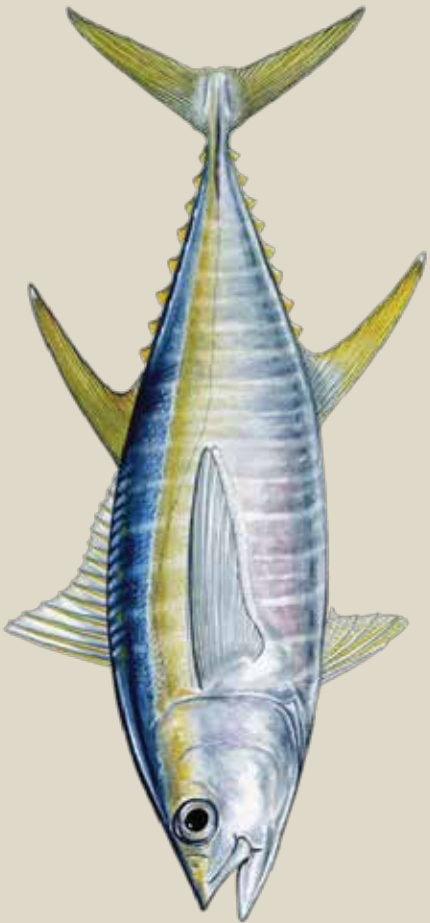


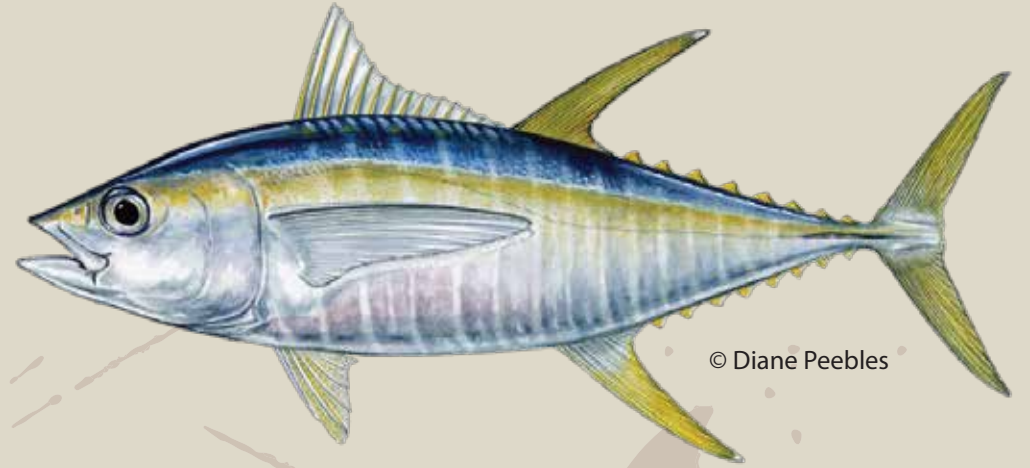
Yellowfin Tuna



Yellowfin Tuna

(*Thunnus albacares*)

Yellowfin tuna are torpedo shaped with metallic, dark blue backs and silver bellies. A yellow band extends along the yellowfin tuna's sides and the belly usually has several vertical lines. You can easily identify larger yellowfin tuna by the long crescent shaped extensions of their second dorsal and anal fins.



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Spawning Season

Yellowfin tuna sexually mature when they are about 43 inches long, sometimes in their first year of life. However, most yellowfin tuna are two to three years old when they first spawn. They spawn in the open ocean throughout the year, but activity peaks during the summer months when temperatures are near or above 78° F. A fully mature five foot long female yellowfin tuna can spawn multiple times and produce up to 8,000,000 eggs during the spawning season.

Habitat

Yellowfin tuna are found in tropical and subtropical oceans, including the Gulf of America, and generally live in the upper 350 feet of the water column due to their oxygen requirements. They often school with other tunas and similarly sized species below drifting objects such as logs, grass, and debris. Yellowfin tuna are a highly migratory species and often travel up to nine miles offshore daily to feed every evening before returning to their school or habitat.

Diet

Yellowfin tuna feed on a variety of finfish, squid, shrimp, and crab. They also use small fingerlike extensions on their gills, called gill rakers, to strain plankton from surface waters. 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

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 of 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 yellowfin tuna grow rapidly during the first few years of life, and then growth stabilizes as they get older. Once yellowfin tuna mature, they invest more energy in reproduction rather than growth.

AGE (YEARS)	APPROX. AVERAGE LENGTH	APPROX. AVERAGE 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"

Lebodey; P and Leroy, B "AGE AND GROWTH OF YELLOWFIN TUNA (THUNNUS ALBACARES) FROM THE WESTERN AND CENTRAL PACIFIC OCEAN AS INDICATED BY DAILY GROWTH INCREMENTS AND TAGGING DATA" SPC Secretariat of the Pacific Community Ed Rodgers, Dr. Jimmie: 1999. Oceanic Fisheries Programme 7 Jul, 2012. <http://www.wapc.int/DigitalLibrary/Doc/FAME/Meetings/SCTB/12/YFT_2.pdf>



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

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This public document was published at a total cost of \$0.00. ? copies of this public document were published and partially paid for by a Federal Aid in Sport Fish Restoration Grant (F-136) from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in this first printing at a cost of \$0.00. This document was published by the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries, 2000 Quail Drive, Baton Rouge, LA 70808, to inform Louisiana residents and non-residents about the Sport Fish Restoration Program. This material was printed in accordance with the standards for printing by state agencies.



Yellowfin Tuna Quick Facts

The largest yellowfin tuna weighed by LDWF was 240.19 pounds.

Their crescent shape dorsal and anal fins become bigger and more arched as yellowfin tuna mature.

Yellowfin tuna can live up to eight years old.

Different 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
225-765-5415