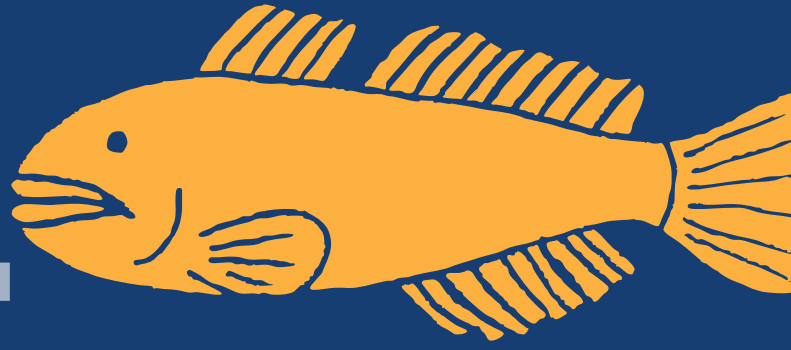


Is It or Isn't It a Sculpin?



Sculpins are a type of fish that can be found in either salt water or fresh water. More than 20 varieties of sculpins are found in our local waters. They range in size from just a couple of inches to over 2.5 feet long. Sculpins are part of the scorpionfish family and are related to both local rockfish and tropical lionfish. Although they come in a variety of sizes and shapes, look for these key characteristics to help decide whether it is or isn't a sculpin.

Sculpins:

- Large heads in relation to bodies.
- Tapered bodies.
- Large pectoral fins with supporting rib-like spines.
- Bottom dwellers, lacking a swim bladder, they cannot hover in the water. They are most often seen resting on the bottom or hiding amongst rocks, kelp and other structures.
- Ability to camouflage with their environment: most can change skin color and patterns to blend in with their surroundings.
- Most have a variety of cirri, spines or barbels on their face and body.
- Patterns of scales that run along the side of the body help identify individual species.



SEATTLE AQUARIUM