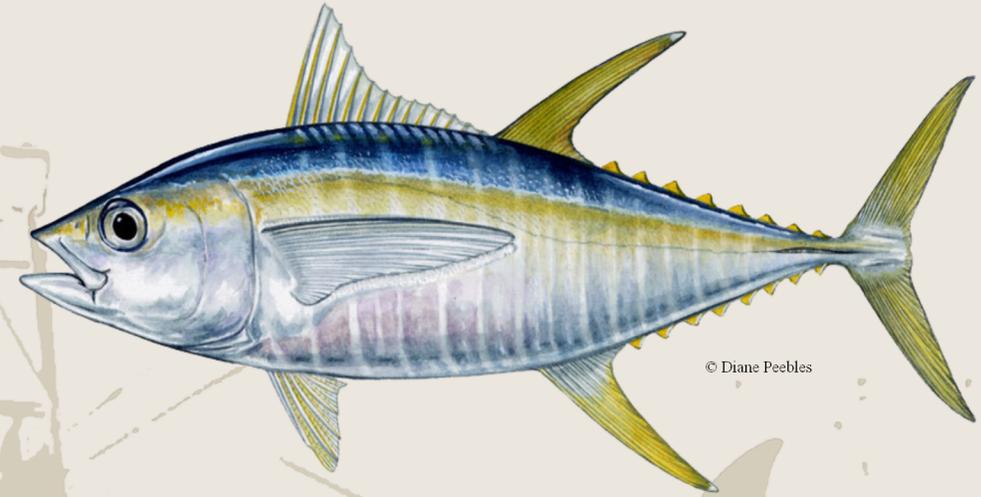


Yellowfin Tuna

(Thunnus albacares)

The yellowfin tuna's body is deep and streamlined with a metallic, dark blue back which changes to yellow and silver on the belly. A yellow band extends along the yellowfin tuna's side and the belly usually has about 20 vertical broken lines, a characteristic only present on yellowfin. Larger fish are easily identified by the long crescent shaped extensions of their second dorsal and anal fins.



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Spawning Season

Yellowfin tuna reach sexual maturity around 43 inches in length, which can be during their first year. However, most yellowfin tuna are two to three years of age when they first spawn. Spawning activity peaks during the summer months in the open sea when temperatures are near or above 78 degrees Fahrenheit, but may occur throughout the year. A fully mature five foot long female yellowfin tuna can release up to 8,000,000 eggs.

Habitat

Yellowfin tuna are a highly migratory species found in tropical and subtropical oceans, including the Gulf of Mexico. Schools are generally found in the coastal waters of Africa, mixed in schools with skipjack tuna and juvenile bigeye tuna. Oxygen requirements cause yellowfin tuna to primarily inhabit the upper 350 feet of the water column. Yellowfin tuna often exhibit schooling behavior with other tunas, driftwood, seagrass, or whale sharks. Yellowfin tuna may travel up to nine miles offshore to feed every evening, only to return to their school or reef edge habitat daily.

Diet

Yellowfin tuna feed on plankton and a variety of finfish including mackerels, flying fish, squid, and other tunas. Yellowfin tuna use gill rakers, small fingerlike extensions on their gills, to strain plankton from surface waters to complement their finfish diet. Yellowfin tuna are very efficient sight hunters, but can also smell their prey. Fish leave a scent in the water made up of oils, proteins, and amino acids from the slime layer on their bodies. This scent trail allows yellowfin tuna to track down their prey.

Age and Growth

Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries use "earstones", called otoliths, to calculate the age of fish. Biologists remove these hard structures from the skull of bony fish and cut them into small sections. In a process similar to ageing trees, biologists count the rings that are visible in the thinner otolith slices. Finfish age, length, and weight data are used by fishery managers to estimate growth rates, mortality rates, and population size. The chart shows that fish grow rapidly during the first few years of life and then growth begins to stabilize as they get older. Once fish reach maturity, energy is invested in reproduction rather than growth.



Your purchase of fishing equipment and motor boat fuels supports Sport Fish Restoration and boating access facilities.

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<http://www.spc.int/DigitalLibrary/Doc/FAME/Meetings/SCTB/12/YFT_2.pdf>

AGE (YEARS)	APPROX. AVERAGE LENGTH	APPROX. FORK LENGTH RANGE
1	34.5"	18" - 51"
2	47.5"	36" - 59.5"
3	57"	47.5" - 66.5"
4	64.5"	58.5" - 70.5"
5+	67"	67" - 70.5"

Yellowfin Tuna Quick Facts

The largest yellowfin tuna weighed by LDWF is 240.19 pounds.

The crescent shape of dorsal and anal fins gets bigger and more arched with maturity.

Yellowfin tuna can live to eight years of age.

Tuna have been observed swimming at 28 miles per hour for long distances.

A yellowfin tuna can swim in bursts near 40 miles per hour.

LDWF Contact Information

Recreational Fishing License
225-765-2887

Commercial License
225-765-2898

Boating Registration
225-765-2898

Lifetime License
225-765-2887

Enforcement
225-765-2989

Fish Tagging Program
225-763-5415