



FACT SHEET

GALJOEN

Dichistius capensis

Family: Dichistidae

Other common names: Damba

Description

South Africa's national fish. Galjoen is a robust, deep-bodied fish with a variable colour ranging from grey to almost black. May have 7-9 vertical bars on each flank.

Distribution

Endemic, from southern Angola around the Cape to Durban. More abundant in waters cooler than 21°C, rare on the KwaZulu-Natal south coast.

Habitat

Adults are found in broken surf (white water) with areas of mixed rock and sand being favoured. Also found in the surf-zone along sandy beaches and in kelp beds. Sometimes found on offshore pinnacles in large shoals. Juveniles are found in the shallow surf-zone.

Feeding

Feed on submerged rocks in the surf-zone with molluscs such as brown mussels dominating the diet.

Movement

Most fish are resident (90%). A small percentage are nomadic. Nomads can move throughout the range. It is uncertain whether individuals adopt one or the other pattern (i.e. residency or nomadism), or if all fish can adopt both patterns, but in unequal proportions.

Reproduction

They mature at a length of 31-34 cm total length and an age of 5 years. They are batch spawners with equal numbers of males and females. Spawning occurs from September to February, probably throughout their distribution.

Age and growth

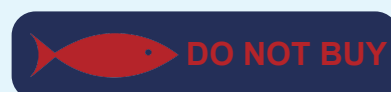
They can reach a maximum size of 74 cm total length and a weight of 6.5 kg, with females growing bigger than males. They have been aged up to a maximum of 21 years.

Current status

The galjoen stock is considered to have collapsed, with the population being at less than 20% of its pristine level. It is likely that the stock is only being sustained because of unfished natural refuges and no-take MPAs. It has not been evaluated on the IUCN Red List. South African Sustainable Seafood Initiative (SASSI) List: Red.



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Capture

One of the most frequently targeted species by recreational shore anglers in the Western Cape. Also often shot by spearfishermen. Taken illegally in gill-nets on the west coast. An exciting fish to catch on light-tackle, they are particularly partial to red-bait.

Current recreational fishing regulations

Daily bag limit: 2 per person per day
Minimum size limit: 35 cm total length
Closed Season: 15 October to last day of February
Other regulations: No sale recreational species
Marine protected areas (MPAs): Galjoen catch rates recovered dramatically in the De Hoop MPA shortly after its closure. There is a marked difference in catch rate and size structure between exploited and unexploited areas. A small fraction of adults leave MPAs, as deduced from tagging, which suggests that MPAs sustain adjacent fisheries by way of adult spillover and perhaps also egg and larval export.

Reference

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



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