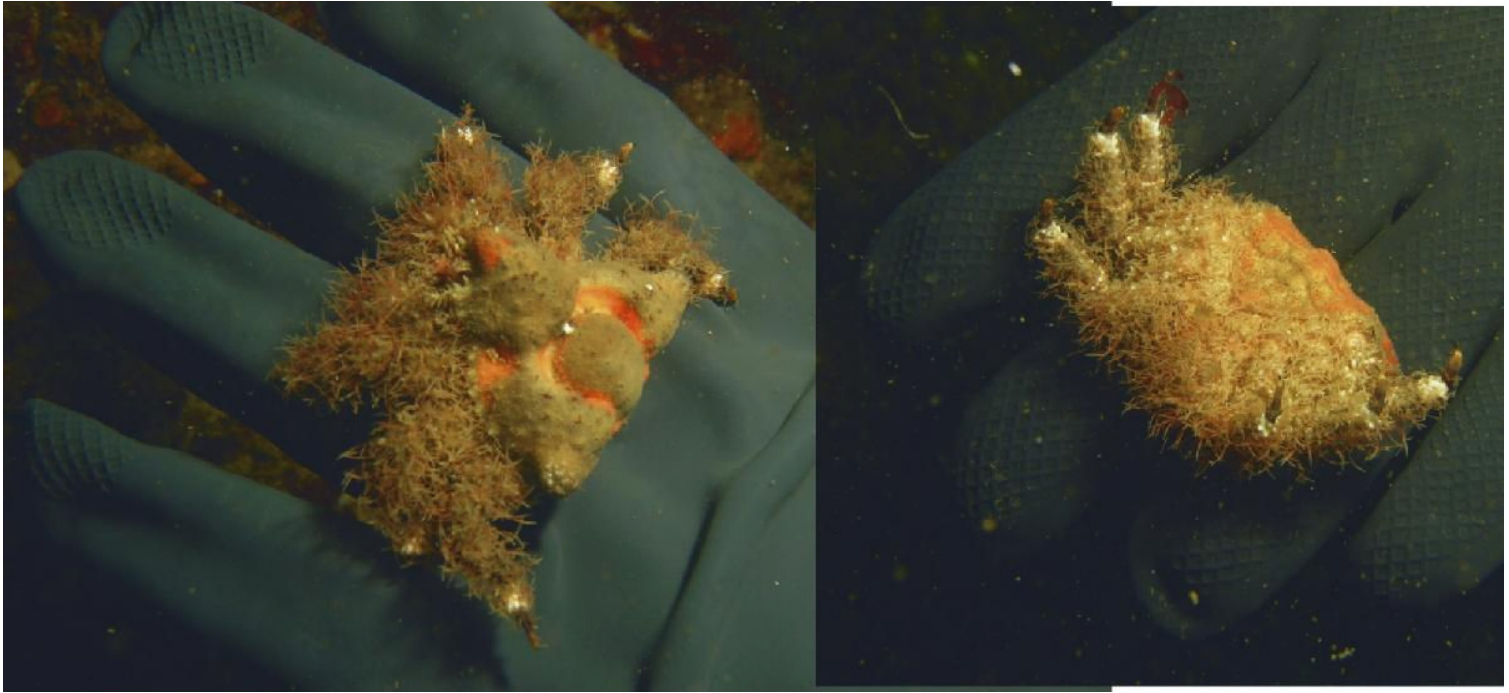




## **COPPER ROCKFISH**

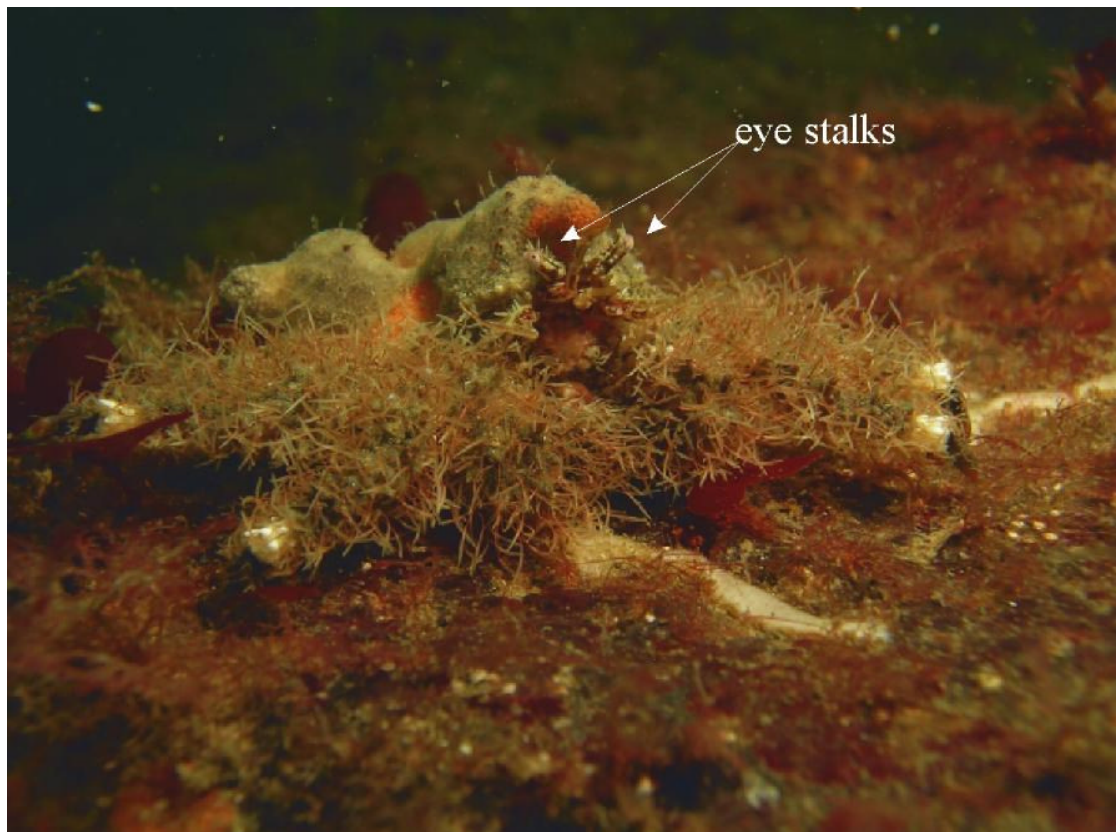
This photo was taken in Howe Sound near Bowyer Island. Copper Rockfish and Quillback Rockfish are the 'robins and sparrows' of the dive-able marine realm. Their presence is often unremarkable to seasoned divers but an absence shouts out that there are problems in the environment. In the late 70s and early 80s Darcy and I did lots of spear-fishing and these were some of our favourite eating fish - nice white flesh perfect for fish and chips. We subsequently learned that they are very slow to mature and are extremely territorial. We longer take a spear when we dive, we take a camera.

The fish pictured is probably over 20 years old. The Copper Rockfish can be identified by its coppery colour and by its whitish lateral line. All rockfish have heavy bodies and lips, big heads and eyes, and large fins. They vary in size, but Copper and Quillback rockfish average about 8 - 12 inches although maximum size can be just over 2 feet (we've never seen one even close to that large though)..



## **RHINOCEROS or GOLF- BALL CRAB**

The small rhinoceros crab (max 3 inch) is always a treat to see. When hiding amongst the encrusting life of the rocky areas it inhabits they are almost invisible. This particular specimen was moving down a rocky slope when I spotted it. Darcy lent his hand to show scale. The photo at top left is a top side view showing its hairy legs and deeply grooved back and the right picture shows the poor little thing on its back. The broad flap on its underside shows this to be a female. We then righted it and placed it back in its camouflaged space. (see below) Note the eye stalks and pinkish eyes.



red-gilled  
nudibranch \*



## **NORTHERN SPEARNOSE POACHER**

I love this photo because it shows interaction between marine creatures. The main subject of the photo is the fish, a Northern Spearnose Poacher, but it is resting/hiding in the arms of a mottled sea star and has a very small red-gilled nudibranch\* crawling over its tail. This photo was taken on New Years Day 2011 in Indian Arm (the student cruise travelled right over the spot where this was taken). Spearnose Poachers are easy to photograph because they seem to think that if they stay very still you can't see them DUH! They have a wonderfully whiskery chin and two funny blunt protrusions from their nose. The maximum size for this fish is 8 inches. Sometimes small specimens can be found in tide-pools.

\* nudibranch (pronounced: noo du brank)

these will be the next topic - the jewels of the marine realm.