

Fish in the Naruto Strait: Rockfish

Japanese rockfish (*Sebastes* spp.)

This fish gets its Japanese name, *mebaru* (“widened eyes”), from its disproportionately bulging eyes. Native to the northwest Pacific Ocean, the rockfish is common in the seas around Japan. The abundance of reefs and aquatic plants in the Naruto Strait make it a suitable habitat for the species, which grows to a length of around 35 centimeters. As indicated by its large mouth with insubstantial teeth, this fish gulps down its prey of shellfish, worms, crustaceans, and small fish; the oversized eyes let it keep a sharp lookout for its own predators. In Naruto, the rockfish is caught via traditional rod-and-line fishing and often stewed, making for a delicious but reasonably priced dish.