

## CHIMAERA CARE

SOP# = Chon1

**PURPOSE:** To describe methods of care for chimaeras.

**POLICY:** To provide optimum care for all animals.

**RESPONSIBILITY:** Collector and user of the animals. If these are not the same person, the user takes over responsibility of the animals as soon as the animals have arrived on station.

**PROCEDURE:** There is only one species of chimaera found around BMSC.

**Species:** Ratfish *Hydrolagus colliei*

**Identification:** Refer to Lamb and Edgell's book, "Coastal fishes of the Pacific Northwest" for in depth descriptions of individual specimens.

*Hydrolagus colliei*: the only chimaera found in the Pacific Northwest. Ratfish have long, rat-like tails and bulbous heads with round or pointed snouts and rabbit-like mouths. Their huge eyes often shine emerald green. They have a scaleless, metallic body, which shimmers silver and bronze. Watch for a large, sharp spine at the front of its first dorsal fin. Can reach 97cm.

**Sites:** Most ratfish inhabit deep and dark offshore haunts.

**Methods:** Trawl nets. Ratfish usually suffer from massive hemorrhaging when caught. They usually succumb to this damage within the first few weeks of captivity.

**Holding:** Held in continually flowing seawater in large tanks. Lids are necessary to prevent escape and to decrease light which will cause stress. Sediment on bottom helps relieve some stress.

**Feeding:** Feed on shrimps, crabs, snails, piling worms or small fishes. It is difficult to get ratfish so feed until they are completely comfortable in their habitat. Long-term captivity of ratfish is difficult.

**Tank Cleaning:** Cleaning the tanks causes the fish great stress. Clean tank only when absolutely necessary and disturb the fish as little as possible. As opposed to removing the fish and draining and cleaning the tank, a net or siphon can be used to remove dead animals, uneaten food and other debris.

**Animal Return:** Return to the site of collection. Be sure to have well oxygenated water in bucket that they are being returned in.

### **DAILY ACTIVITIES:**

1. Ensure water is flowing into the tank at a reasonable rate.
2. Ensure the standpipe is in place and not blocked.
3. Check for and remove any dead animals.
4. Check for and remove any uneaten prey organisms.
5. Check for and remove any foreign organisms.