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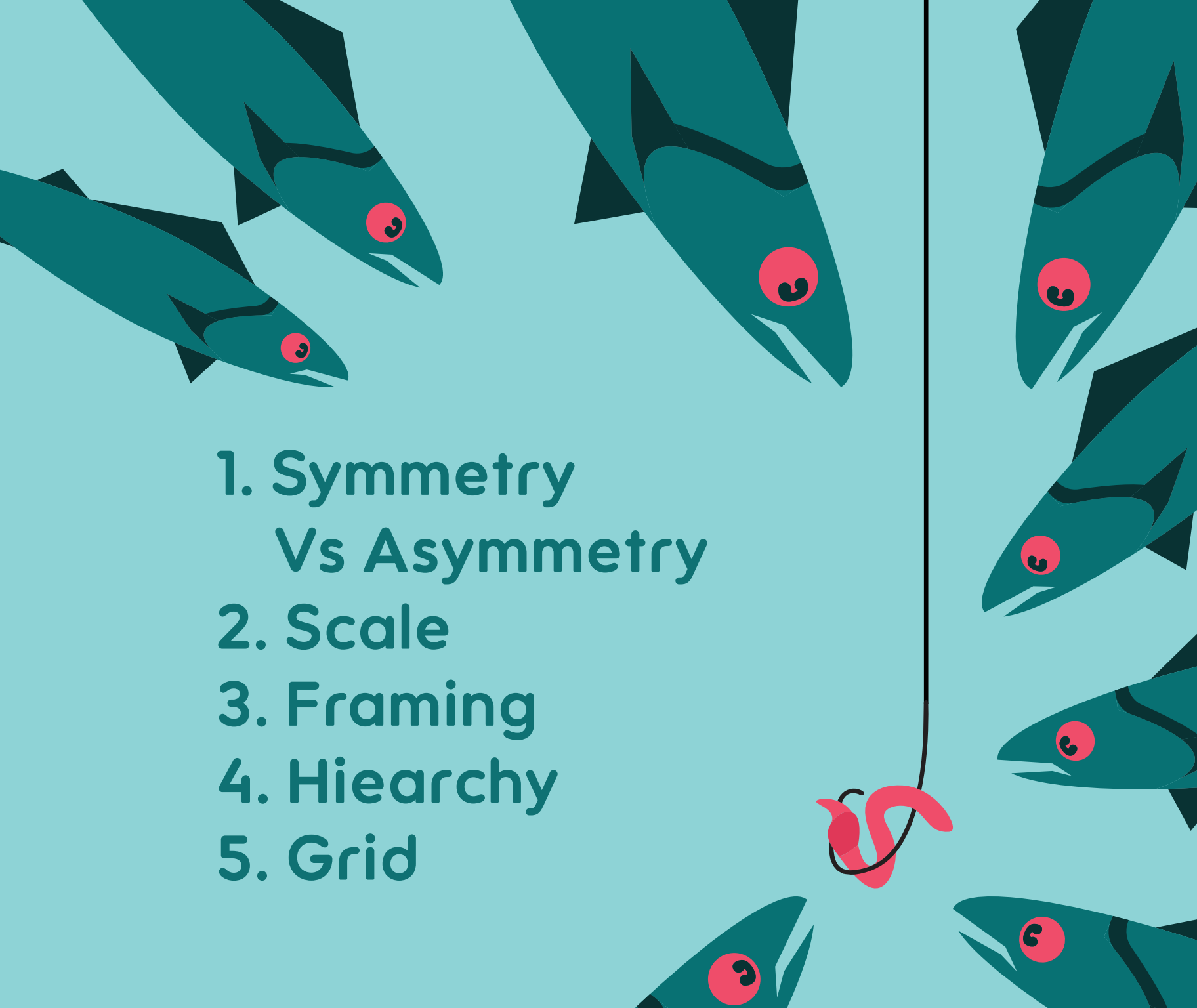
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INTROD

Introduction.

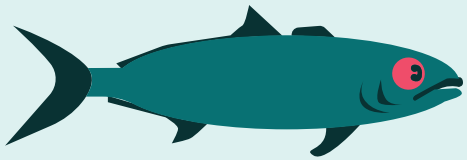
Ellen Lupton and Jennifer Cole Phillips will lay out the 5 basic principles of graphic design – symmetry, scale, framing, hierarchy, and grids – and preview what you'll learn in the rest of their design course.

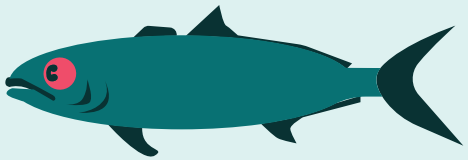
Welcome to this book on graphic design basics. This material is based on courses taught at MICA by Ellen Lupton and Jennifer Cole Phillips, and from their book, Graphic Design: The New Basics, published by MICA and Princeton Architectural Press. We will share some basic principles of graphic design, symmetry, scale, framing, hierarchy, and grids. The illustrations are original works created by-

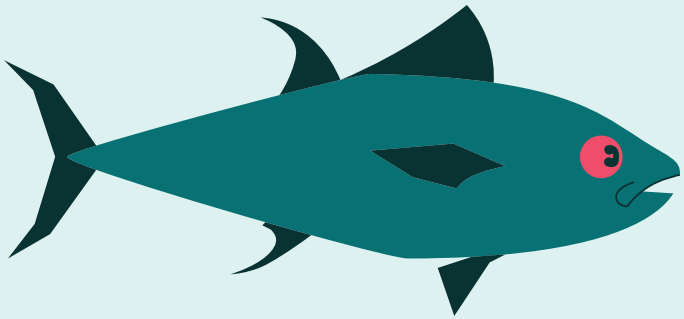
Daniel Hardy in our intro to print production class in the Fall of 2024. Then, we will walk you through the process of creating a basic page layout. You will follow a process from beginning to end. The demo is this booklet, created in indesign and printed using blurb print on demand. You will be shown the ideas and principles that can be applied to any visual layout from a book or magazine spread to a conference poster, webpage or any place where image and text come together to communicate. This material is for anyone who wants to explore and experiment with graphic design.

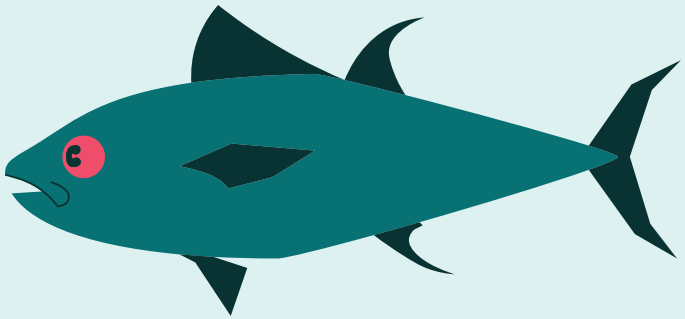
UCTION

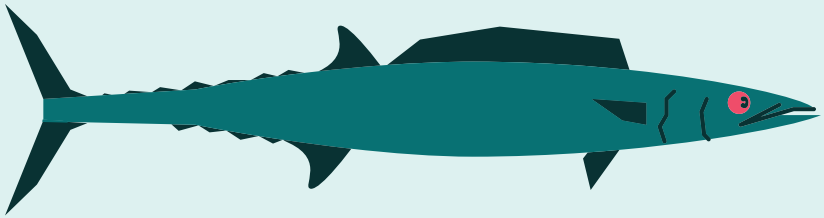
Symmetry

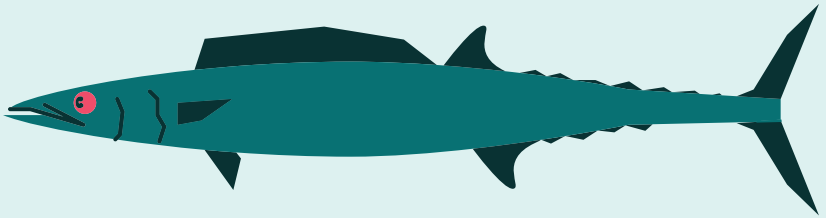


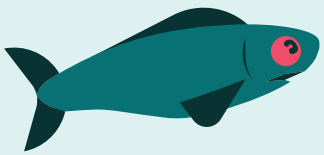


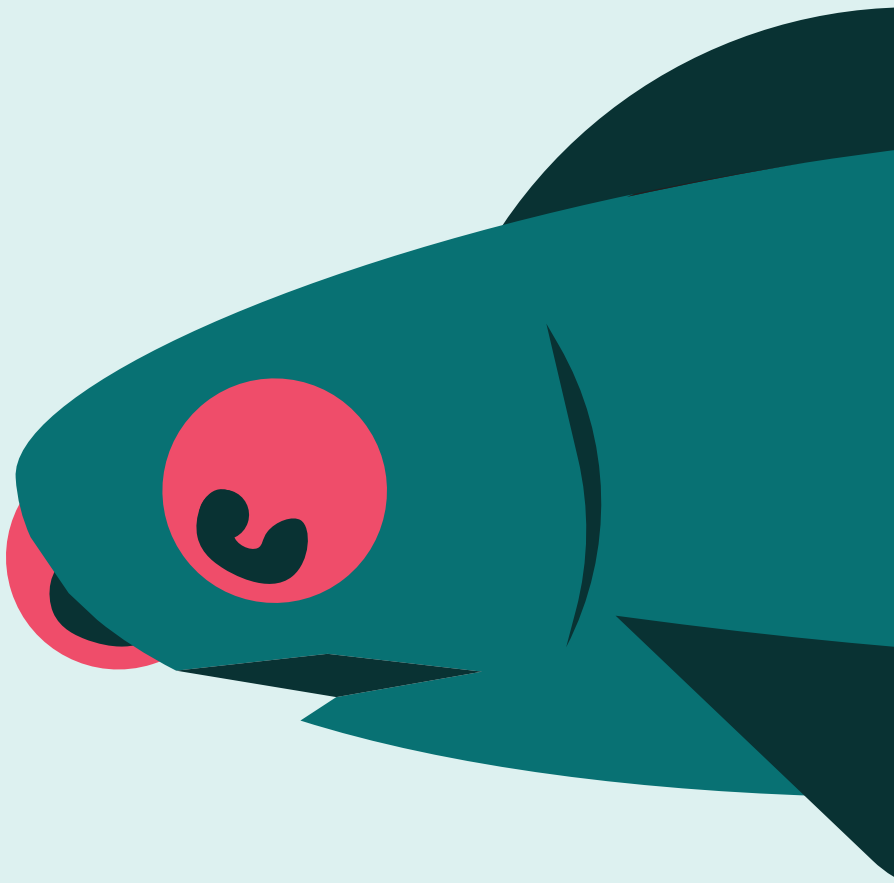




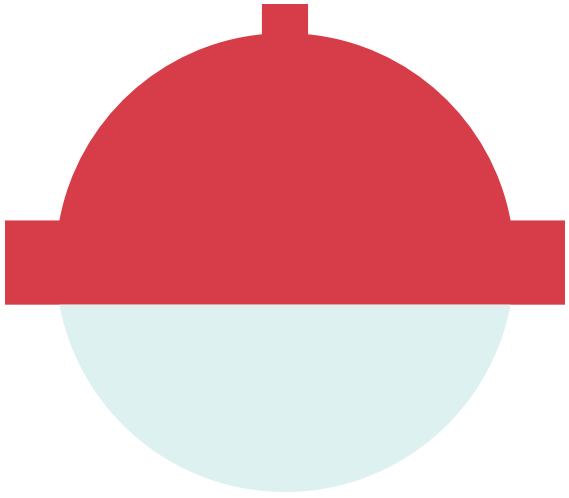








Asymmetry



SYMMETRICAL DESIGN:

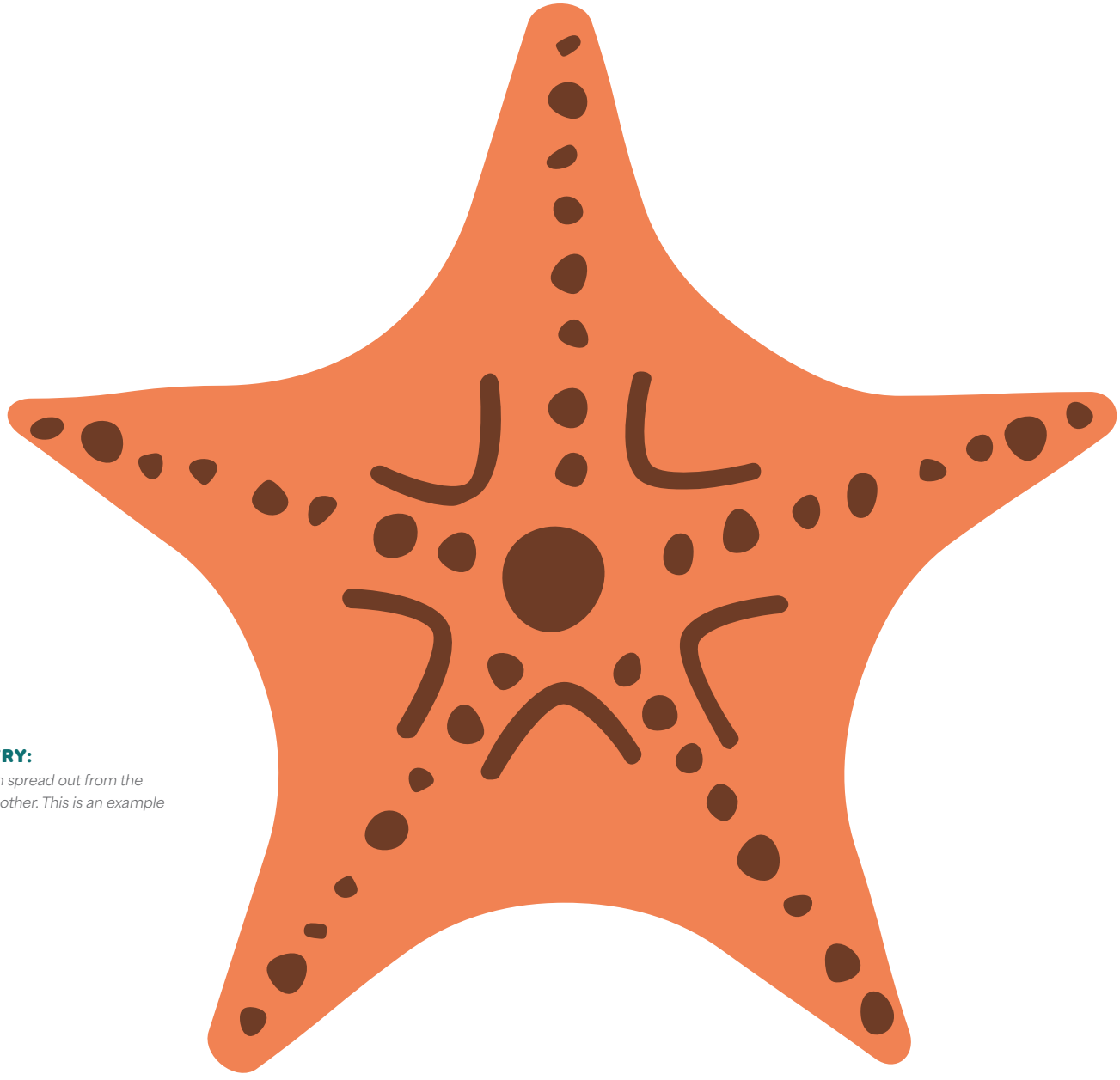
When split down the middle, the design of the bobber is symmetrical. Meaning identical on both sides.

ASYMMETRICAL DESIGN:

The form of this worm is asymmetrical. The placement of the deep red band to signify its head balances out the long stretch of tail on the other end.

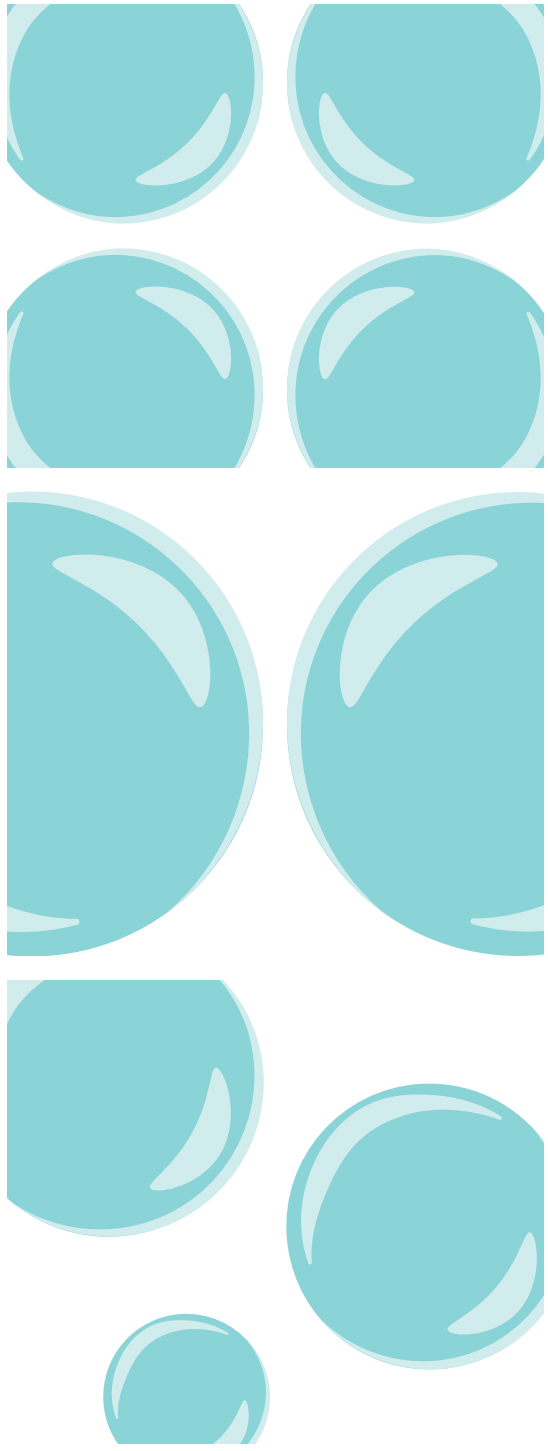
Symmetry vs. Asymmetry

One of the designers' most basic visual tools is the distinction between symmetry and asymmetry. You may be surprised to discover how much you can enhance your work by harnessing this powerful distinction. Symmetry is loved by many designers. Many natural organisms are symmetrical. Look at the human body, we are symmetrical. Our arms and legs keep us balanced. A leaf grows outward in a symmetrical pattern. The arms of a starfish radiate out from the center. That's called radial symmetry. Symmetrical layouts are inherently stable and balanced and that's why designers, for centuries, have gravitated towards centered layouts. In a symmetrical design, we should be able to draw a line top to bottom and it's the same on either side or we could draw a line through the center and it's the same above and below.



RADIAL SYMMETRY:

The arms of the starfrish spread out from the center and mirror each other. This is an example of radial symmetry.



DYNAMIC SYMMETRY:

Top Photo: Dynamic Symmetry
Middle Photo: Dynamic Symmetry
Bottom Photo: Dynamic Asymmetry

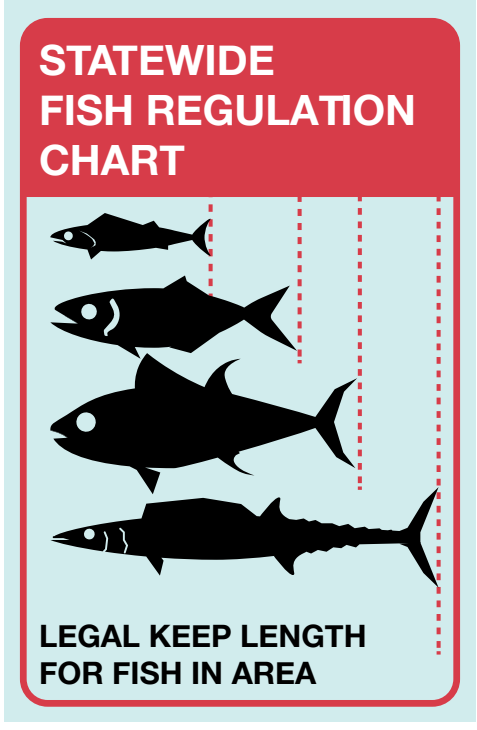
Symmetry vs Asymmerty

Symmetry is more inherently understandable because we can all relate as human beings that are symmetrical to that principle, but you may be wondering what exactly is asymmetry. Asymmetry in design really is distributing elements so that moving them around until they really do feel balanced. So, that really is a matter somewhat of intuitive perception. Nature is full of asymmetry. A mountain has balance even though it's volumes are irregular. When we use the term dynamic or dynamic asymmetry, what we're really referring to is design that really moves and changes, design in which the viewer's eye is actively moved around and through a design. Symmetrical layouts can be dynamic, too. You can vary the size of the elements or you can crop them on the page in a way that suggests tension and movement and growth.

Symmetry vs Asymmerty

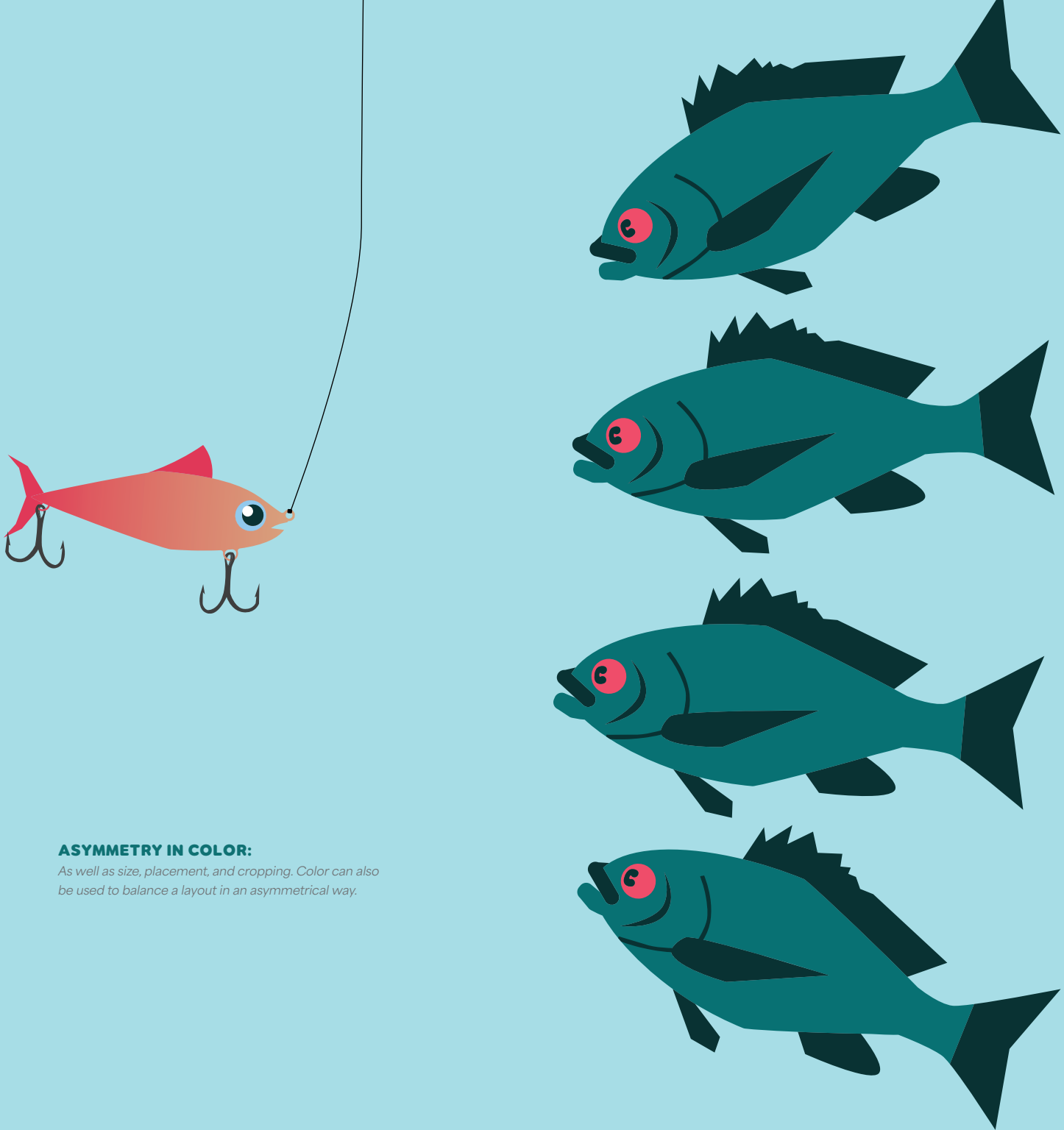
SYMMETRICAL TYPE:

This centered type layout shows an example of symmetry in typography.



ASYMMETRICAL TYPE:

A left aligned type layout to show an example of asymmetry in typography.



ASYMMETRY IN COLOR:

As well as size, placement, and cropping. Color can also be used to balance a layout in an asymmetrical way.

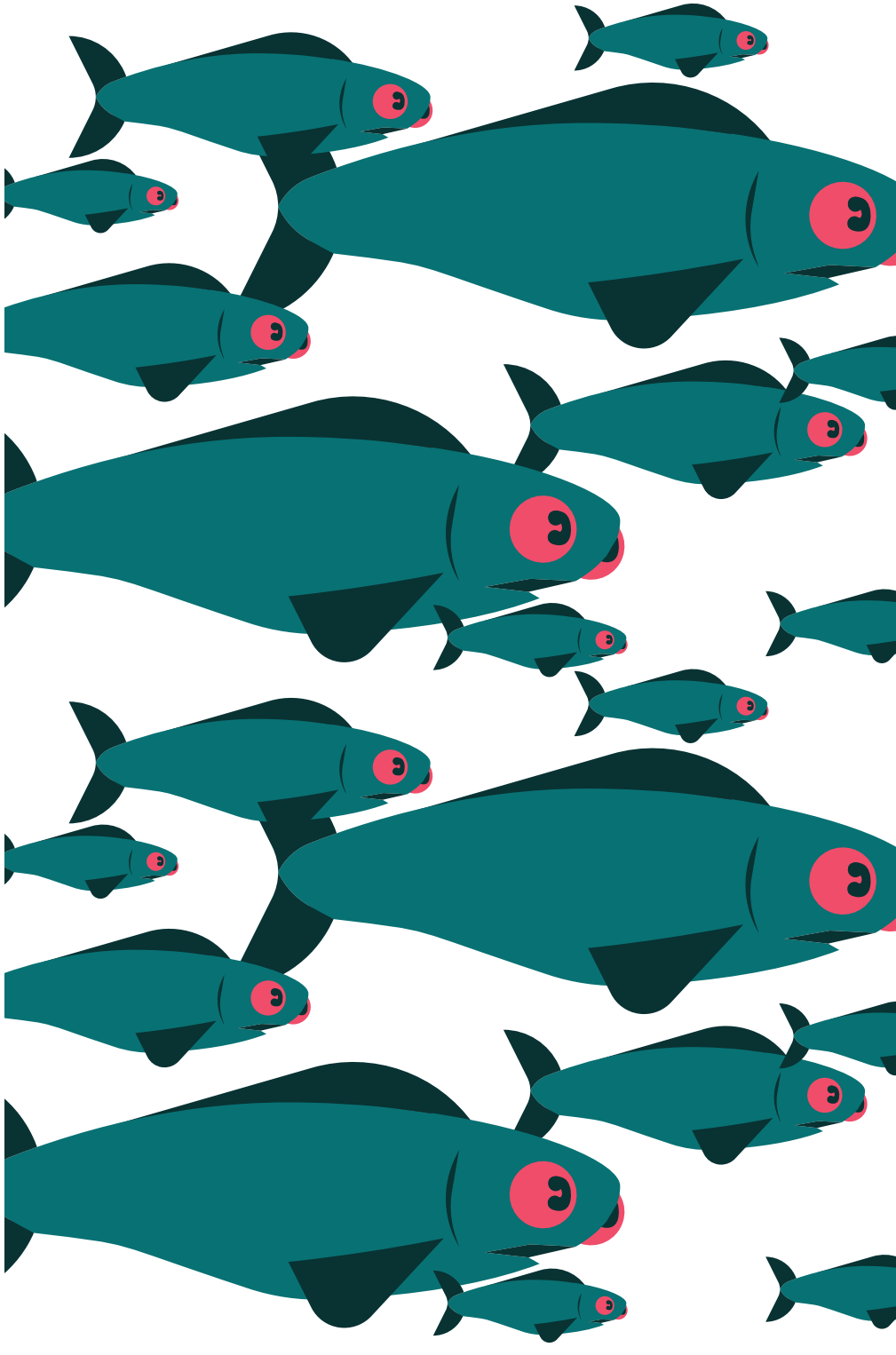
SCA

Scale

Scale is how big something is but it's a little more complicated than that, isn't it? What do designers mean when they talk about scale? Scale is relative. An element will seem larger or smaller depending on its context. How big is a circle in relation to other circles? How big is it in relation to the page? What's it relationship to the human body? Scale conveys meaning. Here, large objects appear to be closer and small objects appear to be farther away. Scale relationships can be conceptual. A large element might be more important. In this data visualization, scale is used to represent precise differences and quantity. Scale can tell a visual story. In these layouts, the large-scale letters are so big they don't fit on the page. Cropping enhances their feeling of scale.

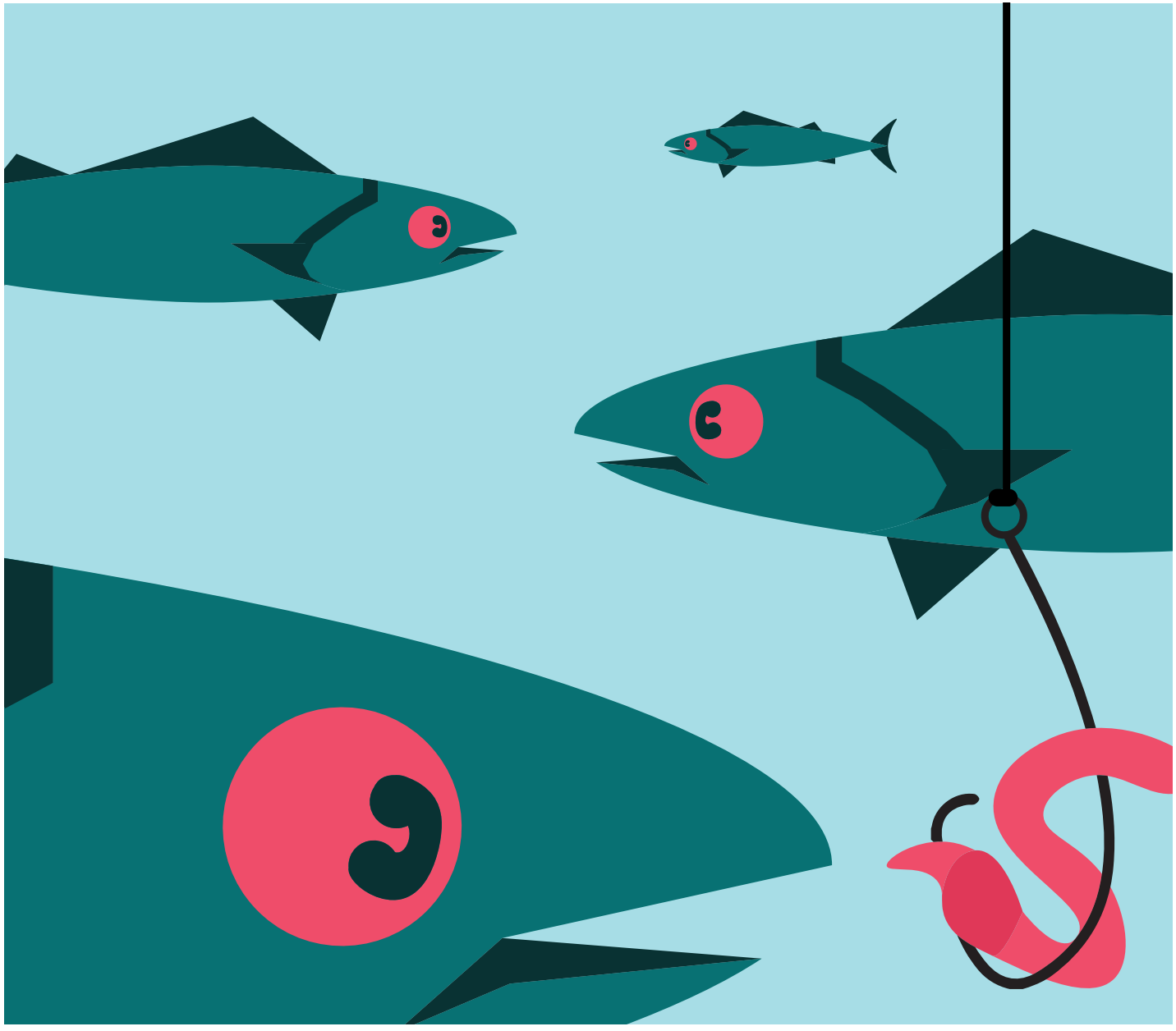
SCALE CONVEYS MEANING:

The fish in this layout vary in size and layering. This is done to create depth and relationships so that the audience can have a sense of scale.



SCALE IS RELATIVE:

Using simple shapes, scale can implicate size depending on context. The larger ball sits in front of the horizon before the smaller ball to make it seem very large.



CROPPING SCALE:

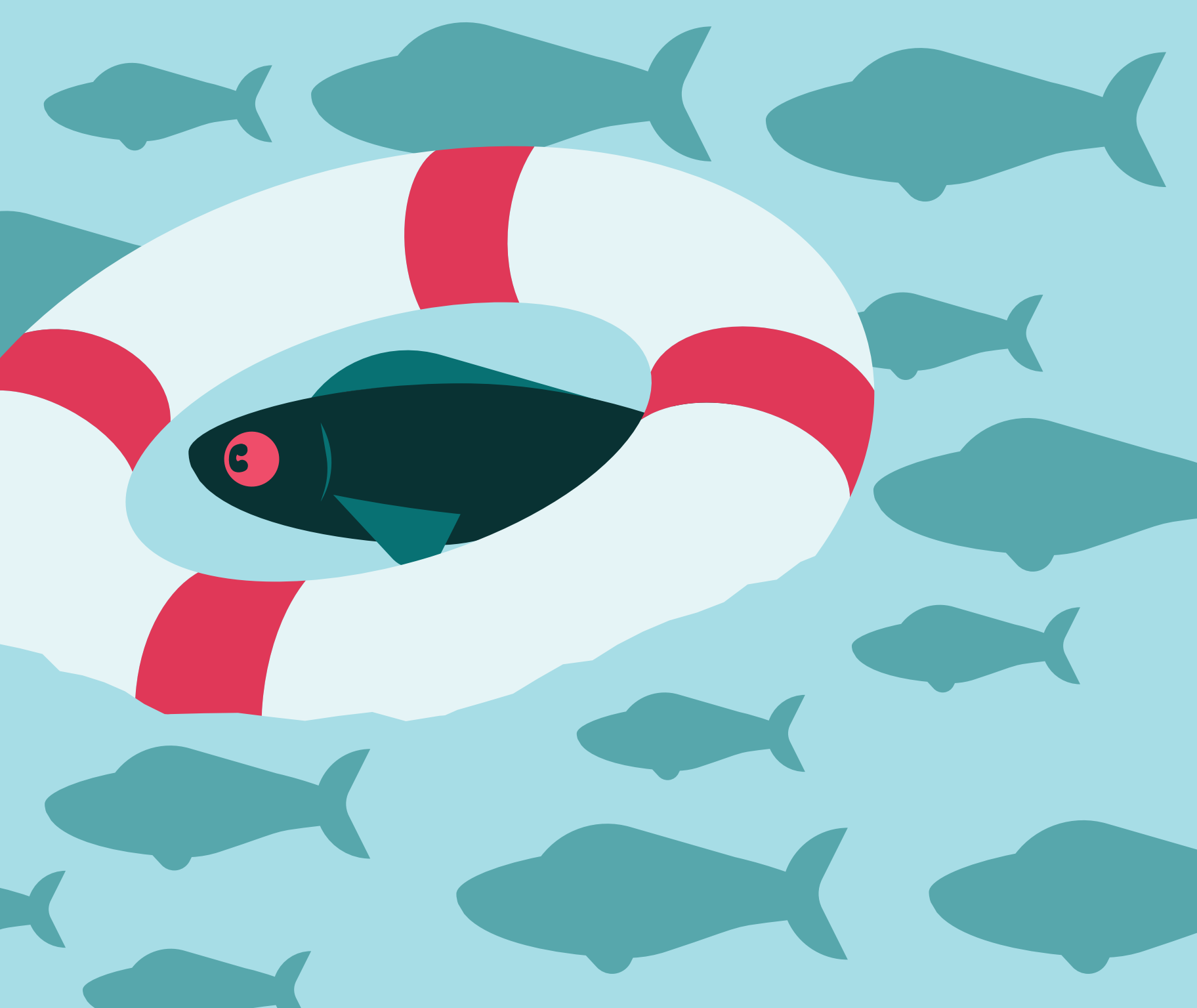
Cropping an image can imply scale.

Scale in typography:
This sign has the term "FISH MARKET" enlarged to catch the viewer's eye. The same treatment is done to "FRESH" on the button.

Scale

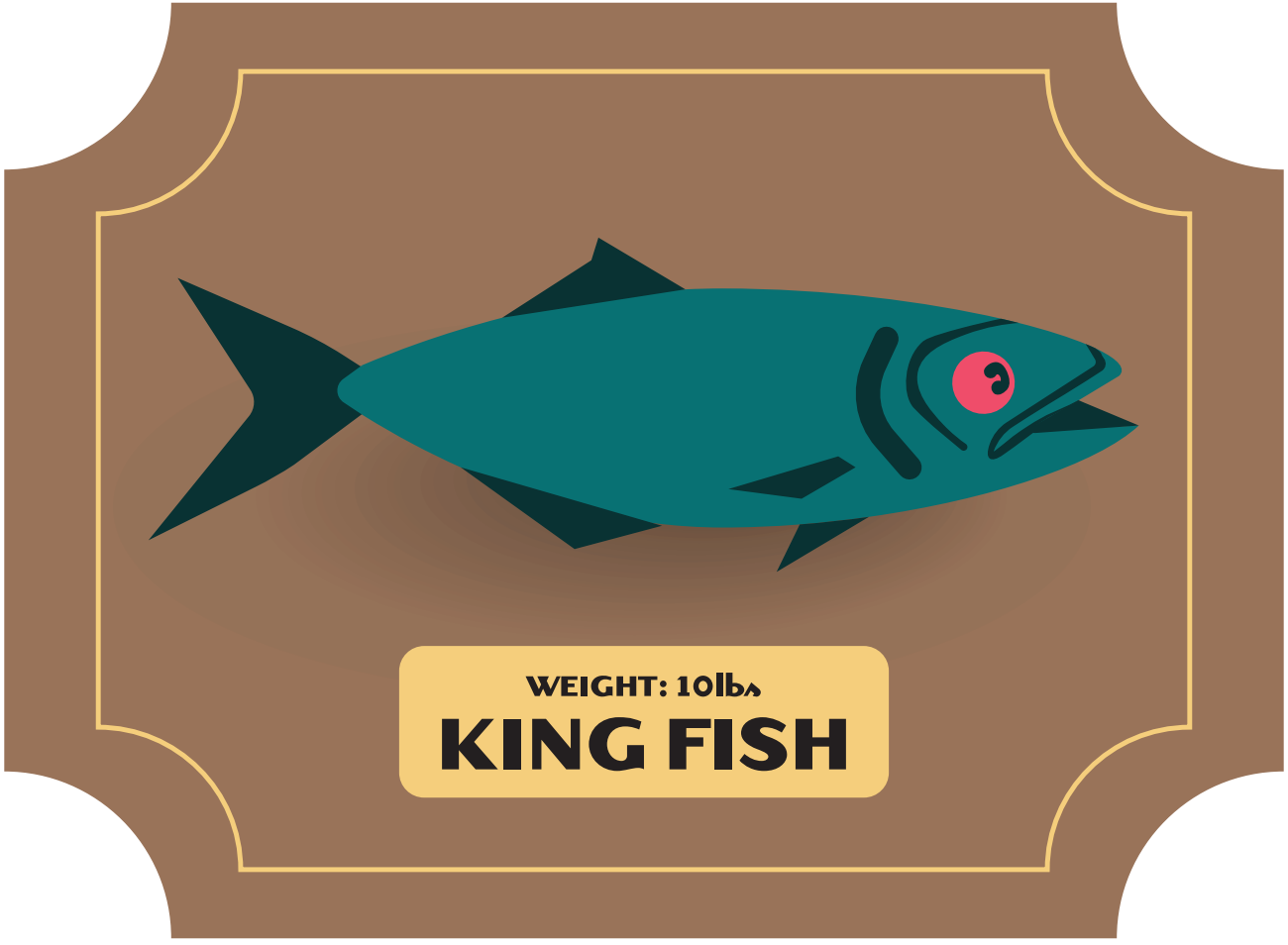
Scale is an important tool in graphic design because it can often energize the design by changing what we expect. Often, when you take an element and change the scale in a way that your audience doesn't anticipate it can energize the design. You can surprise your audience by making something that's typically really big, really small and something really small really big. So, make your headline a little bit bigger, make your text a little bit smaller and you might have more attention and more interests between those elements.

Framing



Framing

Graphic design is an art of framing. When creating a layout, designers bring attention to images and text with margins, borders, and cropping. Every photograph is really an act of framing. We use the camera to focus on points of interest. Margins and bleeds affect how an image occupies space. So, think of a margin as a kind of protective border around the picture. It's a border that lets us see that picture as an object. It draw attention just by being empty. A bleed is the opposite. A bleed goes right off the edges of the page. It brings us more inside the picture. It makes the picture more immediate. Designers also use partial bleeds, where some of the picture goes off the edge, but there's some white leftover. That's really useful because it creates a space for text or captions. Cropping an image can change its shape and proportions, as well as its sense of drama, or intimacy, or abstraction. Cropping an image or making it bleed changes its impact. Framing is part of almost everything graphic designers do. We crop a photograph, we place an image in space, we put a border around a text or around the picture. Every time you change the cropping of the image in instagram, you are framing. Every time you put a picture in the middle of a page, you are framing. Every time you choose whether to put a border around the image or to leave it clean, you are framing. All those things are ways to call attention to the content, to direct people where to look, to show people what's important. That's something that graphic designers are doing all the time in our work.



FRAMING:

Some fishermen want to show-off a prized catch and will do so using framing. This is an example of framing used to focus people on a point of interest.

Hierarchy

SEAFOOD MARKET

Tuna

Wild caught red meat tuna

$9

per lbs.

Salmon

Fresh bright orange meat salmon

$10

per lbs.

Mahi Mahi

Freshly caught Mahi Mahi filets

$8

per lbs.

Yellowtail

Yellowtail sold with yuzu marinade

$11

per lbs.

Hierarchy

Grids are a powerful tool in page layout. They give structure to the page and they increase the efficiency of the design process. A basic grid has vertical columns and horizontal rows. In graph paper, the divisions are perfectly even. Designers use grids to generate patterns and shapes. The fields of the grid can provide a basic structure for page layouts. A typographic grid has more than just columns and rows. It also has margins and gutters. A margin is the space around the edge of the layout and gutters are the space between the blocks of content. Why are grids to important in layout design? The grid helps the designer place and size elements and the grid creates consistency over many pages.

Grids created for the web and digital media tend to be more uniform than print grids. Responsive design creates layouts that work on different devices. So, here you see a desktop design and a mobile design. They have the same content and a similar grid but a different number of images, a different number of columns. A google image search builds automatic grids on the fly and to account for the different shapes of the images, google lines up the heights but not the width, and it creates a kind of funky slightly skewed grid that's fun to look at.

Ocean Side

FISH MARKET

San Francisco, California

CAUGHT FRESH DAILY

HIERARCHY:
Typographical hierarchy

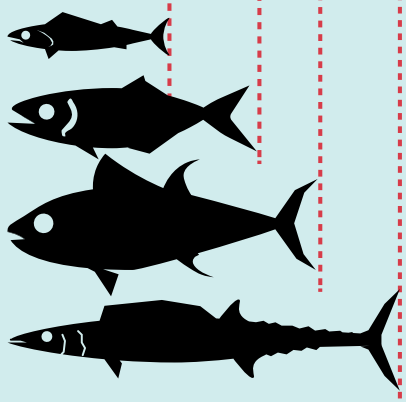
NOTICE

PRIVATE PROPERTY.
NO FISHING WITHOUT A LICENSE.

NO TRESPASSING. ALL VIOLATERS WILL BE PROSECUTED TO THE FULL EXTENT OF THE LAW.
KEEP OUT.

HIERARCHY:
Typographical hierarchy

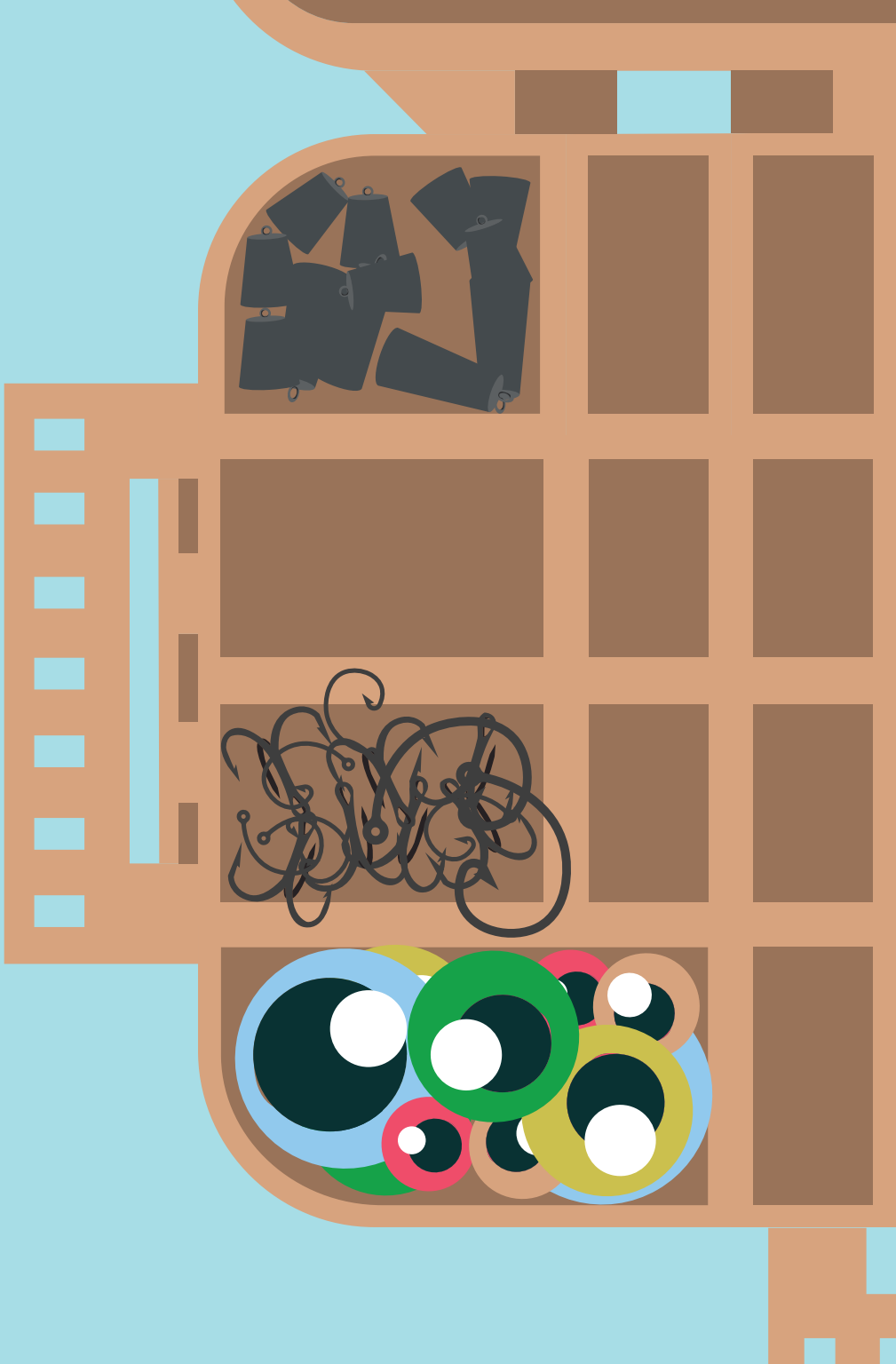
STATEWIDE FISH REGULATION CHART



LEGAL KEEP LENGTH FOR FISH IN AREA

HIERARCHY:
Typographical hierarchy

Grid



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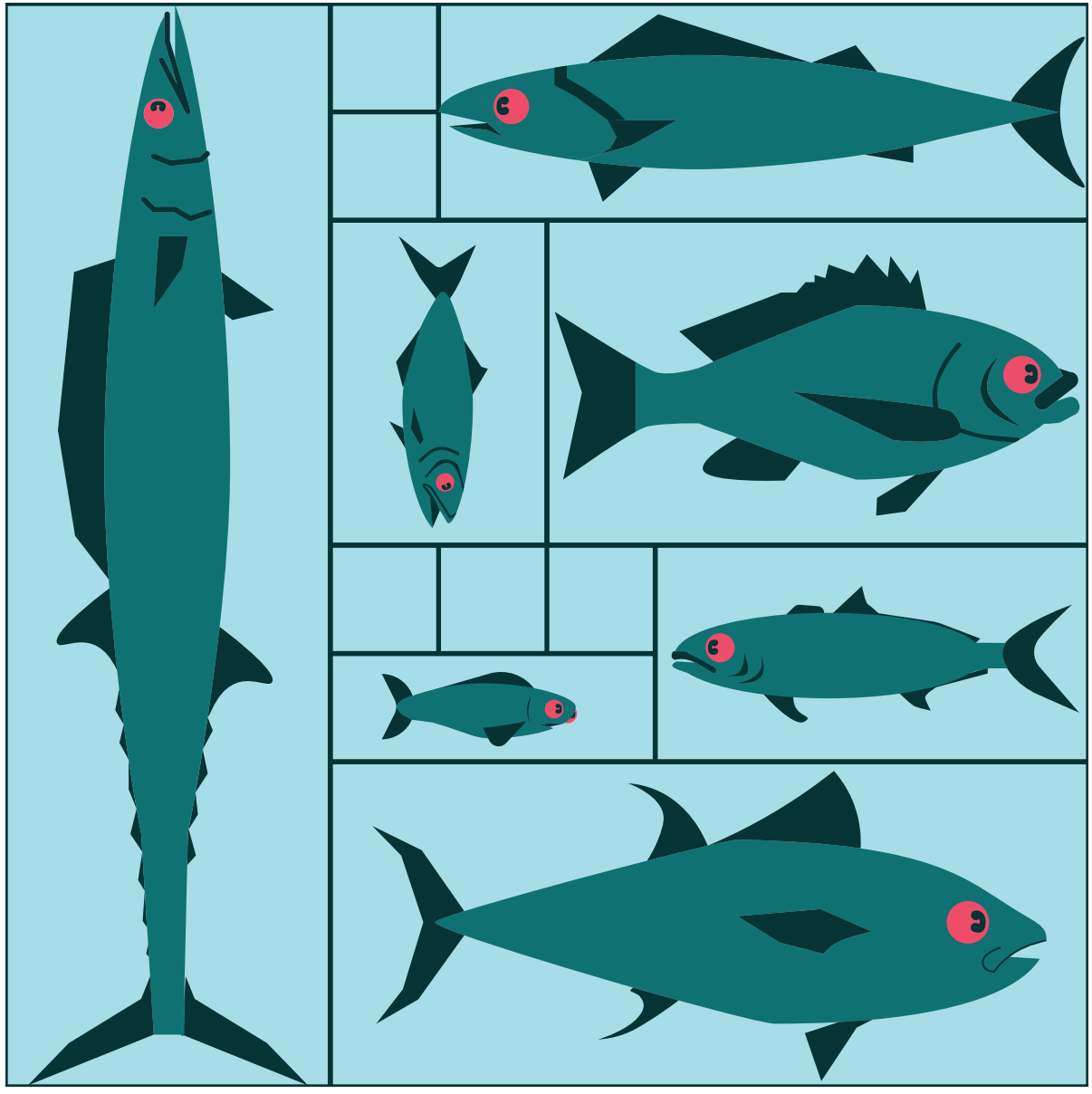

GRID:
Example of grid to space out fish.

Credits

Book designer, Daniel Hardy
Faculty advisor, Suzanne Powney

Primary typeface
LT Saedea
Area Pro

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