



FACT SHEET

BRINDLE BASS

Epinephelus lanceolatus

Family: Serranidae

Other common names: Giant grouper, Briekwabaars

Description

The largest member of the rockcod family and one of the largest bony fish. Adults are mottled grey-brown with a distinctive rounded tail. The caudal, second dorsal and anal fins are often covered with black spots. Juveniles are dark brown with white blotches or bars, and they have yellow fins with black spots.

Distribution

Widespread throughout the Indo-Pacific from East Africa to Hawaii, north to Japan and south to Australia. Southernmost limit in South African waters is Algoa Bay.

Habitat

Adults are found in deep estuaries and harbours and in shelf waters to depths of at least 100 m. They are normally found on coral and rocky reefs, often associated with caves, but may also be found over sandy or muddy bottoms. Juveniles are found in estuaries.

Feeding

An ambush predator known to take a range of prey including lobsters, crabs, fish, small sharks and rays.

Movement

This species is likely to be fairly resident. However, there is some evidence to suggest that adults may undertake seasonal migrations to spawning aggregation sites.

Reproduction

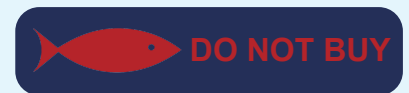
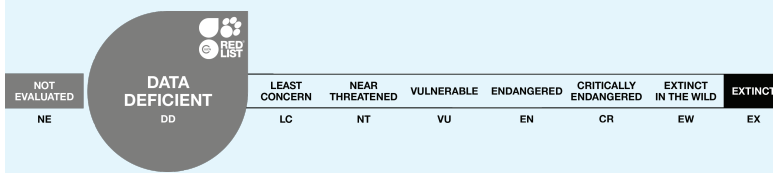
Females mature at about 129 cm total length. They probably change sex from female to male, but this has yet to be confirmed. Spawning likely takes place in tropical areas and a spawning aggregation has been observed off Mafia Island in Tanzanian waters.

Age and growth

They can reach a maximum size of 270 cm total length and a weight of 400 kg. They have not been aged, but adults have been kept in captivity for over 15 years.

Current status

The status of brindle bass has not been assessed. However, they have become increasingly rare in catches and are thought to have experienced severe declines throughout their range. Observations by spearfishermen along the KwaZulu-Natal coast suggested that numbers had declined substantially, prompting the Natal Underwater Union to motivate for their protection back in 1974. They have been evaluated as Data Deficient on the IUCN Red List (2018). South African Sustainable Seafood Initiative (SASSI) List: Red.



Capture

Once a prime target for spearfishers due to its large size, trophy status and the fact that this species is inquisitive and easy to approach underwater, this species was over-exploited and has been fully protected in South African waters since 1992. Prior to its protection this species was also occasionally caught by recreational and commercial ski-boat fishers, shore anglers and occasionally taken as a bycatch by shallow prawn trawlers. Becoming increasingly popular in the live food and aquarium trade, this species is now being hatchery reared and grown in captivity in the East.

Current recreational fishing regulations

Daily bag limit: Zero
Minimum size limit: Not applicable
Closed Season: Not applicable
Other regulations: Prohibited species
Marine protected areas (MPAs): Fully protected from fishing, so assuming that no illegal catches are retained, MPAs would only serve to reduce disturbance and post release mortality.

Reference

Information from the ORI Fish App. www.saambr.org.za



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