



LDWF Red Snapper Biology Fact Sheet

Attachment B (DRAFT)

Purpose: *To provide factual information on the biology of the Red Snapper to Louisiana's fishing community.*

#1 Red Snappers are capable of living for up to 60 years, but few actually survive that long. Old individuals (greater than 20 years) are very scarce in the Gulf population these days.

#2 Most red snappers harvested in both the recreational and the commercial fisheries are from 2 to 7 years of age.

#3 Red Snappers do not migrate to specific sites to congregate for spawning as do some other snappers and many groupers. However, large numbers of individuals may participate in group spawning wherever and whenever it is time for them to spawn.

#4 Female Red Snappers mature and start spawning sometime between the ages of 2 and 6 years; males generally mature at younger ages than females.

#5 Red Snapper spawning season begins in May and ends in September, but peak spawning is in May, June, and July.

#6 Female Red Snappers spawn a batch of eggs every 4-5 days throughout the spawning season. Individual batches of eggs may number from as few as 1,000 to as many as 2.5 million depending on the size of the female.

#7 A small, young female Red Snapper may spawn 30,000 eggs in a season, but an older, larger female may produce as many as 75 million eggs in a season.

#8 Red Snappers grow very quickly to about 30 inches in length during their first 10 years of life after which they grow very slowly for the remainder of their lives.

#9 Size and age are totally unrelated in Red Snappers: a 5 year old individual may be a little as 13 inches in length or as much as 32 inches in length, though the average is about 25 inches.

#10 Red snappers live in 3 different habitats during the course of their lives. 1 and 2 year olds inhabit shoreward mud/sand bottom areas. At age 3 years they move to structure (natural and artificial reefs, oil and gas platforms, shipwrecks) and stay there for 7 to 8 years. At about age 10 or so, they move to remote, more isolated habitats in the deep waters of the Gulf.

#11 Red snappers do not make seasonal long distance migrations like some other Gulf fishes. In fact, they do not move around very much at all except for those movements noted in #10 above.