



FACT SHEET

BIGEYE KINGFISH

Caranx sexfasciatus

Family: Carangidae

Other common names: Bigeye trevally, Grootoog-koningvis

Description	A robust, oblong body with a rounded head profile and relatively large eyes. Silvery grey in colour with distinct white tips to the dorsal and anal fins. A small black spot on the upper edge of the gill cover. Juveniles have six faint vertical bars.
Distribution	Widespread in tropical areas of the Indo-West Pacific. In South African waters they are found as far south as Knysna. Probably one of the most common kingfish species found in South African waters, especially in estuaries.
Habitat	Associated with coral reefs and found in coastal and oceanic waters to depths of 146 m. Prefers clear, warmer waters and is sensitive to changes in salinity and water turbidity. Most active nocturnally (hence the large eyes). Juveniles are commonly found in estuaries from KwaZulu-Natal to the southern parts of the Eastern Cape.
Feeding	Predominantly feed on small fish, but also prawns, mantis shrimps and swimming crabs. Small juveniles feed on planktonic organisms such as copepods, while larger juveniles in estuaries feed on small fish and prawns.
Movement	Little known. Adult fish appear to be summer migrants to northern KwaZulu-Natal waters. Tag-recapture results have shown fairly high levels of residency although some individuals have moved distances of over 60 km.

Reproduction	They reach maturity at about 50 cm fork length. They spawn in spring and summer, mainly in inshore areas, probably throughout their distribution. Pair-spawning has been observed at dusk with the male being a darker colour than the female.	
Age and growth	They can reach a maximum length of 120 cm total length and a weight of up to 18 kg. They can reach an age of at least 11 years.	
Current status	Little is known about the status of bigeye kingfish in South African waters. However, considering the poor condition of many of our estuaries, it is likely that the population of this estuarine-dependent species is under pressure. It is listed as Least Concern in the IUCN Red List (2018). South African Sustainable Seafood Initiative (SASSI) List: Red.	
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Capture	Popular recreational gamefish especially in northern KwaZulu-Natal and Mozambique. Caught by recreational shore and skiboat anglers and larger specimens are occasionally speared by divers. Popular with saltwater flyfishing enthusiasts in estuaries.	
Current recreational fishing regulations	<p>Daily bag limit: 5 per person per day</p> <p>Minimum size limit: None</p> <p>Closed Season: None</p> <p>Other regulations: No sale recreational species</p> <p>Marine protected areas (MPAs): Protected from capture in some no-take MPAs along the east coast such as the iSimangaliso, uThukela, Aliwal Shoal and Pondoland MPAs. Juveniles may receive protection within certain estuaries zoned for no-take.</p>	
Reference	Information from the ORI Fish App. www.saambr.org.za	



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