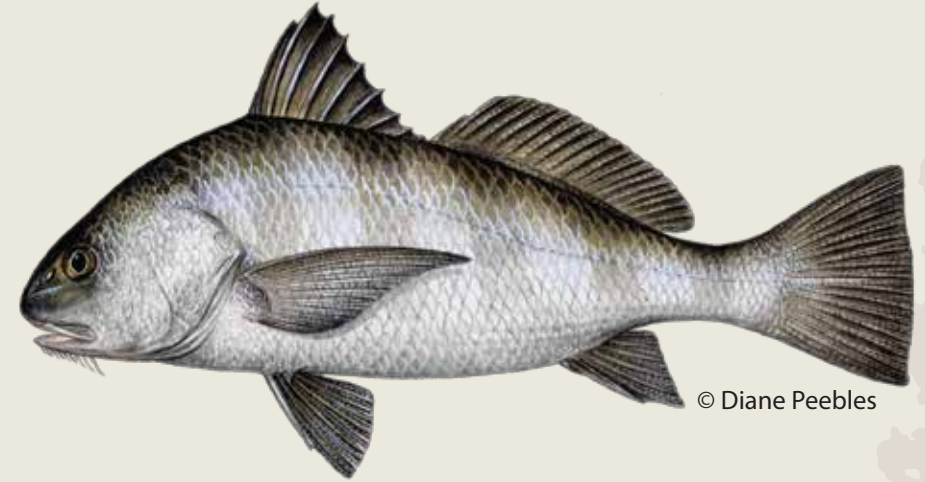


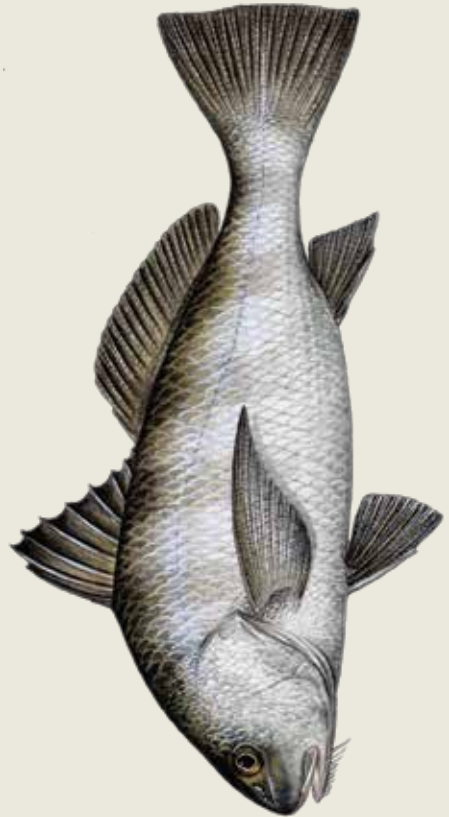
Black Drum



Black drum are silvery to blackish in color with black or dusky fins and have several pairs of whisker-like barbels under their chin. Juvenile black drum have four to six vertical bars along each side that fade with age. Closely related to red drum, black drum are the largest species in the drum family. Black drum have rounded teeth in the back of their throat and powerful jaws capable of crushing oysters and other shellfish.



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Black Drum

(*Pogonias cromis*)

Spawning Season

Male black drum are sexually mature by age four and females by age five. From January through April, mature black drum gather in nearshore waters of the Gulf of America to spawn. Groups of spawning drum can be up to 60,000 pounds of fish. They are highly productive and spawn 20 to 30 times during a spawning season. Females can produce 11 to 60 million eggs over these few months. During spawning, male and female black drum can produce loud "drumming" sounds with muscles associated with the swim bladder.

Habitat

Black drum range along the coast of the United States from the Chesapeake Bay to the mouth of the Rio Grande River. They are most common in the northern Gulf of America, near the Mississippi River delta. Post-larval and juvenile black drum inhabit shallow estuarine nursery areas. Juvenile black drum move to open bayous and bays by their first summer. Black drum are found in offshore and inshore waters along the coast, depending on the season.

Diet

Young black drum feed on marine worms and small fish. Larger drum feed on mollusks such as oysters, clams, and mussels. Black drum have whisker like structures called barbels to sense food and pharyngeal molars (teeth in their throat) that allow them to crush and consume shellfish. They often feed around oyster beds, docks, bridge pilings, and other structures. Large schools of feeding black drum have been known to "dredge" the ocean floor and leave turbid plumes that are visible from the air.

Age and Growth

The 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 to reveal yearly growth rings. In a process similar to ageing trees, they count the number rings to determine the age of a fish. Fishery managers use fish age, length, and weight data to estimate growth rates, mortality rates, and population size. The chart below shows that black drum grow rapidly during the first few years of life, and then growth stabilizes as they get older. Once black drum mature, they invest more energy in reproduction rather than growth.

AGE (YEARS)	APPROX. AVERAGE LENGTH	APPROX. LENGTH RANGE
1	11.5”	9” - 13.5”
2	17.5”	14” - 21”
3	21”	17” - 25”
4	23.5”	19” - 28”
5	25”	20” - 29.5”
6	25.5”	21” - 30.5”
7	26.5”	21.5” - 31”
8	27”	22” - 32”
9	27.5”	22” - 32”
10	28”	23” - 42”

LDWF Fish Management



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

Louisiana Department of
Wildlife and Fisheries
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Baton Rouge, LA 70808
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Invest in the Future...Geaux Fish Louisiana!

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Black Drum Quick Facts

The oldest female black drum aged by LDWF was 42.5 years old. It was 36.5 inches long and captured in 2000 by a recreational fisherman.

The longest female black drum aged by LDWF was 43.5 inches long. It was 41 years old.

The oldest and longest male black drum aged by LDWF was 45 years old, 41.8 inches long, and captured in 2008 by a commercial fisherman.

Black drum can live a long time; biologists have recorded fish as old as 59 years on the east coast.

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