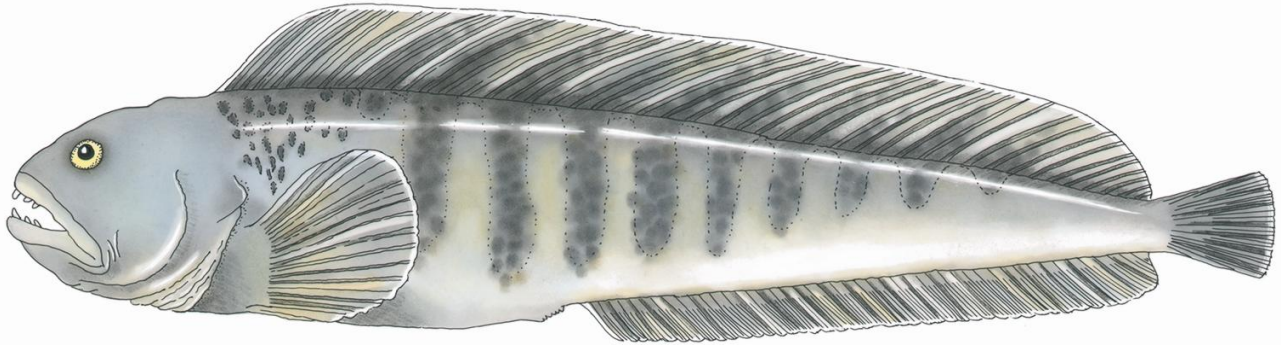


Wolffish (*Anarhichas lupus*)

Family Anarhichadidae, Wolffishes



Common names: wolffish, ocean catfish

Description: Atlantic wolffish range in color from brownish olive (prior to sexual maturity) to light blue gray (sexually mature). Distinct, dark, irregular bands run transversely along their sides. Atlantic wolffish have an elongated shape. Their body, which is deepest at the nape of their neck, tapers back to a slender caudal peduncle and small weak tail fin. These fish have large, rounded pectoral fins, lack pelvic fins and do not have a lateral line. Their dorsal fin is uniform in height and extends from their neck area back to the base of their tail fin. Their anal fin is about half as long as their dorsal fin. Atlantic wolffish have exceptionally strong jaws equipped with large canine teeth and massive molars. These fish can grow to 5 feet in length, with the average size closer to 3 feet.

Where found: inshore and offshore

Similar Gulf of Maine species: spotted wolffish, cusk, eel pout

Remarks: Atlantic wolffish are solitary fish that are only found over a hard bottom at depths varying from a few feet to over 500 feet. They eat a variety of mollusks, echinoderms and crustaceans. Occasionally, anglers will hook onto one while fishing for more desirable species. Atlantic wolffish should not be ignored as table fare, for their sweet, firm meat has lobster-like qualities. Extra care should be taken when handling them, because their bite can cause serious injury.

Records: MSSAR:

handline: vacant

rod and reel: Gunther Schulz, 08/21/90, 30 lbs. 0 oz., Perkins Cove

fly rod: vacant

junior male: vacant

junior female: vacant

IGFA All-Tackle World Record: 52 lbs.

Fish Illustrations by: Roz Davis Designs, Damariscotta, ME (207) 563-2286

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