



FACT SHEET

Queen mackerel

Scomberomorus plurilineatus

Family: Scombridae

Other common names: Natal snoek, Kanadi kingfish, Serra, Gespikkelde katonkel

Description

An elongate, streamlined fish with a large, deeply forked tail. They are silver in colour with a metallic green sheen above and white below. A series of dark grey horizontal, broken lines and spots pattern the flanks. The front part of the first dorsal fin is black.

Distribution

Western Indian Ocean, Kenya to South Africa, also west coast of Madagascar, Comoros and Seychelles. In southern Africa common in Mozambique and KwaZulu-Natal waters, rarely extending into the Eastern Cape, but has been recorded as far south as Tsitsikamma.

Habitat


Near the surface, primarily confined to the inshore zone, often just behind back-line but seldom enters the active surf-zone. Shows a strong preference for areas close to river-mouths, rip currents off sandy beaches, shallow rocky and coral reefs.

Feeding

Feeds mainly on small fish such as anchovies and sardines but also takes squid, mantis shrimps, mysids and swimming prawns.

Movement

Adults migrate into KwaZulu-Natal waters during early summer (October-November) and return to Mozambican waters during winter (May-September). This is likely to be a feeding migration as very few reproductively active fish have been observed in KwaZulu-Natal waters.

Reproduction	They reach maturity at 72-78 cm fork length at an age of 2 years. Spawning occurs mainly from late winter to early summer (August-November) and is thought to occur along the Mozambique coast.
Age and growth	They can reach a maximum size of 117 cm fork length and a weight of 12.5 kg. They are a fast-growing, short-lived species and have been aged to a maximum of 6 years.
Current status	Queen mackerel have been assessed as optimally exploited in KwaZulu-Natal waters with spawner biomass at 50% of their pristine level. However, annual catches are highly variable and dependent on years of good recruitment. They have been evaluated as Data Deficient on the IUCN Red List (2011). South African Sustainable Seafood Initiative (SASSI) List: Green.
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Capture	Important to recreational ski-boat anglers and spear-fishermen in KwaZulu-Natal and Mozambique. Makes up only a small component of commercial ski-boat catches in KwaZulu-Natal. Important in the artisanal line and net fisheries in Mozambique and other East African countries.
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): This species probably derives little benefit from MPAs due to their highly migratory nature.
Reference	Information from the ORI Fish App. www.saambr.org.za



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