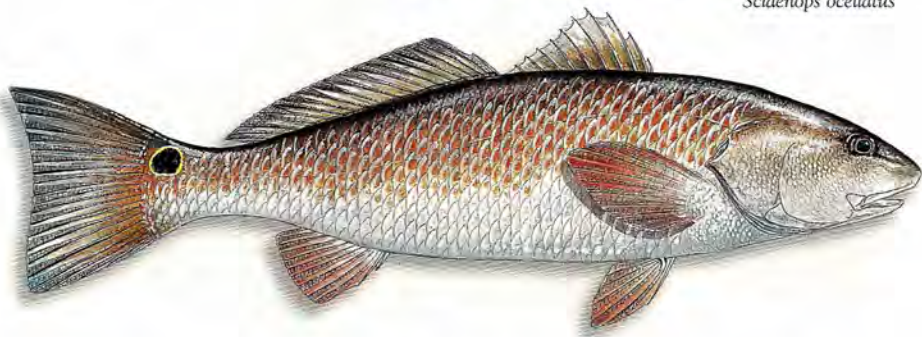


# Red Drum "Redfish"

*Sciaenops ocellatus*



**DESCRIPTION:** As a rule, Reds are reddish with white underside, but sometimes quite pale. There nearly always is a prominent ringed spot, or several spots, at base of tail fin. Scales are very large. Silhouette similar to Black Drum, but the Redfish has no chin barbels, and the Black Drum never has the tail spot.

**SIZE:** Most run from a pound to 10 or 12 pounds; 30-pounders are not rare. World record 94 pounds, 2 ounces.

**FOOD VALUE:** Redfish up to around 10 pounds rank among the favorite fish of most anglers. The red portions of flesh do not have an objectionable taste when fresh, but should be trimmed away if the fish is to be frozen.

**GAME QUALITIES:** One of the best gamesters of inshore waters, displaying strength and stamina.

**TACKLE AND BAITS:** Anything goes with Redfish, depending on the area and sea conditions. Spinning, baitcasting and fly tackle can be used for Redfish of all sizes in many situations, but light ocean tackle can come in handy for big fish in strong currents of channels and passes. Surf rods and light-to-medium salt-water outfits are good for beach, bridge, pier and offshore fishing. Although they can be as moody as any fish, Reds are usually ravenous feeders that will take live baitfish, crabs and shrimp, and also dead or cut fish, squid and crab. Most productive artificials are weedless spoons, plastic-tail jigs and topwater plugs. Large streamers do the job for fly fishermen.

**FISHING SYSTEMS:** Still Fishing; Drifting; Casting.

**OTHER NAMES:**

**Red**  
**Red Bass**  
**Channel Bass**  
**Drum**  
**Poisson Rouge**

**RANGE:** All Gulf states plus northern Mexico.

**HABITAT:** Roams just about everywhere. The most popular fishing areas are along jetties, shell bars and rocky or grassy outcrops and shorelines. Redfish also forage regularly on shallow flats, where they are fished by sight. In addition, the bigger ones, particularly, are great surf fish nearly everywhere on the Gulf Coast, usually in the fall and spring. Adults move offshore to spawn and large schools of the big fish can be encountered in the open Gulf. Smaller Reds roam into coastal rivers and creeks at any time of year and in winter swarm into them, seeking warmer water.