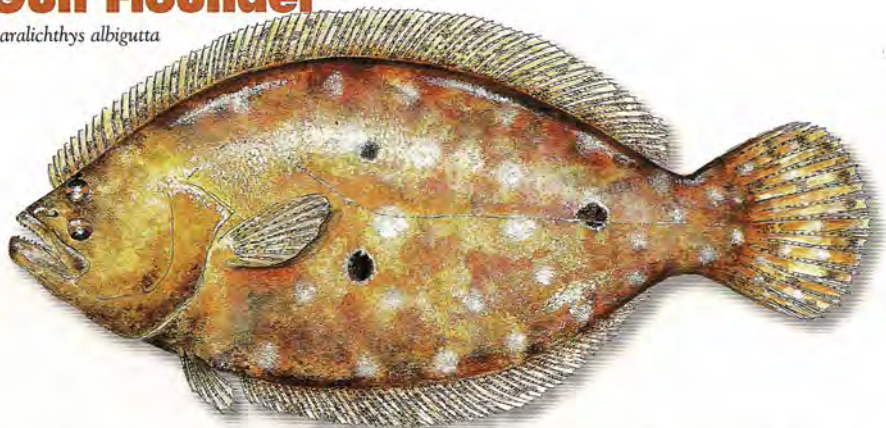


Gulf Flounder

Paralichthys albigutta



OTHER NAMES:

**Doormat
Plie
Lengvad**

RANGE: All Gulf states, into northern Mexico.

HABITAT: Because giggers go after Flounder on shallow, sandy flats at night, many people think this is the top habitat. Anglers, however, are best advised to look for them near cover. They like the edges of grass flats, and also rocks or rubble. Many are caught around wrecks. They also stick close to bridge, dock and pier pilings, especially along beaches and inlets.

DESCRIPTION: This fish is difficult to distinguish from the Southern Flounder unless you take a second look. Both wear numerous spots and dark blotches, but on the Gulf Flounder, you can pick out three distinctive ocelli, which are eye-like spots with dark centers. One is located on the lateral line near the tail; the other two above and below the lateral line about the middle of the body.

SIZE: Average size is only a bit smaller than that of the Southern Flounder—1-3 pounds—but the Gulf Flounder doesn't grow so large, topping out at perhaps 5 or 6 pounds. World record 6 pounds, 4 ounces.

FOOD VALUE: Among the best.

GAME QUALITIES: Moderate runs. Fun on light gear.

TACKLE AND BAITS: Light spinning and baitcasting tackle. Somewhat heavier casting gear, and light boat rods, may be useful in deeper water around wrecks. Jigs are by far the best artificials, and sometimes work wonders for pier and dock anglers who use them close to the pilings. Flounders do spend much of their time snuggled in soft sand, but are voracious predators, preferring live baits, and lures that imitate them. Finger Mullet, Cigar Minnows and other small fish are seldom refused. Live shrimp are good. Cutbaits and dead shrimp work.

FISHING SYSTEMS: Still Fishing; Casting; Drifting.