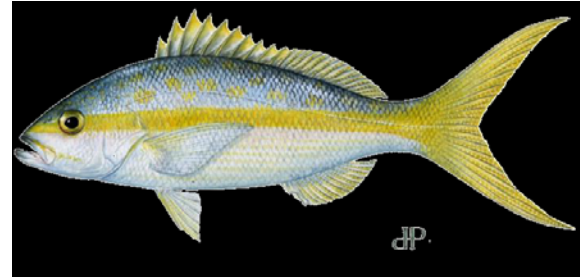


About Yellowtail Snapper (*Ocyrus chrysurus*)

General Description

Yellowtail snappers have slender, streamlined bodies with a yellow stripe that runs from the snout and broadens toward the tail. The back and upper sides are blue, olive or violet. In comparison to other types of snapper, the head and mouth of the yellowtail snapper is small.



Geographical Distribution

The yellowtail snapper is found in the western Atlantic Ocean from Massachusetts to Bermuda and southward to southeastern Brazil, including the Gulf of Mexico and Caribbean Sea. It is most common in the Bahamas, off south Florida and in the Caribbean Sea.

Habitat

Adult yellowtail snappers live over sandy areas near deep reefs at depths of 32-230 feet, while small adults tend to congregate over hard bottom habitats. Once established, adult yellowtail snapper tend to remain in the same area for long periods of time. Juveniles reside inshore in seagrass bed nursery areas that offer protection from predation while they mature.

Size, Age, and Reproduction

Adult yellowtail snappers may reach a maximum length of 30 inches, and weigh up to 5 pounds. Sexual maturity is attained at lengths of 10-12 inches and life expectancy is 6-14 years. Spawning occurs year round, peaking at different times in different locations, with an overall activity decline in the winter months.

Diet

Adult yellowtail snappers are nocturnal predators. They feed on crabs, shrimp, cephalopods, worms, and fish. Juveniles, living primarily among seagrasses, feed on plankton.

Fisheries

Yellowtail snapper is a popular game and food fish, composing a major portion of both the sport and commercial catches of Florida's snapper fishery. In 2010 over 1.4 million pounds worth an estimated \$3.7 million were landed in the state. The U.S. fishery for yellowtail snapper is primarily concentrated in south Florida, though fish are available from wholesalers throughout the southeast. The primary gear to harvest yellowtail is hook and line, which has little impact on the environment and little bycatch. Shrimp trawlers account for a large portion of the total fishing mortality on this snapper, as juveniles occur over soft bottom areas containing high shrimp populations.

Management:

Florida yellowtail snapper stocks are well managed and sustainable. They are neither overfished nor experiencing overfishing. They are managed both in state and federal waters. The commercial fishery is regulated by size limits, permits, quotas, and no-take zones. The recreational fishery is regulated by size and aggregate bag limits

Attributes

Yellowtail snapper is a lean fish with a firm texture, white meat and mild flavor. It is marketed as both fresh and frozen for human consumption. Comparable species for eating include grouper, swordfish, tilefish, and amberjack.

Purchasing and Cooking

- Look for the following signs of quality when purchasing yellowtail snapper fillets: flesh that is firm and not separating, fresh sea breeze smell, and no discoloration.
- When shopping, purchase seafood last and keep it cold. Ask your seafood specialist to pack your seafood on ice for the trip home. Remove from ice prior to refrigerating.
- Store fresh yellowtail snapper in the coldest part of your refrigerator at 32° F for up to two days.
- To freeze yellowtail snapper, wrap tightly to prevent freezer burn, write date on package, and store at 0° F for up to four months. Thaw in the refrigerator or under cold running water.
- Yellowtail snapper is cooked when its meat flakes easily with a fork, and loses its translucent or raw appearance. All fish should be thoroughly cooked. The general rule for cooking fish is 10 minutes per inch of thickness at the thickest part of the fillet or steak at 350°- 450° F. If fish is cooked in parchment, foil or a sauce, add 5 minutes to the total cooking time.
- Keep raw and cooked seafood separate to prevent bacterial cross-contamination. After handling raw seafood, thoroughly wash knives, cutting surfaces, sponges and your hands with hot soapy water.



For information on yellowtail snapper recipes visit: <http://www.fl-seafood.com/recipes/index.htm>

References:

Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services

www.flseafood.com

Florida Museum of Natural History Ichthyology Department

<http://www.flmnh.ufl.edu/fish/Gallery/Descript/YellowtailSnapper/Yellowtailsnapper.html>

South Carolina Sustainable Seafood Initiative

<http://scaquarium.org/SSI/default.html>

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