



FACT SHEET

SQUARETAIL KOB

Argyrosomus thorpei

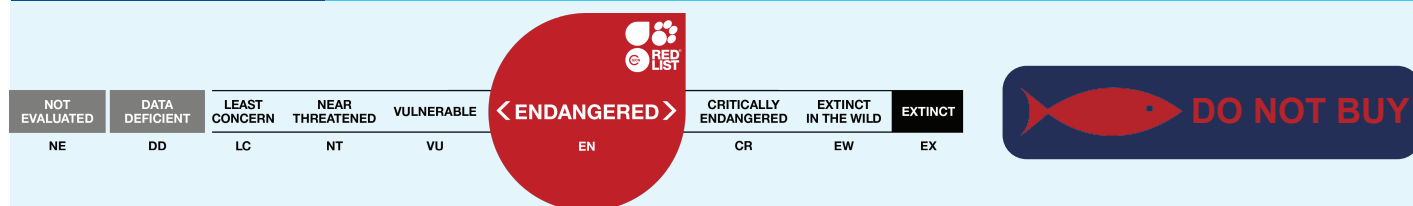
Family: Sciaenidae

Other common names: Half kob, Stompstert-kabeljou

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| Description | An elongate body with a silver colour overall. The upper flanks have a pink to blueish sheen. Very similar to the other kob species, but they can be distinguished by the squarer tail, scales on the flap of skin under the pectoral fin and smaller teeth. |
| Distribution | Endemic to southern Africa, found along the south-east coast of Africa from Xai-Xai in Mozambique south to Port Elizabeth. |
| Habitat | Adults are found on low relief, offshore reefs in depths less than 100 m. Juveniles are found on offshore banks with soft muddy or sandy bottoms in depths less than 50 m. |
| Feeding | They mainly feed on fish but cephalopods and crustaceans are also taken. |
| Movement | Mostly resident although a few movements of over 100 km have been recorded. Juveniles move from soft substrata to reefs on reaching maturity. |
| Reproduction | Females mature at about 33 cm total length equivalent to an age of about 2.1 years. Spawning has been recorded from June to September on the Thukela Banks in central KwaZulu-Natal but likely also occurs off Xai-Xai in Mozambique. |
| Age and growth | They can reach a maximum size of 110 cm total length and a weight of 17 kg. They have been aged up to a maximum of 13 years. |

Current status

This species was assessed to be overexploited in the mid-1990s with the spawner biomass estimated to be at about 17% of the unfished level. This was due to targeting of adults by commercial and recreational ski-boats and the substantial bycatch of juveniles taken by prawn trawlers operating on the shallow Thukela Bank. However, the cut in commercial line-fishing effort implemented between 2003-2006 and the fact that the prawn trawl fishery is no longer operational in this area suggests that the stock may be recovering. They have been evaluated as Endangered on the IUCN Red List (2020). South African Sustainable Seafood Initiative (SASSI) List: Red.



Capture

They comprised a substantial component of commercial ski-boat catches in northern KwaZulu-Natal during the 1980s, but catches declined sharply during the 1990s. They are also caught by recreational ski-boat anglers, mainly between Thukela and Richards Bay on the KwaZulu-Natal north coast. Juveniles used to be a common bycatch in Thukela Bank prawn trawl catches especially between January-February, but this fishery is no longer operational.

Current recreational fishing regulations

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

Minimum size limit: 60 cm total length if caught from the shore or in estuaries east of Cape Agulhas, 40 cm total length if caught from a boat offshore in the province of KwaZulu-Natal. 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): Squaretail kob are likely to receive good protection in the recently proclaimed no-take area of the uThukela Bank MPA, if it is well enforced. They also receive some protection in the Pondoland MPA in the Eastern Cape.

Reference

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



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