Project MER (Marine Ecology Research) is aimed at improving environmental education in the San Francisco Bay Area schools. As part of meeting this goal, it is hoped that students and teachers can see the results of their efforts being put to practical use. This guide is the sixth of a series produced to help students and teachers gather data concerning the San Francisco Bay-Delta-Estuary Complex and to organize these data to make a contribution to the literature of science, serving as the groundwork upon which knowledgeable decisions about the environment could be based. Presented in this guide is a key to aid in identifying the common fish of the Bay. Physical descriptions and illustrations of the fish are also given. The documents are SE 016 645--SE 016 649. (JP)
PROJECT M.E.R
MARINE ECOLOGY RESEARCH

HANDBOOK OF TECHNIQUES
and
GUIDES FOR THE STUDY
of the
SAN FRANCISCO BAY-DELTA-ESTUARY COMPLEX

KEY TO THE COHO FISHES OF SAN FRANCISCO BAY

PART VI

Prepared by

Bob Sikora
Berkeley High School

Contra Costa County Schools Office
Floyd Marchus, Superintendent

Alameda County Schools Office
Rock Lafleche, Superintendent

July 1973
The HANDBOOK OF TECHNIQUES AND GUIDES FOR THE STUDY OF THE SAN FRANCISCO BAY-DELTA-ESTUARY COMPLEX was developed and prepared by the staff of the Contra Costa County Superintendent of Schools Office and teachers in Contra Costa and Alameda counties. It is reproduced through the facilities of the Alameda County Superintendent of Schools Office.

For information concerning Project MER or this publication, write to:

Director, Project MER
Contra Costa County Superintendent of Schools Office
75 Santa Barbara Road
Pleasant Hill, CA 94523

COVER

_Crachion franciscorum_, the Bay Shrimp, was once the most prevalent shrimp in San Francisco Bay. Today, as the result of changes in Bay waters, it is no longer commercially important.

The line drawing of _Crachion_ was prepared by Margaret Lynn Siri, student of Ed Springer, at Kennedy High School.

CONTRA COSTA COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION - 1973

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KEY TO THE COMMON FISHES OF SAN FRANCISCO BAY

Prepared by
Bob Sikora, Berkeley High School

1. Skin like sandpaper; more than one gill slit (on each side).... 2
1. Skin slippery; one gill slit............................... 11

2. Body long and thin .................................. Sharks, 3
2. Body flat and wide .................................... Rays, 6

3. Anal fin absent ........................................... Dogfish
3. Anal fin present ........................................... 4

4. Sides with blackish spots .............................. Leopard Shark
4. Sides without marks .................................... 5

5. Anal fin same size as second dorsal and right below it. Soupfin Shark
5. Anal fin smaller than second dorsal and a little behind it .... Brown Smoothhound

6. One dorsal fin with stinger behind it .................. Bat Stingray
6. Two dorsal fins; no stinger ............................... 7

7. Body round; smooth, with no prickles .................. Electric Ray
7. Skin rough with scattered prickles ....................... 8

8. Tail fin well developed .................................. Thornback Skates
8. Tail fin very small or absent ............................. 9

9. Outer edge of pelvic fins (when they are stretched out) curve deeply inwards (fish upside down) .... 10

9. Outer edge curves only slightly inwards ............... Big Skate

10. Nose sticks out only slightly ........................... California Skate

10. Nose very large ........................................ Longnose Skate
11. Pelvic fins present (look carefully, they may be small and hidden underneath). .......... 12
11. Pelvic fins absent ................................................. 46

12. Pelvic fins between pectoral fins and tail .......... 13
12. Pelvic fins and pectorals overlapping ........... 22

13. 5 rows of bony plates on back; mouth under head. White Sturgeon
13. No bony plates; mouth at front of head ........ 14

14. No lateral line or small fleshy fin in front of tail and behind dorsal fin .......... 15
14. With lateral line and/or small fleshy fin between dorsal and tail ............. 18

15. Mouth large; lower jaw not reaching to front of head .. Anchovy
15. Mouth not especially large; lower jaw reaches to front of head ............. 16

16. Rows of shaded spots on upper sides of body behind gills; two large scales on each side of tail .......... 17
16. No dark spots or enlarged scales ................. 19

17. Lowest scales on belly forming a sharp, knife-like edge .. Shad
17. No sharp edge on belly .......................... Pilchard (Sardine)

18. Fleshy appendage at base of each pelvic fin; small fleshy fin between dorsal fin and tail .......... 19
18. No appendage or small fleshy fin .................. 23

19. Fleshy appendage at base of each pelvic fin .......... 20
19. No fleshy appendage at base of each pelvic fin .. Surf Smelt

20. 8 - 12 rays in anal fin .................. Steelhead Trout
20. 13 - 19 rays in anal fin .................. Salmon, 21

21. Black spots on upper lobe of tail only, jaws around teeth silvery; if small, dark marks on sides narrower (front to back) than the lighter spaces between them. Silver Salmon
21. Black spots on both lobes of tail, jaws, black around bases of teeth; if small, dark marks on sides wider (front to back) than the lighter spaces separating them .................. King Salmon

22. Back of first dorsal fin ahead of anus; front of anal fin; pectoral fins do not reach back as far as base of pelvic fins) .................. Jacksmelt
22. Back of first dorsal fin right above anus, just in front of anal fin; pectoral fins reach as far back as front of pelvics .......................... Topsmelt

23. Body flat, like a pancake; both eyes on same side of head; darker on top side, lighter on bottom .......... 24
23. Body the same on right and left sides .................. 31
24. Left (dark) pelvic fin on edge of throat; right (light) pelvic fin on right (blind) side. ........ Speckled Sanddab
24. One pelvic fin on each side of body (right side of body up except in Starry Flounder which may be either way up). .... 25

25. Mouth nearly the same on dark and light side; back end of jaw as far back as pupil of eye or farther on top side. .... 26
25. Mouth opens wider on bottom side; back end of jaw not as far back as pupil of eye on top side. ......................... 27

26. Dorsal and anal fins pointed in center ................................ Pacific Halibut
26. Dorsal and anal fins rounded ...................................... .Petrale Sole

27. Scales in form of bumps separated by tough skin. .......... Curlfin Turbot
27. Scales overlapping in usual fashion. .......................... 28

28. Lateral line single ................................................. Starry Flounder
28. Lateral line branched, one branch passing just beneath dorsal fin, the other branch passing over pectoral fins to tail 29

29. Lower lateral line makes steep curve above pectoral fin. . Rock Sole
29. Lower lateral line nearly straight .............................. 30

30. Upper branch of lateral line does not extend beyond pectoral fin ......................................................... .English Sole
30. Upper branch of lateral line extends well beyond pelvic fin ................................................................. .Diamond Turbot

31. Row of scales beneath dorsal fin separated by groove from scales on rest of body ................................. Sea Perches, 32
31. No row of scales with groove along base of dorsal ....... 40

32. Color pattern in head-to-tail stripes or up-and-down bars. . 33
32. Color otherwise. ..................................................... 37

33. Main color pattern up-and-down bars ............................. 34
33. Main pattern of blue and orange head-to-tail stripes ....... 36

34. Bars on sides green or brownish ................................. Barred Surfperch
34. Bars orange or yellowish ........................................... 35

35. Adult less than 7 inches long; 3 bars on sides ............ .Shiner Surfperch
35. Adult larger; about 9 or 10 bars on sides; reddish pelvic and tail fins .................................................. .Redtail Surfperch

36. Front part of dorsal much shorter than back part .......... Striped Surfperch
36. Front part of dorsal fin only slightly lower than back part; dark bars on back; plus around eyes ................ .Rainbow Surfperch

37. Eye larger than mouth .............................................. .Walleye Surfperch
37. Eye same size as mouth or smaller .............................. 38
38. Lips thick and white or pinkish; fins dark except for light pectorals. .................. Rubberlip Surfperch
38. Lips smaller. ........................................ 39
39. Body shaded with dark color; black spot at corner of mouth; dorsal fin rises to point in middle. .......... Pileperch
39. Body light colored and shiny; no spot at corner of mouth; dorsal evenly rounded. .................. White Surfperch
40. 3 stiff, stout spines at front of anal fin, then 5 - 9 softer rays. A large group, many of whose species look alike and can be told apart only by experts. . Rockfishes, genus Sebastes
40. Anal fin with 0 - 4 spines, but if 3, not large or stout; spines followed by more than 10 softer rays. ........ 41
41. Rows of small bright, shiny spots, looking like silvery pinheads, on body. .................. Midshipman
41. Without spots ........................................ 42
42. Tadpole-shaped, with a sucker under its flattened head. .Clingfish
42. Not so shaped or, if so, no sucker. .......................... 43
43. Pelvic fins united to form a cone; found in muddy areas, living in burrows of other animals. .............. Arrow Goby
43. Pelvic fins not united. .................................. 44
44. Two dorsal fins, the first composed of only 2 or 3 long, stout spines .................. Threespined Stickleback
44. If two dorsal fins, the first not composed of 2 or 3 long, stout spines .................. 45
45. Head with spines or prickles, at least on gill covers; scales not covering body below lateral line; pectoral fins large. The Sculpins, family Cottidae. A large family with many species that can be told apart only by experts. The most common species in the Bay is the Staghorn Sculpin which has a 3 or 4-pointed, antler-like spine on each gill cover. .......... Family Cottidae
45. Head without spines; lower jaw sticking out beyond upper; 7 or 8 stripes running from head to tail; pectoral fins not large .................. Striped Bass
46. Body long and skinny, covered with bony plates; snout long and tubular; no more than 3/4 inch thick. .......... Pipefish
46. Without bony plates or tubular snout; anal, tail and dorsal fins nearly continuous like one long fin going all the way around. ................. 47
47. With large, strong teeth including flat crushing molars in back of mouth; long, coming to a pointed tail; covered with black spots. .................. Wolf-eel
47. With smaller mouth; teeth tiny ................................ One of the Prickleback or Blenny Eels
Gill Slits

1st Dorsal Fin

2nd. Dorsal Fin

Pectoral Fins

Pelvic Fins

Anal Fin

Pectoral and Pelvic Fins Overlapping
GLOSSARY OF SCIENTIFIC NAMES

Anchovy ........................ (Fig. 1).  Engraulis mordax
Bass, Striped ........................ (Fig. 2).  Roccus saxatilis
Clingfish ............................... (Fig. 3).  Gobiesox maeandricus
Dogfish, Spiny ........................... (Fig. 4).  Squalus acanthias
Flounder, Starry ............................ (Fig. 5).  Platichthys stellatus
Goby, Arrow ................................. (Fig. 6).  Clevelandia ios
Halibut, Pacific ............................ (Fig. 7).  Hippoglossus stenolepis
Herring, Pacific ............................ (Fig. 8).  Clupea harengus
Jacksmelt ................................. (Fig. 9).  Atherinopsis californiensis
Midshipman ............................... (Fig. 10).  Porichthys notatus
Pilchard (Pacific Sardine) .............. (Fig. 11).  Sardinops sagax
Pileperch ................................. (Fig. 12).  Rhacochilus vacca
Pipefish ................................. (Fig. 13).  Syngnathus leptocephalus (1)
Ray, Electric ............................... (Fig. 14).  Torpedo californica
Salmon, King ............................. (Fig. 15).  Oncorhynchus tshawytscha
Salmon, Silver ............................ (Fig. 16).  Oncorhynchus kisutch
Sanddab, Speckled ........................ (Fig. 17).  Citharinichthys stigmatus
Shad .......................... (Fig. 18).  Alosa sapidissima
Shark, Leopard ........................... (Fig. 19).  Triakis semifasciata
Shark, Soupfin ............................ (Fig. 20).  Galeorhinus zyopterus
Skate, Big ................................. (Fig. 21).  Raja binoculata
Skate, California .......................... (Fig. 22).  Raja inornata

(1) Syngnathus leptocephalus has been more commonly known as Syngnathus grisescens. In Fish and Game Bulletin #157, Guide to the Coastal Marine Fishes of California, the name Syngnathus leptocephalus is indicated, based on communications received by the authors from W. I. Follett, since Syngnathus leptocephalus appeared first in print. (Pg. 212, Pref; Pg. 89, Footnote 2.)
Skate, Longnose. (Fig. 23). Raja rhina
Skate, Thornback. (Fig. 24). Platyrrhinoidis triseriata
Smelt, Surf. (Fig. 25). Hypomesus pretiosus
Smoothound, Brown. (Fig. 26). Mustelus henlei
Sole, English. (Fig. 27). Parophrys vetulus
Sole, Petrale. (Fig. 28). Eopsetta jordani
Sole, Rock. (Fig. 29). Lepidopsetta bilineata
Stickleback, Three-spined. (Fig. 30). Gasterosteus aculeatus
Stingray, Bat. (Fig. 31). Myliobatis californica
Sturgeon, White. (Fig. 32). Acipenser transmontanus
Surfperch, Barred. (Fig. 33). Amphistichus argenteus
Surfperch, Rainbow. (Fig. 34). Hypsurus caryi
Surfperch, Redtail. (Fig. 35). Amphistichus rhodoterus
Surfperch, Rubberlip. (Fig. 36). Rhacochilus toxotes
Surfperch, Shiner. (Fig. 37). Cymatogaster aggregata
Surfperch, Striped. (Fig. 38). Embiotoca lateralis
Surfperch, Walleye. (Fig. 39). Hyperprosopon argenteum
Surfperch, White. (Fig. 40). Phanerodon furcatus
Topsmelt. (Fig. 41). Atherinops affinis
Trout, Steelhead (or Rainbow). (Fig. 42). Salmo gairdnerii
Turbot, Curlfin. (Fig. 43). Pleuronichthys decurrens
Turbot, Diamond. (Fig. 44). Hypsopsetta guttulata
Wolf-eel. (Fig. 45). Anarrhichthys ocellatus
These pictures have been reproduced from Fish Bulletin No. 157, Guide to the Coastal Marine Fishes of California, by Daniel J. Miller and Robert N. Lea (1972), and Fish Bulletin No. 83, A Revision of the Family Embiotocidae (The Surfperches), by Fred Harald Tarp (1952).