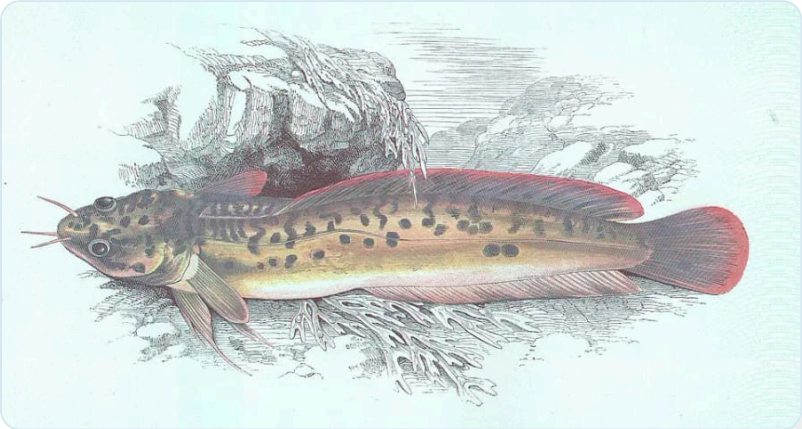
COD FAMILY

Three-bearded rockling

Gaidropsarus vulgaris

Not recorded off Sussex in our sources | Confirmed record



Three-bearded rockling (*Gaidropsarus vulgaris*). Picture: Jonathan Couch, Public domain (creativecommons.org/publicdomain/mark/1.0/), via Wikimedia Commons: commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:FMIB_46236_Three-Bearded_Rockling.jpeg.

IN SHORT

The three-bearded rockling is not a fish anyone sets out to catch, and that is part of its charm. Our sources do not record it off the Sussex coast. British boat record: confirmed.

Key facts

IDENTIFY IT
Slimy, scaleless, eel-like fish, orange-brown with dark spots and three barbels around the mouth.

SIZE
Up to 60 cm per Wikipedia; one angling guide says up to 2 ft and 3 lb, with shore fish usually under 1 lb.

HABITAT
Shallow inshore rocky or mixed ground, often near weed; seldom on clean sand.

OFF SUSSEX
Not recorded in our sources

AROUND BRITAIN
No months in our sources

METHODS
Usually a by-catch on ragworm, lugworm, fish strip, squid or mackerel; size 1 or 2 hooks suit it.

GROUP
Cod family

COME FISHING WITH US

Fish with Kestrel Warrior from Brighton Marina

The three-bearded rockling is not one of the fish our sources record off Sussex, so no Kestrel Warrior trip targets it. Come and fish the Sussex coast on one of our eight trips (Prices 2027):

- **Sightseeing tour** 1 hour, £20 pp
- **Squid and cuttlefish trip** 3 hours, £55 pp
- **Sea fishing trip at anchor, multiple species** 8 hours, £75 pp
- **Wreck fishing at anchor** 10 hours, £110 pp
- **Mackerel trip** 90 minutes, £27 pp
- **Sea fishing trip, multiple species** 4 hours, £55 pp
- **Flatfish drift trip** 8 hours, £90 pp
- **Shark fishing trip** 10 hours, £150 pp

Free tuition and free gutting and filleting of your catch. Rod hire £10 per person; fishing tackle is included on the shark trip.

Scan to book

Book: ring **07896 471691** (8am to 9pm, seven days a week) · info@kestrelwarrior6.co.uk · kestrelwarrior6.co.uk/contact/

About the three-bearded rockling

The three-bearded rockling is not a fish anyone sets out to catch, and that is part of its charm. It is slimy, scaleless and eel-like, orange-brown with dark spots, and it has three barbels around the mouth, which is where the name comes from. It belongs to the cod family, though you would not guess that at first glance.

It likes shallow inshore rocky or mixed ground, often near weed, and it is seldom found on clean sand. Most turn up as a by-catch when anglers are fishing baits such as ragworm, lugworm, fish strip, squid or mackerel.

Sizes vary by source. Wikipedia gives up to 60 cm, while one angling guide says up to 2 ft and 3 lb, with shore fish usually under 1 lb. So a small one is normal, and a big one is something to talk about afterwards.

If you land one on a boat trip, count the barbels. Three around the mouth is the clue to the name. No minimum size was found on the government list, so check the current rules.

On the boat

The record gives no months for this species, either for Britain or for Sussex, so we cannot say when it is most likely to turn up. What it does say is that it is usually a by-catch on ragworm, lugworm, fish strip, squid or mackerel, and that size 1 or 2 hooks suit it. It lives on shallow rocky or mixed ground, often near weed. One West Sussex shop report mentions plenty of rockling in spring but does not name the species, so treat that as a hint, not a fact.

British boat-caught record

Confirmed record

Weight	3 lb 4 oz 4 dr (1.481 kg)
Where	Off the Isle of Wight
When	1992
Angler	C Hurst

Confirmed British boat-caught record: C Hurst, 3 lb 4 oz 4 dr (1.481 kg), off the Isle of Wight, 1992. The figures come from the British Record Fish Committee sea fish listings, updated 18 June 2026. The official weight-based boat records were frozen in June 2024, and newer claims are by length only. The list gives the year, not a full date.

Care and rules

No minimum size was found on the government's MCRS table for this species, and the record holds no protected-species or release advice for it. Treat that as 'not found', not as 'no rules'. Rules change: check the current rules before you fish.

Did you know?

The name comes from the three barbels around its mouth. The official boat record, 3 lb 4 oz 4 dr, is a little above the 3 lb ceiling that one angling guide quotes for the species.

Sources: British Sea Fishing - Three Bearded Rockling; Wikipedia - Three-bearded rockling; BRFC Sea Fish Listings June 2026; Prime Angling - West Sussex fishing report 30 March 2025. The full guide, with links to every source: kestrelwarrior6.co.uk/sea-fish-guide/three-bearded-rockling/