

# Aquatic Invasive Species Watch

## Non-Native Fish Show Up On West Coast

### Striped Beakfish (*Oplegnathus fasciatus*)

also called Striped Knifejaw, Barred Knifejaw, Rock Bream, Ishidai

After the 2011 Japanese tsunami, people in Oregon, Washington and California reported the following sightings of the striped beakfish, which is native to the ocean off East Asia and Hawaii and had never before been documented in waters along the West Coast.

#### March 2013

A fishing boat that was swept out to sea by the tsunami arrives near Long Beach, Washington, carrying five live striped beakfish. This marks the first time the fish is reported on the West Coast. Photo: Allen Pleus



The fish looks harmless as a small juvenile with its seven black vertical bands that camouflage it in kelp.



As the fish grows, its stripes disappear and the region around its mouth darkens. It can grow up to two feet long and live 10 to 20 years. The juveniles prefer to live among rocky reefs in shallow waters, while adults can be found in deeper waters. Photo: Kaoru Kuriwa



**Oregon** Invasive Species  
Online Hotline

You can help stop the spread of species like the striped beakfish. If you find unusual or invasive species in Oregon, report them to 1-866-INVADER or online at [oregoninvasiveshotline.org](http://oregoninvasiveshotline.org).

#### December 2014

A sixth beakfish is filmed around a shipwreck near Monterey, California.

#### February 2015

A fisherman finds a seventh in a crab pot near Port Orford, Oregon.

#### April 2016

Another is discovered near Seal Rock, Oregon, in a boat that the Japanese tsunami set adrift.



Scientists can't say for sure that all of the beakfish traveled with tsunami debris from Asia. Analysis of the ear bones of the fish found in Long Beach (like this one pictured above) revealed that they were hatched after the tsunami. It could be, however, that the boat they were in drifted in the western or central Pacific Ocean for a while before the fish hitchhiked on it. Photo: Travis Haring

The discoveries of the fish are worrisome because they use their powerful beak-like jaws to crush and eat oysters, scallops, clams, mussels, sea urchins and barnacles. If the fish were to become widespread, they might decrease the population of commercially important shellfish. But scientists say that's unlikely because they doubt the fish could reproduce in the colder water that's present on much of the West Coast. Photo: Kaoru Kuriwa

