

# Northern Wolffish

*Anarhichas denticulatus*



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## Species Description

The Northern Wolffish is a large greyish to dark brown, elongated bottom-dwelling fish that grows to 1.5 m in length. It has a small, stout head, and prominent, sharp teeth. It has a long, continuous dorsal fin from the back of its head to its tail, fan-like pectoral fins, and no pelvic fins. It can be distinguished from other wolffish species by its uniform body colour (some indistinct bars or spots can be present); relatively small head; smaller pectoral fins; small, sharp teeth; and jelly-like flesh.



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**Key ID Features:** \* uniform colouration \* jelly-like flesh

## STATUS

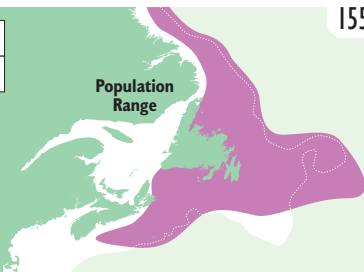


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Found in the North Atlantic and Arctic Oceans. In Canada, it is most common in waters off Labrador. Around Nova Scotia, this species is occasionally observed on the Scotian Shelf and in the Bay of Fundy. Declined by over 95% since the 1980s.



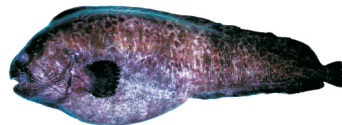
Population Range

155

## Interesting Points

- They are docile and only aggressive when defending eggs or feeling threatened, as when caught in fishing gear.
- Their sharp, slim, curved front teeth are designed to feed on jellyfish and small pelagic fish.

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## Threats

- Incidental capture (bycatch) in commercial fisheries.
- Fishing gear (bottom trawls and dredges) can alter or destroy habitat, and create sedimentation that smothers nesting sites and damages gills.

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Fisherman releasing a wolffish. Due to their powerful jaws, care must be taken during release.

Learn how you can help on page 136.

## Contacts, Information & Stewardship Opportunities

**Contact:** DFO Species at Risk 1-866-891-0771 or [xmarsara@mar.dfo-mpo.gc.ca](mailto:xmarsara@mar.dfo-mpo.gc.ca)

**Info:** [www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/species-especes](http://www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/species-especes), [www.sararegistry.gc.ca](http://www.sararegistry.gc.ca)

**Stewardship:** Wolffish: A Balance of Life video: [www.intervale.ca/video.html](http://www.intervale.ca/video.html)