



FACT SHEET

YELLOWFIN TUNA

Thunnus albacares

Family: Scombridae

Other common names: Geelvin-tuna

Description

A large, robust tuna with a spindle-shaped body. Colour is metallic blue on the back, golden on the sides and silvery-white below. In juvenile fish there may be about 20 pale narrow bars on the sides. The dorsal and anal fins are yellow and all the finlets are yellow with a black border. The dorsal and anal fins become elongated in larger specimens.

Distribution

A cosmopolitan species found in tropical and subtropical open waters of the Indian, Atlantic and Pacific Oceans. The geographical limits are 45-50° N and S latitude. They are found right around the coast of southern Africa.

Habitat

An oceanic species with adults generally found from the surface to depths of 350 m. However, archival tagging has shown that this species is capable of very deep dives to over 1000 m. Their preferred habitat is in water temperatures of above 22°C. Juveniles spend more than 90% of their time in depths less than 100 m.

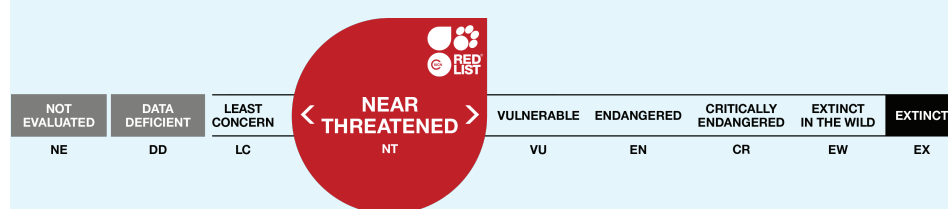
Feeding

They are opportunistic predators feeding on a wide variety of shallow and deep-water fish species, crustaceans and cephalopods.

Movement

A highly migratory species that moves annually into the tropics to spawn and into more temperate waters to feed. Off southern Africa, progressively larger fish are found with increasing latitude.

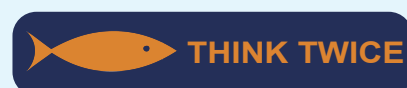
Reproduction	Females reach maturity at a length of 104-109 cm fork length and an age of 2-3 years. Spawning takes place in summer (October-March) in tropical areas such as off the coast of Gabon in the eastern Atlantic and in the northern Mozambique Channel in the southwestern Indian Ocean.
Age and growth	They can reach a maximum size of 239 cm fork length and a weight of 193.7 kg and have been aged up to 9 years.
Current status	<p>The stocks of yellowfin tuna in both the southern Atlantic and Indian Oceans are considered to be optimally exploited. However, although highly variable, catches in both these regions have been declining since the early 1990s. They have been assessed as Near Threatened on the IUCN Red List (2011).</p> <p>South African Sustainable Seafood Initiative (SASSI) List: Green for fish caught in the tuna pole fishery, Orange for those caught by the pelagic longline fishery.</p>



Caught in the tuna pole fishery



Caught by the pelagic longline fishery



Capture	Yellowfin ranks second in the world tuna fishery. In South African waters the pelagic longline fishery targets large (adult) fish. Juveniles are caught in surface waters by the tuna pole sector primarily along the Cape west coast. Juveniles are also caught in purse seine fisheries in more tropical waters. Yellowfin tuna are one of the most important gamefish targeted by recreational ski-boat anglers along the eastern seaboard of South Africa.
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Current recreational fishing regulations	<p>Daily bag limit: 10 per person per day</p> <p>Minimum size limit: 3.2 kg</p> <p>Closed Season: None</p> <p>Other regulations: None</p> <p>Marine protected areas (MPAs): Yellowfin tuna is an open ocean, highly migratory species and MPAs are unlikely to protect such a widespread, highly mobile species.</p>
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Reference	Information from the ORI Fish App. www.saambr.org.za
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