

Yellowtail Snapper (*Ocyurus chrysurus*)

Description:

Yellowtail snapper is a member of the snapper family (Lutjanidae). It is colored olive to bluish black with yellow spots. Yellowtail snapper exhibit a distinct yellow strip along the entire side of the body which expands near the deeply forked tail. Yellowtail snapper is considered a single distinct stock that is distributed in the Gulf of Mexico and the South Atlantic. Yellowtail snapper occurs in a variety of coastal water habitats but are mostly found along coral reefs near the Florida Keys. Results from the latest stock assessment indicate that yellowtail snapper is not overfished and is not experiencing overfishing (SEDAR 64 2020).



Gulf Stock Characteristics: (SEDAR 64 2020)

Natural mortality rate (M):	0.56/year for age 0; 0.20/year for age 20
Reproductive maturity:	50% of females are mature at ~7.6 inches (19.2 cm) fork length (FL); ~age 2
Maximum age:	28 years
Maximum weight:	7.7 lbs (3.5 kg) whole weight
Maximum length:	33.1 inches (54.8 cm) FL
Discard mortality:	10%

Life History and Distribution: (SEDAR 64 2020)

Yellowtail snapper is distributed from the North Atlantic off North Carolina through the Gulf of Mexico and Caribbean to southeastern Brazil. Yellowtail snapper have been observed feeding both during the day and at night, whereas other snapper species primarily forage at night. It preys upon a variety of food sources such as eggs of other spawning fish, cephalopods, and worms. Spawning season can occur from March to August with peak spawning occurring in June. Very little is known about the early life history stages of yellowtail snapper (i.e. how long it takes eggs to hatch, when larvae settle, etc.), because larvae distributions patterns occur on such large spatial and time scales.

Current Regulations:

In the Gulf of Mexico, the stock is monitored with a combined recreational and commercial annual catch limit (ACL). The fishing year runs from August 1 to July 1 and the season will close if the ACL is projected to be exceeded. There is a minimum size limit of 12 inches. Recreationally, yellowtail snapper are included within the 10-snapper aggregate bag limit. Commercially, there is no trip limit for yellowtail snapper.

