



## FACT SHEET

### CAPE ELEPHANTFISH

*Callorhinchus capensis*

**Family:** Callorhinchidae

**Other common names:** St Joseph, Silver trumpeter, Josef

#### Description

A strange looking fish with a long, pointed tail and a curious, trunk-like lobe projecting downwards from the tip of the snout. The scale-less skin is very smooth and silver in colour. They have a cartilaginous skeleton similar to sharks and rays. They have four gill slits fused into one opening.

#### Distribution

Endemic, Namibia to KwaZulu-Natal but primarily found along the Namibian, western and southern Cape coasts.

#### Habitat

A bottom dwelling marine species found living over sandy and muddy bottoms in depths from 10 to 370 m. Juveniles found predominantly inshore in depths less than 50 m. Eggs are deposited in shallow areas close to shore.

#### Feeding

Benthic invertebrates including bivalves, gastropods, polychaetes, crustaceans and fish. Known to feed on black mussels.

#### Movement

Thought to be nomadic, mature fish have an annual onshore/offshore migration for breeding.

## Reproduction

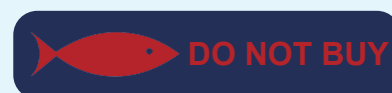
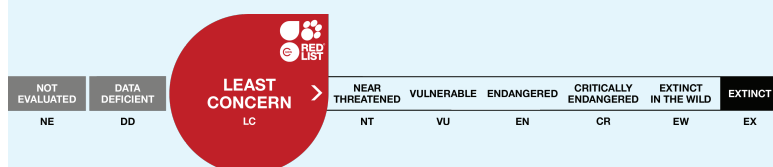
They mature at a length of 44-50 cm fork length and an age of 3-4 years. They are oviparous and lay up to 22 eggs with an incubation time of 9-12 months. During summer, mature individuals migrate inshore to mate and lay eggs in shallow, sheltered bays. Courtship, mating and breeding have been observed in St Helena Bay on the Cape west coast.

## Age and growth

They reach a maximum length of 122 cm fork length, a weight of 5.3 kg and have been aged up to a maximum of 10 years.

## Current status

Unknown. Inshore catches have declined but large catches continue to be made by the inshore trawl fishery. Listed as Least Concern on the IUCN Red List (2006).  
South African Sustainable Seafood Initiative (SASSI) List: Red.



## Capture

Caught by gillnet and beach seine fisheries off the West Coast and in False Bay. Large numbers caught as a bycatch in the inshore trawl fishery. Occasionally caught inshore by recreational boat and shore anglers, especially during and following cold upwelling events.

## Current recreational fishing regulations

**Daily bag limit:** 1 per person per day  
**Minimum size limit:** None  
**Closed Season:** None  
**Other regulations:** None  
**Marine protected areas (MPAs):** It is likely that no-take MPAs with suitable habitat in the Western Cape and Northern Cape play a role in providing protection for this species.

## Reference

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



INCORPORATING



Helping people to care for our ocean