reef fish. This species is attracted to rocky structure such as reefs, rock piles, rocky ledges, and underwater pinnacles. Typically, any rocky area has the potential to host a healthy population of Lingcod, especially if it's in an area that sees heavy tidal currents. They will rest on the rocky bottom as if they are lifeless, their mottled brown and green skin camouflaging them with their surroundings. As an unsuspecting baitfish swims by, the Lingcod bursts to life, thrusts towards its prey and engulfs it. Lingcod love live bait, because it is part of their normal diet.

Lingcod may be found statewide off California. This fish lives at or near the bottom, in a wide range of habitats including kelp beds, especially where there is strong tidal movement. They occur most abundantly in water shallower than 350 ft., but will often go into deeper water and have been caught as deep as 2,700 ft. off southern California. Metal lures are very effective for Lingcod. While more expensive than fishing soft plastics, they can be the top producer. Metal jigs are slender and dense, therefore they sink quickly and get down to the fish. Select the proper size based on the depth fished. A P-Line Lazer Minnow metal jig weighing 1ounce might be enough to fish around the edges of a Kelp bed, but a 24 ounce Cod Jig might be what is needed offshore.

Fishing for Lingcod with soft plastics is extremely popular and extremely productive. Single-tail and double-tail plastic grubs in 4" and 6" are the most common lure to find in any Lingcod anglers tackle box. Thread these on a lead-jighead, drop them to the bottom and "jig" them as you would a metal jig.

How to fillet a Lingcod, click here: www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ta20QP3Awxw