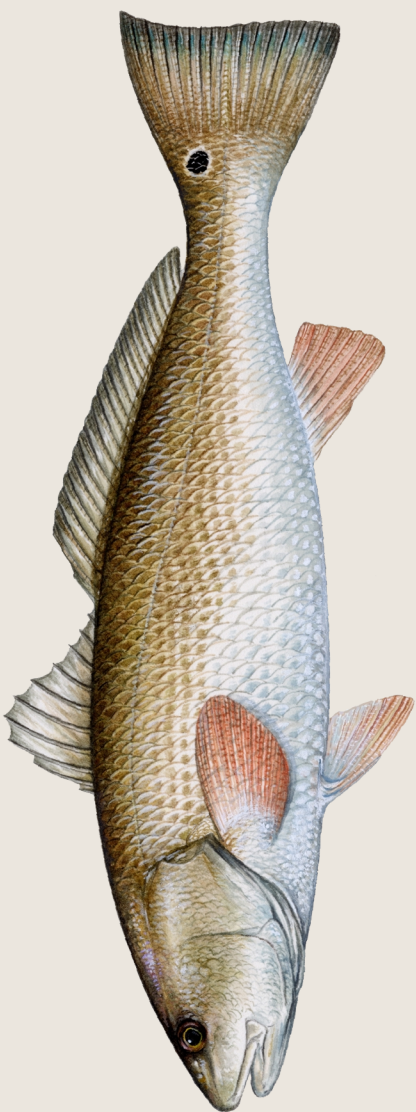
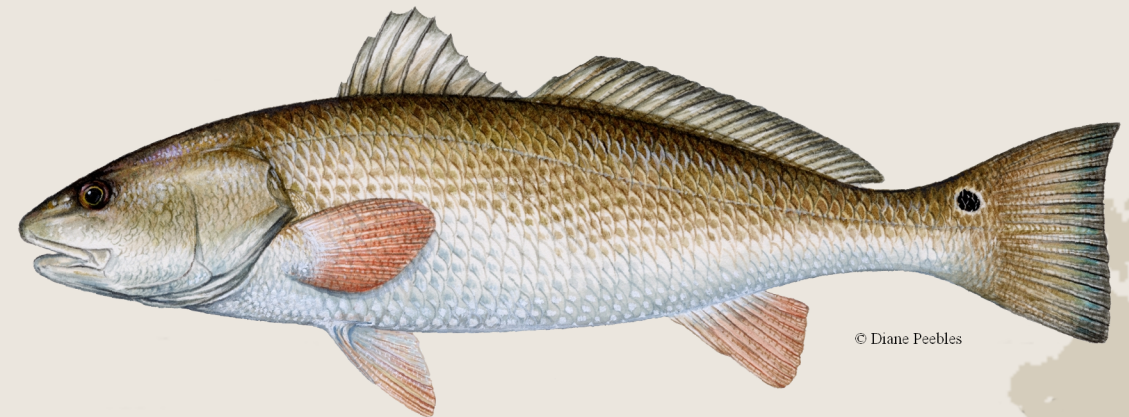


Red Drum



Red Drum (*Sciaenops ocellatus*)

Red drum, also called redfish, are inshore schooling fish that live in estuaries and along barrier islands from Virginia to Texas and the Florida Keys. Red drum have a reddish-brown hue and can have one or several spots at the base of the tail. During spawning season, males make a "drumming" sound by vibrating special muscles against their inflated air bladder.



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Spawning Season

The red drum spawning season usually occurs from mid-August to mid-October. During this period, males seek the best spawning areas near passes in high salinity areas. They make "drumming" aggregations to attract females for mating. When females are ready to spawn, on average once every two to seven days, they migrate to these areas. A female red drum will produce an average of 1.5 million eggs per spawning season.

Habitat

Red drum naturally range from central Mexico in the Gulf of America to Massachusetts in the western Atlantic. Juveniles occur in seagrass beds and over muddy and sandy bottoms in inshore estuaries, and adults usually occupy open Gulf waters.

Diet

Red drum are voracious predators that feed primarily on crustaceans, such as blue crab and shrimp, and small finfish including menhaden, mullet, Atlantic croaker, and flounder.

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.

AGE (YEARS)	APPROX. AVERAGE LENGTH	APPROX. LENGTH RANGE
1	11.5"	9" - 14"
2	19"	15" - 23"
3	24"	19" - 29"
4	27"	22" - 33"
5	29"	23" - 35"
6	31"	25" - 37"
7	31"	26" - 39"
8	32"	26" - 39"
9	32"	26" - 39"
10+	33"	26" - 39"



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

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Red Drum Quick Facts

The oldest red drum aged by LDWF was 39 years of age and 36.85 inches long.

The longest red drum aged by LDWF was 41.89 inches long and 28 years of age.

The lifespan of a red drum can exceed 40 years.

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

*LDWF Fish Management