



## FACT SHEET

### LONGFIN TUNA

*Thunnus alalunga*

**Family:** Scombridae

**Other common names:** Albacore, Albakoor

#### Description

A robust, spindle-shaped tuna that is dark metallic blue above and silvery white below. The iridescent blue band that runs along each flank is particularly evident in live specimens. The fins are yellowish, and the pectoral fins are characteristically long, extending beyond the first dorsal finlets.

#### Distribution

Has a wide geographical distribution with populations found in the Atlantic, Mediterranean, Indian and Pacific Oceans. The species prefers cooler and deeper water in the temperature range 10–20°C. In South African waters shoals occur in larger quantities along the temperate west coast compared to shoals in the Indian Ocean, which occur along the warmer south east coast.

#### Habitat

A pelagic species that is frequently found associated with the northern and southern gyres of the oceans. They migrate widely from their spawning grounds in the tropics to the poleward limits of the gyres where water temperature is below 15°C.

#### Feeding

An opportunistic predator feeding on sardine, anchovy, mackerel, squid and planktonic crustaceans.

#### Movement

A highly migratory species but migration routes in the South Atlantic and the Southwestern Indian Ocean remain uncertain. However, they probably involve migrations to and from their spawning grounds in more tropical waters (see below).

## Reproduction

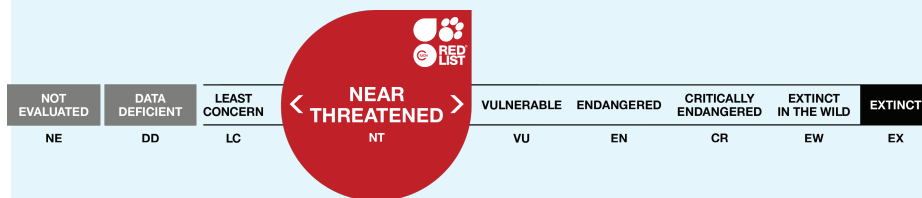
They mature at 90 cm fork length and an age of 5 years. Spawning season is spring-summer from September-March for both the Southern Atlantic and Indian Ocean stocks. Spawning areas in the South Atlantic are off the eastern Brazilian coast, from 5°S to 20°S. The main spawning area in the Indian Ocean occurs in waters off eastern Madagascar, from 15°S to 25°S. In both oceans, spawning takes place in water temperatures above 24°C.

## Age and growth

They can reach a maximum size of 130 cm fork length and a weight of 40 kg. They have been aged to a maximum of 13 years.

## Current status

Both the Southern Atlantic and Indian Ocean stocks were overexploited, but recent assessments suggest that some recovery has taken place in the South Atlantic stock. They have been evaluated as Near Threatened on the IUCN Red List (2011).  
South African Sustainable Seafood Initiative (SASSI) List: Green.



## Capture

The tuna pole and commercial line-fishery contribute the most towards longfin tuna catches, with 4100 mt reported in 2010. The pelagic longline and recreational ski-boat fishery catch longfin tuna in smaller quantities, estimated at about 10% of the total South African catch. It is a very popular gamefish and is commonly targeted by ski-boat anglers around Cape Point.

## Current recreational fishing regulations

**Daily bag limit:** 10 per person per day  
**Minimum size limit:** None  
**Closed Season:** None  
**Other regulations:** None  
**Marine protected areas (MPAs):** Longfin tuna is an open ocean, highly migratory species and MPAs would unlikely protect such a widespread, highly mobile species.

## Reference

Information from the ORI Fish App. [www.saambr.org.za](http://www.saambr.org.za)



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