



FACT SHEET

BONEFISH

Albula oligolepis

Family: Albulidae

Other common names: Smallscale bonefish, Beenvis

Description

Bright silvery fish with an elongate body that is nearly cylindrical in cross-section. The snout is long and cone shaped.

Distribution

This species has a tropical Indo-West Pacific distribution from South Africa to Oman, India, Thailand and north-eastern Australia. In South African waters it extends south to East London.

Habitat

An inshore, shallow-water species associated with sandy and muddy bottoms, also found in mangrove swamps and clear lagoons. Larvae pass through an eel-like leptocephalus phase before maturing into the adult form at about 6 cm in length.

Feeding

They feed on bottom-dwelling invertebrates including crabs, shrimps, worms and molluscs.

Movement

Little known of their movement patterns in South African waters.

Reproduction	Little known, but thought to mature at a length of about 30 cm and an age of 1-2 years. Probably have equal number of males and females and spawn all year round with spawning thought to occur in slightly deeper water further offshore in more tropical regions.
Age and growth	Not aged in South African waters, the similar <i>Albula vulpes</i> has been aged up to 19 years in Florida. Bonefish have been recorded reaching a maximum length of 100 cm and a weight of 8.6 kg, with some of the largest specimens on record caught in KwaZulu-Natal waters.
Current status	Unknown, listed as Data Deficient on the IUCN Red List (2011). South African Sustainable Seafood Initiative (SASSI) List: Not assessed.
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Capture	Popular among light tackle shore anglers along the Zululand coast due to its fighting ability but is not considered good eating due to numerous tiny bones. Around the Indian Ocean islands bonefish are often targeted on fly tackle. Occasionally netted in the beach seine fishery off Durban. There is recent evidence of more bonefish being caught in southern KwaZulu-Natal suggesting a range extension, possibly associated with increasing sea temperature.
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): Benefits from receiving full protection in the no-take zones of the iSimangaliso MPA.
Reference	Information from the ORI Fish App. www.saambr.org.za



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