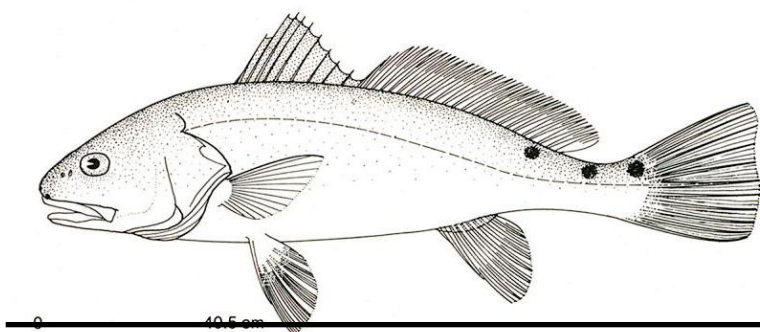


Red drum

Sciaenops ocellatus
Corvina



Description

Range: The red drum, a bony fish of the family Sciaenidae, is found in the western Atlantic from New England to Tuxpan, Mexico. It is most abundant in the northern Gulf.

Habitat: A demersal fish, the red drum is found over a variety of substrates including sand, mud, and oyster reefs. This species occurs in estuaries and nearshore waters to depths of 40 meters. Juveniles prefer grass beds with slightly muddy bottoms.

Feeding and Behavior: This fish feeds at or near the bottom, mostly on crabs, shrimps, molluscs, other invertebrates, and small fish. Very young red drum eat copepods, amphipods, and shrimps. Juveniles eat shrimp, small fish, and crabs. The most intensive feeding is in the early morning and late evening. Large schools are often sighted in the Gulf.

Reproduction: Spawning areas are distributed throughout coastal waters near mouths of passes into estuaries. Spawning occurs during fall and winter months with a peak in October. Nursery areas are located in the protected waters of estuaries where there is little wave action and grassy, slightly muddy bottoms.

Movement: There is a general movement inshore in spring and offshore in the fall. In cold weather, adults move to deeper waters. There is little movement between bay systems.

Fisheries: The red drum is a commercial species harvested in the northern Gulf off the coast of Louisiana and Mississippi, and to a lesser extent, in western Florida and Alabama. It is also harvested in Mexican waters. Catches are marketed mostly fresh as a popular foodfish. Recreational fishing for this species is undertaken throughout the nearshore waters of its range, particularly off the coasts of Texas, Alabama, and northwest Florida.

References: Overstreet, R.M., and R.W. Heard, 1978b; Ferret, W.S., et al., 1980; Simmons, E.G., and J.P. Breuer, 1962; US DOI, FWS, Office of Biological Services, 1978; Yokel, B.J., 1966.

-  **Adult Area (Year-round)**
-  **Spawning Area (Fall, Winter)**
-  **Nursery Area (Year-round)**
-  **Commercial and Recreational Fishing Ground (Year-round)**
-  **Recreational Fishing Ground (Year-round)**

References

Fischer, W., ed., 1978; Gutherz, E.J., pers. comm.; Heald, E.J., 1970; Hildebrand, H.H., pers. comm.; Janke, T.E., 1971; Loman, M., 1978; Pearson, J.C., 1929; Perret, W.S., et al., 1980; Rohr, B.A., pers. comm.; Yokel, B.J., 1966.

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