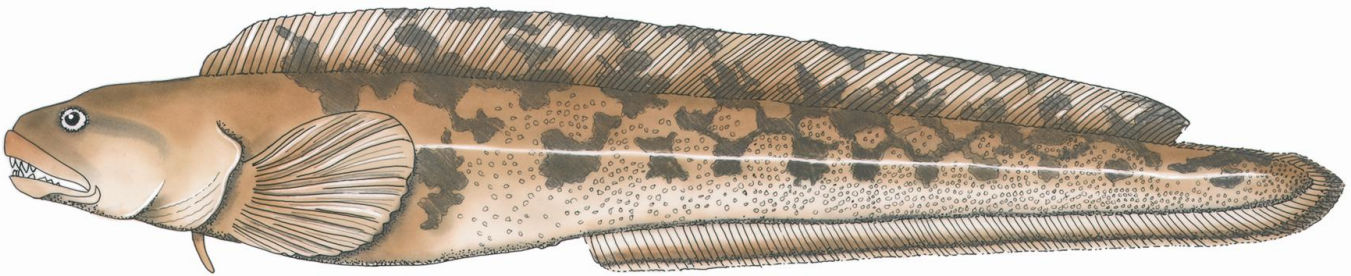


Ocean Pout (Macrozoarces americanus)

Family Zoarcidae, Eelpouts



Common names: ocean pout, eel pout, conger eel

Description: Ocean pout have a muddy yellow to mottled reddish brown upper body that blends to a dirty white or yellowish underbody. They are eel-like in shape with a continuous dorsal fin that runs from the nape of the neck back to the tail fin, but does not connect to it. Conversely, the anal fin, which starts at mid body and runs back toward the tail fin, is connected to the tail fin. These fish have a wide, gaping mouth with thick, fleshy lips and jaws armed with strong, blunt, conical teeth. Their body is 8 times as long as it is deep. Ocean pout can grow to 42 inches in length and weigh around 12 pounds.

Where found: inshore and offshore

Similar Gulf of Maine species: cusk, wolffish

Remarks: Ocean pout are bottom dwellers that generally inhabit sand, mud or rocky substrate. They can be found in both inshore and offshore waters at depths ranging from 30 to 630 feet. These fish feed on a wide variety of mollusks, crustaceans and echinoderms, as well as other invertebrates. They will eat other fish, but lack the swimming skills to be effective hunters. Anglers who are trying for more popular species, such as cod or haddock, sometimes catch ocean pout. Their meat is reported to be sweet tasting.

Records: MSSAR:

handline: vacant

rod and reel: vacant

fly rod: vacant

junior male: vacant

junior female: vacant

IGFA All-Tackle World Record: vacant

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

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