Three seastars of the genus Astropecten are taken at shelf depths within the Southern California Bight. Fisher’s Asteroidea of the North Pacific and Adjacent Waters Vol. 1 (1911) should be consulted for full descriptions. The three are -

- **Astropecten armatus** Gray 1840
  - Fisher 1911: 0-55m
  - Maluf 1988: 0-302m

- **Astropecten ornatissimus** Fisher 1906
  - Fisher 1911: 87-299m
  - Maluf 1988: 9-366m

- **Astropecten verrilli** de Loriol 1899
  - syn. Astropecten californicus Fisher 1906
  - Fisher 1911: 18-450m
  - Maluf 1988: 2-488m

The species do not usually occur together, but when they do, one species is nearly always much less abundant than another.

As with *Luidia*, color can be a useful field characteristic, but in *Astropecten* the choices are fewer, only grey or light red. The mosaic patterns of color patches seen in some *Luidia* do not occur in *Astropecten*.

**KEY**

1.a With tubercles or spines on the superomarginal plates, especially in the interradii (less evident in smaller specimens; color grey; enlarged adambulacral spines truncate; lateral spines robust, flattened, those on adjacent arms touching or overlapping at the arm bases and for about 1/5 the arm length).................**Astropecten armatus**

1.b Lacking tubercles or spines on the superomarginal plates; color grey or light red; enlarged adambulacral spines hastate if present, if no adambulacral spines enlarged, then all acute; lateral spines small, not touching or overlapping on adjacent arms at the arm bases beyond the first 2-3 superomarginal plates.................................................................................................2

2.a Light red aborally, with lighter middorsal stripe on arms; no adambulacral spines enlarged, lacks subacute; paxillae relatively large - 3 rows per two superomarginal plates at arm bases; lateral spines of adjacent arms touching at the arm bases...........................................**Astropecten ornatissimus**

2.b Uniform grey aborally; some adambulacral spines enlarged, hastate; paxillae relatively small - 5 rows per two superomarginal plates at base of arm; lateral spines of adjacent arms not touching at the arm bases...........................................**Astropecten verrilli**