



FACTSHEET

King Wrasse



King Wrasse

Common Name: King Wrasse

Scientific Name: *Coris auricularis*

Conservation Status: The waters around Rottnest Island are a designated Marine Reserve. Some parts of Rottnest's coral reefs are included the Marine Sanctuary Zones shown in the Rottnest Island Marine Management Strategy (2007).

The WA daily bag limit for catching King Wrasse is 8. These limits may change, so please contact Department of Fisheries for current fish catch limits.

Habitat: Coral reefs

Body length: 32-40 cm

Description:

King Wrasse change their colours three times. Small juveniles (young fish) have black and white stripes running sideways down the length of their bodies. Large juveniles and females are a pinkish-white with a dark red strip running through their

eyes to the base of the tail. The male King Wrasse is bright pink with fine bright blue and yellow lines across his body and fins. He has a white lower jaw and a broad white bar behind his pectoral fin.

Diet:

Small fish, invertebrates.

In the Wild:

King Wrasse are the most commonly seen fish around Rottnest. They are found in water down to at least 45m. Juveniles and small adult females sometimes act as cleaner fishes. They set up stations and remove skin parasites from other fish species. Juveniles hide in the reefs and adults form groups on the edge of the reef close to sand and seagrass.

Threats:

- Habitat destruction
- Over-fishing
- Pollution



DID YOU KNOW?

Most individual King Wrasse are born as females but have the ability to change their sex. The female fish belong to large groups called “harems”. Each “harem” is controlled by a single male who has changed sex or occasionally may have been born a male. A sex-change occurs when the controlling male of the “harem” dies or starts to lose control of the group. Usually the most dominant female will change sex and take over.

