



## FACT SHEET

### DUSKY KOB

*Argyrosomus japonicus*

**Family:** Sciaenidae

**Other common names:** Daga salmon, Japanese meagre, Kabeljou

#### Description

An elongate but robust fish with a slightly rounded tail fin. Silvery in colour with a pearly-pink sheen on the head, flanks and dorsal surface. Has a row of beautiful silvery spots along the lateral line when they are alive. The black flap of skin under the pectoral fin is smooth with no scales.

#### Distribution

Known from the south-eastern seaboard of southern Africa, Oman, Pakistan, India, southern and eastern Australia, Hong Kong northwards along the Chinese coast to southern Korea and Japan. In southern African waters they occur from False Bay to southern Mozambique.

#### Habitat

Adults are predominantly found in the near-shore marine environment, from the surf-zone down to 120 m, but they also frequent the lower-middle reaches of turbid estuaries. Juveniles are highly dependent on estuaries but move into the adjacent surf-zone with increasing size and age.

#### Feeding

Adults are predominantly found in the near-shore marine environment, from the surf-zone down to 120 m, but they also frequent the lower-middle reaches of turbid estuaries. Juveniles are highly dependent on estuaries but move into the adjacent surf-zone with increasing size and age.

#### Movement

Juveniles and sub-adults are resident in specific estuaries and adjacent surf-zones and exhibit low levels of dispersal. However, after reaching maturity a proportion of the adult population from the Eastern and Western Cape migrate to KwaZulu-Natal to spawn in winter and spring.

#### Reproduction

Males mature at 92 cm and females at 107 cm total length, equivalent to an age of 5 and 6 years respectively. Spawning occurs from August to January. Adult spawning aggregations occur on offshore reefs, pinnacles and wrecks (mainly at night) in KwaZulu-Natal and the Eastern Cape.

## Age and growth

They can reach a maximum size of 205 cm total length and a weight of 80 kg. They have been aged up to a maximum of 42 years.

## Current status

This species has been severely depleted both through overfishing and estuarine degradation. It is estimated that the stock has collapsed and is now at less than 5% of its pristine level. They have been evaluated as Endangered on the IUCN Red List (2020).

South African Sustainable Seafood Initiative (SASSI) List:  
Red but Green for farmed dusky kob.



## Capture

Dusky kob is one of the most important species targeted in the recreational, subsistence and commercial linefisheries. Juveniles and sub-adults less than 110 cm total length are commonly targeted by estuarine and surf-zone anglers, while adults are caught mainly by recreational and commercial ski-boat fishermen beyond the surf-zone. There is specific targeting of spawning aggregations of adult fish by ski-boat fishermen at night during late winter and spring in KwaZulu-Natal.

## Current recreational fishing regulations

**Daily bag limit:** 1 per person per day if caught from the shore and in estuaries east of Cape Agulhas. 5 per person per day if caught west of Cape Agulhas or if caught anywhere from a boat offshore.

**Minimum size limit:** 60 cm total length if caught from the shore and in estuaries east of Cape Agulhas. 40 cm total length (KZN) and 50 cm total length (EC & WC) if caught from a boat offshore or from the shore west of Cape Agulhas. However, only one kob greater than 110 cm total length may be caught per person per day regardless of area or sector.

**Closed Season:** None

**Other regulations:** Due to the similarity of the three kob species found in South African waters (i.e. dusky kob, silver kob and squaretail kob), complex regional differences in the regulations exist.

**Marine protected areas (MPAs):** Several MPAs in South Africa have been shown to provide protection for dusky kob including De Hoop and Dwesa-Cwebe. Other MPAs such as the zoned no-take areas of the Thukela Banks, Aliwal Shoal, Pondoland, Amathole and Addo should provide additional protection for this species. However, owing to the resident nature of juvenile and sub-adult dusky kob in estuaries and the adjacent surf-zone, this species would benefit from greater protection in estuarine protected areas, particularly within large productive and turbid systems.

## Reference

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



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