

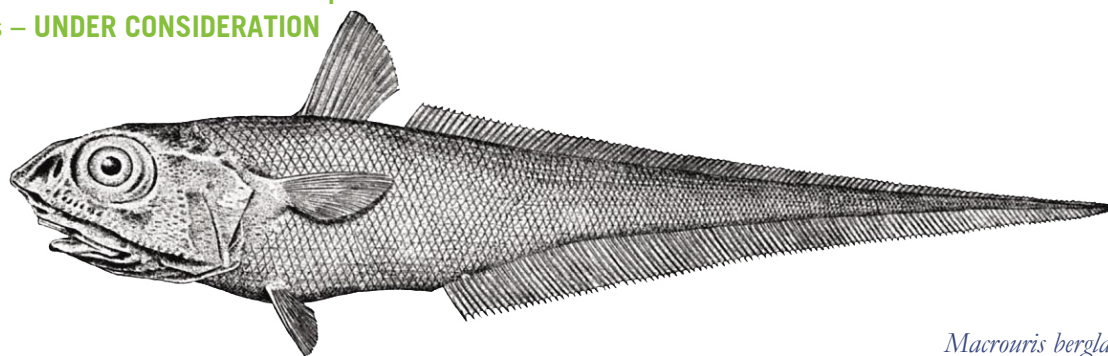
Aquatic Species at Risk



The Roughhead Grenadier... a *Species at Risk* in the North

COSEWIC Status – SPECIAL CONCERN April 2007

SARA Status – UNDER CONSIDERATION



Macrouris berglax
Illustration from Goode & Bean, 1896

This species has been identified as Special Concern by the Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada (COSEWIC). It is currently being considered for listing under the federal *Species at Risk Act* (SARA).

Protection is currently afforded under the *Fisheries Act*. If listed under SARA, it will be afforded additional protection and a management plan will be developed.

General Description

The Roughhead Grenadier (*Macrouris berglax*) is one of only four *Macrouris* species in the world, and the only one that occurs in the North Atlantic. It is a member of the family Macrouridae, a group that is sometimes referred to as 'rattails'. Common names for this fish include Onion Eye and Smooth-Tailed Rattail. The Inuit refer to it as 'ingminniset', which means "it bellows when dying". The Roughhead Grenadier has the following characteristics:

- Large, fairly broad head that makes up about 25 percent of the body length;
- Head has ridges and scute-like scales with strong, small spines;
- Prominent, pointed snout lacks scales;
- Slender body tapers to a pointed tail;
- Small chin barbel and reduced gillrakers;
- Upper jaw has three to five irregular rows of pointy teeth;
- Body is ash grey in colour with a darker chest and anal fin; and
- Can be up to one metre in length.



Distribution

The Roughhead Grenadier is found in the North Atlantic in temperate to arctic waters along the continental shelf. In the eastern North Atlantic, this fish is found from the Irish Atlantic Slope and Faeroe Islands, Norwegian coast to Spitzbergen and into the Barents Sea. In Canadian waters, the Roughhead Grenadier has a continuous distribution, and is most commonly found along the slope of the Labrador and Northeastern Newfoundland shelves, the northeastern slope of the Grand Banks and off the Flemish Cap. It occurs less commonly north to Baffin Bay and south to Georges Bank.

Habitat and Life History

The Roughhead Grenadier is a deep-sea fish that inhabits open water areas at depths between 400 and 1,200 m, sometimes as deep as 2,700 m. It has a specialized swim bladder that functions at depth to prevent the diffusion of oxygen. This fish is typically found at water temperatures between 2 and 5.4°C, on occasion below 0°C. It is slow-growing and fecundity is considered low for this type of fish. Eggs are laid offshore during a lengthy spawning period, sometimes lasting up to a year. Females mature between the ages of 13 and 15 years, and may live to about 25 years. Males have a shorter lifespan.

Diet

The Roughhead Grenadier is a non-specific predator. It consumes a variety of invertebrates and sometimes other fish, depending on its size. Smaller individuals feed on bottom organisms (benthos), such as small clams, starfish, shrimp and polychaetes. Larger individuals tend to consume larger clams, smaller fishes and squid.

Threats

Due to its long lifespan, late maturity and slow growth rates, the Roughhead Grenadier is highly susceptible to disturbances, which impact its mortality. In addition, this fish is an unregulated species. It is caught commercially by the Portuguese and Spanish for its liver and is an important by-catch species that is often discarded by the Greenland halibut fishery.

Similar Species

The Roughhead Grenadier is distinguished from other grenadiers in the North Atlantic by its prominent pointed snout and the ridges along its head.

Text Sources: COSEWIC Status Report 2007.

ROUGHHEAD GRENADIER DISTRIBUTION - Arctic



Unpublished data - Fisheries and Oceans Canada

For more information, visit the SARA Registry website at www.SARAregistry.gc.ca and the Fisheries and Oceans Canada website below.

Cette publication est également disponible en français.

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www.aquaticspeciesatrisk.gc.ca

Section 32 (1) of the *Species at Risk Act* (SARA) states that “no person shall kill, harm, harass, capture or take an individual of a wildlife species that is listed as an extirpated species, an endangered species or a threatened species.”