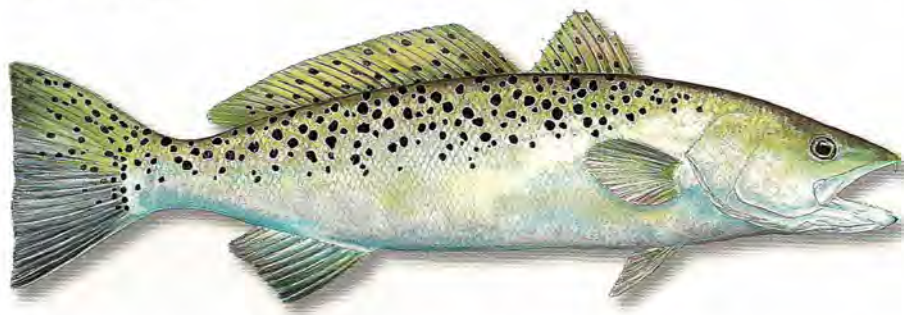


Spotted Seatrout

Cynoscion nebulosus



OTHER NAMES:

Trout

Speckled Trout

Speck

Truite Gris

Trucha De Mar

RANGE: All Gulf states, plus northern Mexico. Not found below the Yucatan Peninsula.

HABITAT: While they are most frequently taken on shallow, grassy flats, Trout can be caught in virtually any inshore waters, from the surf of outside islands to far up coastal rivers, where they often seek refuge during cold weather.

DESCRIPTION: Streamlined shape; large mouth with prominent canine teeth; dark back with gray or silvery sides marked with scattered black spots of varying density. Spots also present on dorsal and tail fins. Background may take on a golden hue in stained water. Shape similar to that of a freshwater trout.

SIZE: The average is a pound or two, but in most areas fish up to five pounds or so are fairly common and an occasional fish may reach 8 or 10 pounds. The largest Trout of the Gulf come from Texas. World record 17 pounds, 7 ounces.

FOOD VALUE: Very good; a favorite of many anglers.

GAME QUALITIES: The fight is showy, with much thrashing at the surface and an occasional jump, but it takes a pretty large Trout to get off a run of any length, even against light line. What Trout lack in power, however, they make up for with aggressiveness.

TACKLE AND BAITS: Spinning is the most widely used gear, although baitcasting reels are nearly as popular in many areas, especially with a two-handed "popping rod." Fly tackle is also very effective. Live shrimp tops the list of natural baits, but small live fish are superior when going after Trout of trophy size. Strips of cut fish or squid also work well. More Trout probably are taken on plastic-tail jigs than any other artificial lure, but bucktail jigs, spoons, jerk plugs and topwater plugs also are killers in many instances. Fly casters rely heavily on popping bugs in shallow water, but a variety of large streamer flies will take Trout.

FISHING SYSTEMS: Drifting; Still Fishing; Casting.