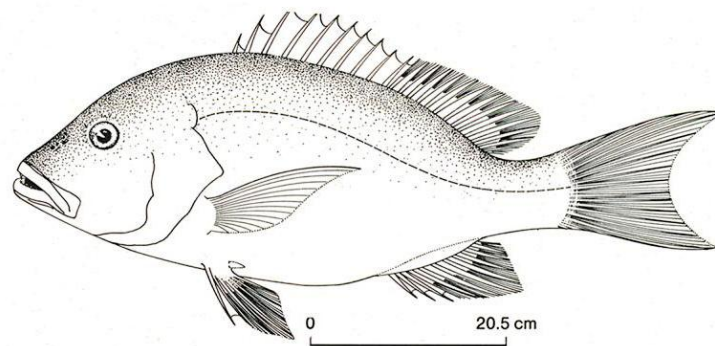


# Red snapper

*Lutjanus campechanus*

Guachinango



## Description

**Range:** The red snapper, a bony fish of the family Lutjanidae, is found along the western Atlantic from New England to the Yucatan Peninsula and throughout the Gulf of Mexico. It is particularly abundant on the Campeche Banks, the shelf areas of west Florida, and the northern Gulf.

**Habitat:** These demersal fish are found over sandy and rocky bottoms, around reefs and underwater objects at depths between 0 to 200 meters and possibly beyond 1,200 meters. In the northern part of its distribution area, adult red snapper favor deeper waters. Juveniles inhabit shallow nearshore and estuarine waters and are most abundant over sand or mud bottoms.

**Feeding and Behavior:** A common inhabitant of reefs, the red snapper feeds along the bottom on fishes and benthic organisms such as tunicates, crustaceans, and molluscs. Juveniles feed on zooplankton, small fish, crustaceans, and molluscs. The red snapper is a schooling species.

**Reproduction:** Spawning grounds are located in offshore waters and are active from June to October. Juveniles are found in estuaries and inshore coastal areas.

**Movement:** Little movement is shown by tagging studies, except possibly a general offshore movement in cold weather. As juveniles mature, they move into deeper waters.

**Fisheries:** Commercial fishing for this species in the Gulf is more extensive than for any other snapper, with year-round fishery reported off the coasts of western Florida to Texas and off the Yucatan. In terms of landed pounds, the red snapper is the largest component of the snapper fishery. The red snapper is highly esteemed as a recreational sport fish. Recreational fishing grounds are located offshore in the northern Gulf and both coasts of Florida.

**References:** Benson, N.G., ed., 1982; Bradley, E., and C.E. Bryan, 1974; Camber, C.I., 1955; Collins, L.A., J.H. Finucane, and L.E. Barger, 1980; Fischer, W., ed., 1978; Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council, 1980b; US DOI, FWS Office of Biological Services, 1978.

- Adult Area (Year-round)
- Major Adult Area (Year-round)
- Nursery Area (Year-round)
- Commercial Fishing Ground (Year-round)
- Recreational Fishing Ground (Year-round)

Spawning, from June to October, occurs throughout adult areas.

## References

Rivas, L.R., pers. comm.