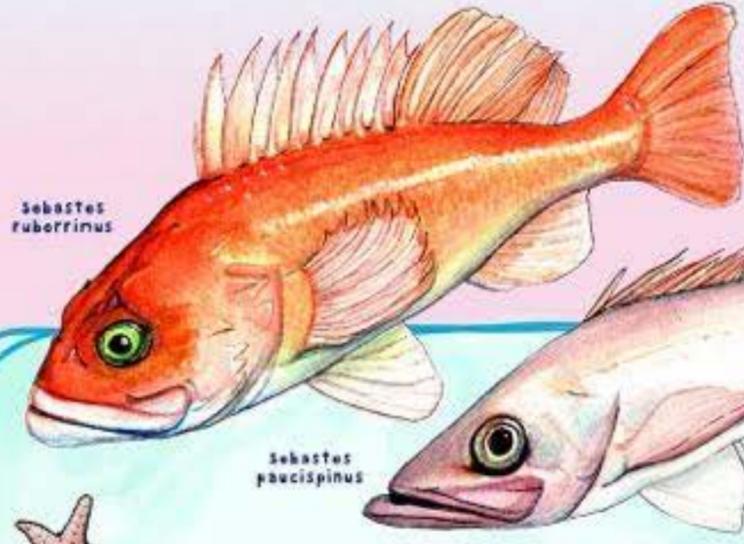




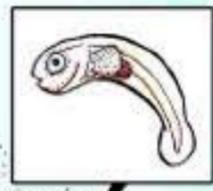
The secret lives of Bocaccio and Yelloweye Rockfish

There is a special population of Bocaccio and Yelloweye rockfish who live their entire lives in Puget Sound. Bocaccio have big lower lips and adult yellow eye have bright yellow eyes. These rockfish take 20 years to mature and may live longer than humans—up to 120 years! As they grow, their bodies change size, color, and shape.

They also live in 3 different habitats as they grow bigger:
 A. The plankton is a pelagic (open water) habitat for larvae and pelagic juveniles.
 B. Bullkelp and rocks are benthic (bottom) habitat for benthic juvenile stages.
 C. Mud walls and clay caves are deep water benthic habitat for adults.



1 Female rockfish give birth to live babies otherwise known as larvae. Depending on the size of the mama rockfish, she can produce anywhere from hundreds of thousands to two million larvae each year!



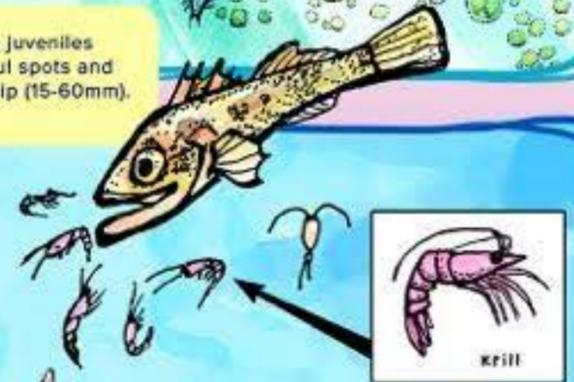
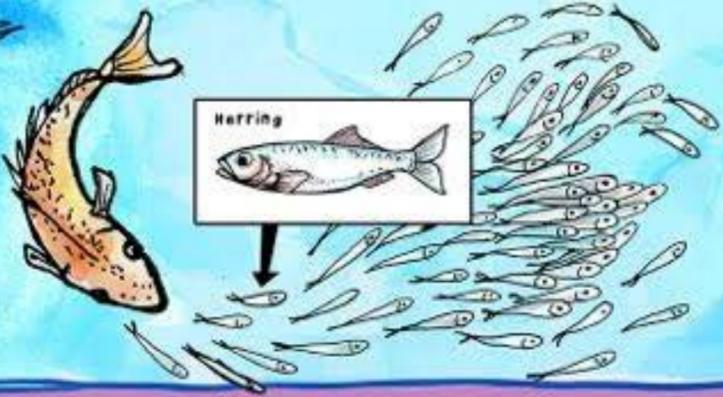
2 When they are born, larvae first live among tiny plants and animals called plankton. Larvae are shorter than a penny (5-15 mm) and their clear color helps them hide from hungry predators. Larval rockfish hunt nauplii which are baby copepods that also float in the plankton.



3 Rockfish are considered pelagic juveniles when they start to grow more colorful spots and are about the size of a large paperclip (15-60mm).

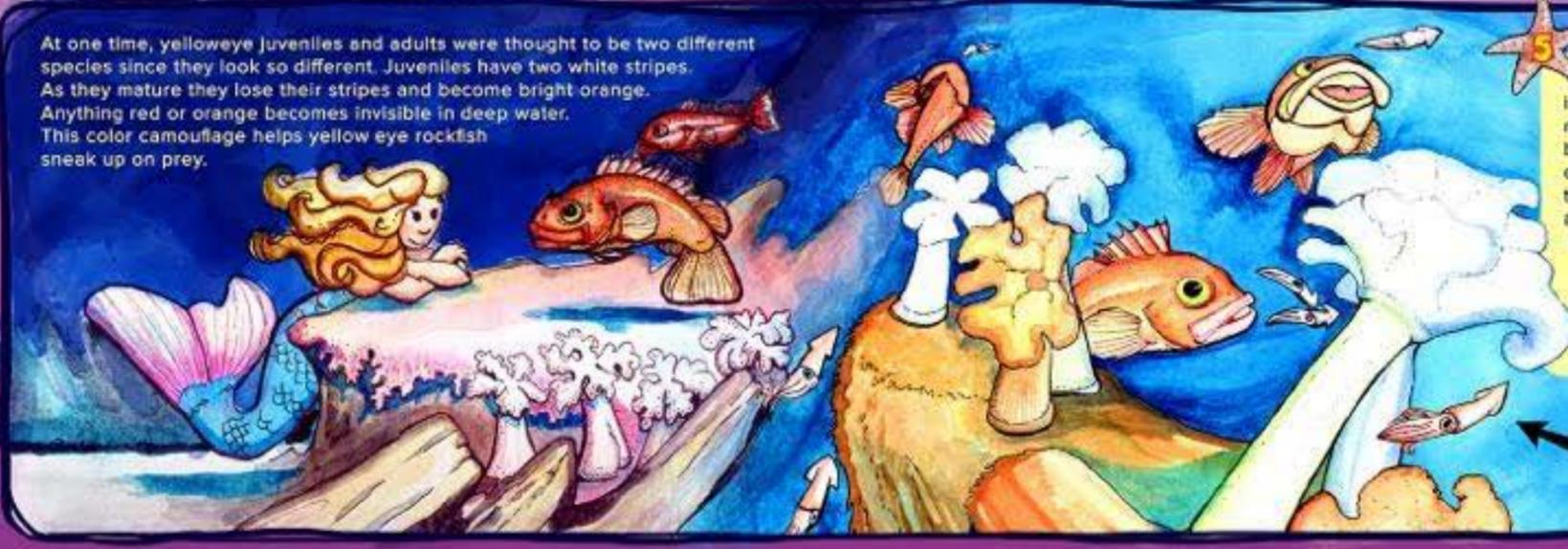


As they transition from pelagic to benthic habitat, they begin exploring bull kelp forests and rocks in shallow water. In this benthic juvenile life stage they start eating krill, copepods and other tiny shrimp-like crustaceans.



4 Once they reach 60 mm in length, rockfish are considered truly benthic (meaning they live near the bottom). Their larger size allows them to be more adventurous and they begin diving down to the clay, mud and rock structures near the bottom of the Sound. Benthic juveniles love hunting for anchovies, herring, smelt, and flatfish.

At one time, yelloweye juveniles and adults were thought to be two different species since they look so different. Juveniles have two white stripes. As they mature they lose their stripes and become bright orange. Anything red or orange becomes invisible in deep water. This color camouflage helps yellow eye rockfish sneak up on prey.



5 As rockfishes grow into adulthood they move to the deepest benthic habitat. Along deep glacial-mud walls, they find tasty squid and fishes like Pacific cod and walleye. Eating big food, gives them the energy to grow into bigger and bigger adults.

