

# Red Abalone

*Haliotis rufescens*

This is the world's largest abalone species. Red abalone are identified by their red-rimmed shells and black bodies. The shell surface is lumpy and generally encrusted, while the interior has colorful iridescence and a prominent muscle scar.

The three to five open respiratory pores are oval and slightly raised above the shell surface. They can be found from the intertidal zone down to rocky reefs 100 feet deep.

## POPULATION STATUS

Declined<sup>1</sup>

## MAXIMUM SIZE

Up to 12 inches<sup>3</sup>

## LIFESPAN

Up to 30 years<sup>1</sup>

## DEPTH RANGE

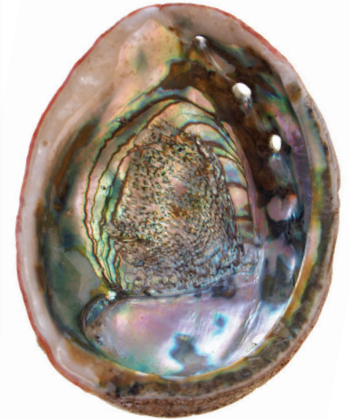
Intertidal to 100 feet<sup>1</sup>

## GEOGRAPHIC RANGE

Sunset Bay, OR to Bahia Tortugas, MX including offshore islands.<sup>3</sup>

## SHELL COLORS

Brick red, sometimes banded green or pink. Lumpy texture.<sup>2</sup>



## BODY COLORS

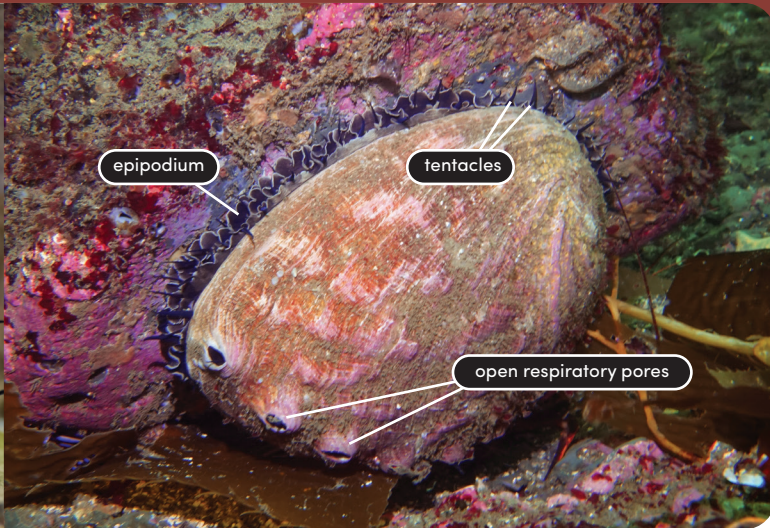
Body, epipodium and tentacles are black, occasionally with white marble-like streaks.<sup>3</sup>

## HARVEST INFORMATION

Wild harvest is prohibited. Recreational fishing is closed through April 2026. Commercial fishing was closed in 1997.<sup>4</sup> Red abalone are sustainably farmed in California.

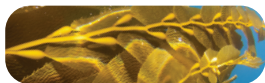


An adult red abalone at The Cultured Abalone Farm in Goleta, CA.



An adult red abalone clings to a boulder in 60 ft of water off San Diego, CA.  
 Images: Oriana Poindexter, unless noted otherwise.

### ASSOCIATED ALGAL SPECIES <sup>1</sup>



**GIANT KELP**  
*Macrocystis pyrifera*



**FEATHER BOA KELP**  
*Laminaria farlowii*



**BULL KELP**  
*Nereocystis leutkeana*  
 Image: Dwayne Meadows, NOAA/NMFS/OPR



**ELK KELP**  
*Pelagophycus porra*  
 Image: U.S. National Park Service.



**SEA LETTUCE**  
*Ulva* spp.  
 Image: NOAA Tech Memo NMFS-AFSC-389

### REFERENCES

- 1 CA Dept of Fish & Game, Abalone Recovery & Mgmt Plan, 2005.  
 2 Cox, 1962. 3 Geiger & Owen, 2012. 4 CDFW, Red Abalone Draft FMP.



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