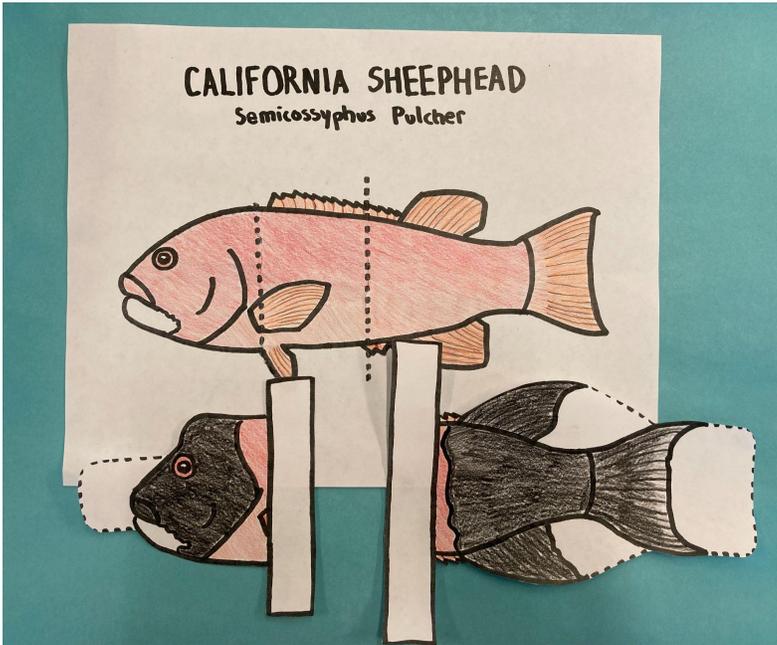


# Shifting Sheephead

California sheephead live off the coast of Southern California and Mexico. Like other fish in the wrasse family, they are all born female. However, when males are scarce and they're big enough, some of them will actually *become* male! This process can take between two weeks and several months and not only changes their sex, but their colors, size, and the shape of their head. Create a paper slider that demonstrates the female sheephead's transition to male.



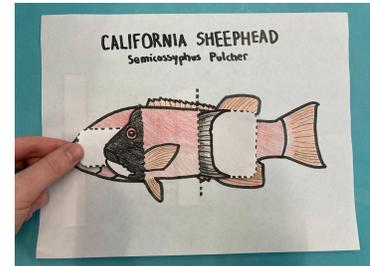
## Materials

Scissors  
Print out templates (page 3 and 4)  
Crayons or colored pencils

## Directions

1. **Print out** the coloring templates on page 3 and 4 on separate pieces of paper.
2. **Color in** the fish on both templates. Look at the reference photos on page 2 or do your own research to decide how you want to color. The female sheephead coloring sheet is the fish on page 3, and the male is the divided fish on page 4.
  - a. *Optional:* Add a background around the female sheephead. For example, draw and color in the kelp forest habitat where these fish usually live.
3. **Cut out** the two male sheephead pieces from page 4. Cut along the outside border and the dotted lines to ensure that you have easy-to-pull tabs.

4. **Cut along** the dotted lines on the female sheephead, making sure to only cut the dotted lines in the middle of the paper. To make this easier, gently fold the page in half and start the cut at the crease.
5. **Insert** the male sheephead pieces into the openings you just cut across the female sheephead one at a time, pull-tab first.
6. **You're done!** You've demonstrated some of the visible changes a female sheephead goes through as it transitions to become a male. What differences do you notice between the two? In addition to the changes you see here, the male sheephead will grow much larger and exhibit more territorial behavior.



## Reference Photos

Male Sheephead



"California Sheephead (*Semicossyphus pulcher*)" by  
Matt Elyash, California Department of Fish and Wildlife  
CC-BY 2.0

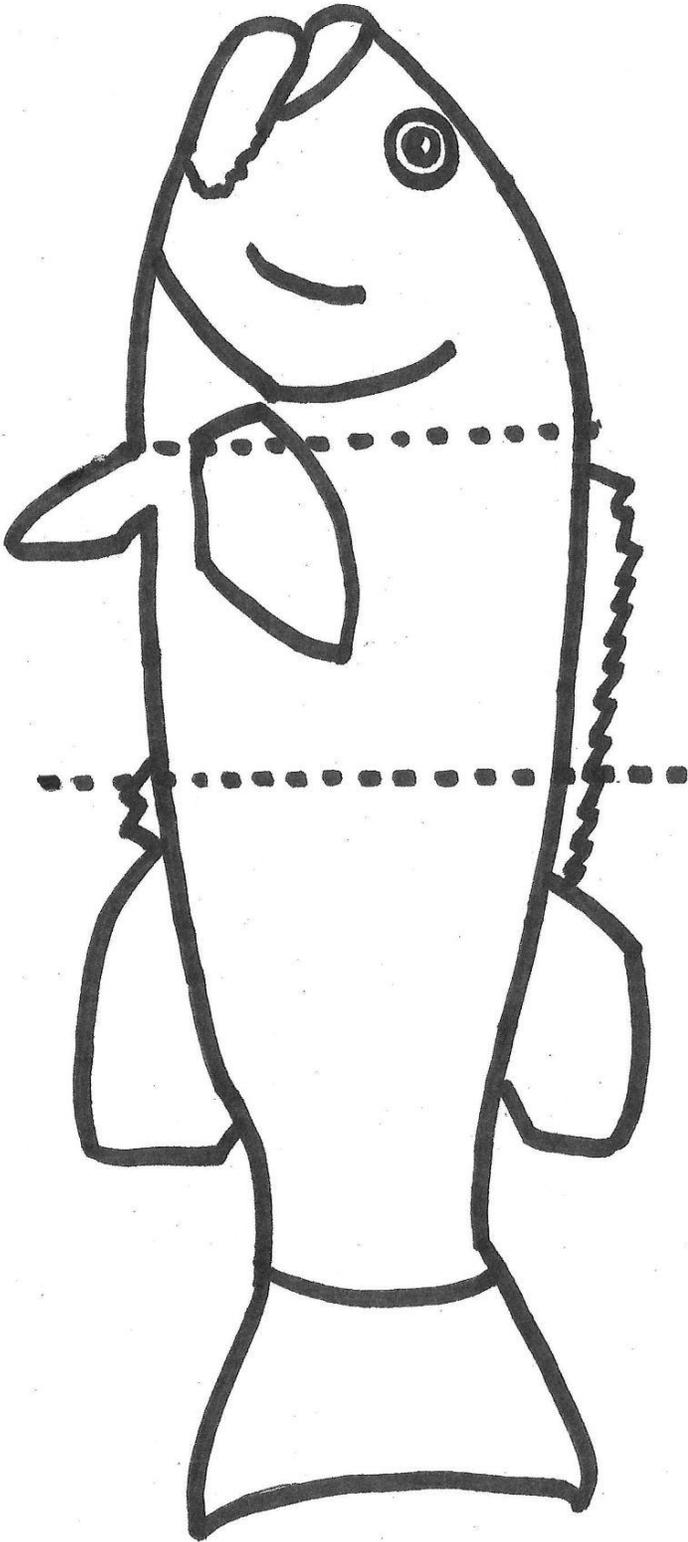
Female Sheephead



"Female CA Sheephead" by Dana Roeber  
Murray, Heal the Bay  
CC BY-NC-SA 2.0



CALIFORNIA  
ACADEMY OF  
SCIENCES



# CALIFORNIA SHEEPHEAD

*Semicossyphus pulcher*

