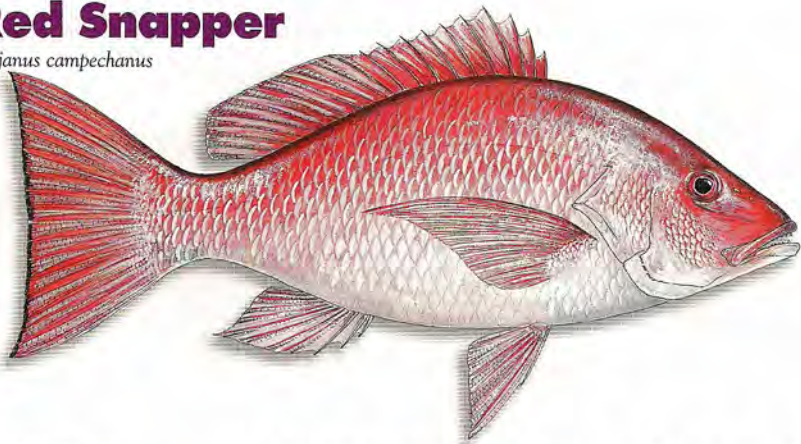


Red Snapper

Lutjanus campechanus



OTHER NAMES:

Pargo Colorado
North American
Red Snapper
Genuine Red
Snapper

RANGE: A temperate fish rather than tropical, it is most plentiful in the northern Gulf and in the Bay of Campeche on the Mexican coast. It is rare off Cuba and in the Straits of Florida, although occasionally encountered.

HABITAT: Along the northern Gulf Coast, Red Snappers are sometimes found in fairly shallow water off the beaches, and even in deep holes of the larger bays; however, the chief grounds for Gulf anglers are located over offshore banks, wrecks, uprisings and dropoffs.

DESCRIPTION: Overall rosy red. Canine teeth less prominent than those of most other Snappers. Red eye. Anal fin is triangular.

SIZE: Common from a pound or so to about 8 or 10 pounds. Usual maximum is about 20 pounds, although the Red Snapper can run as high as 30 or 40 pounds. World record 50 pounds, 4 ounces.

FOOD VALUE: Excellent at all sizes.

GAME QUALITIES: A hard-fighting fish that uses strong, head-shaking tactics rather than long runs.

TACKLE AND BAITS: Some Red Snapper spots in fairly shallow water, say up to 50 or 60 feet, permit the use of light ocean tackle, or even heavy spinning and baitcasting tackle. Much Snapper fishing, however—especially on long-range headboat and charterboat trips—requires deep drops, often in strong current. This means that only very heavy rods and strong lines of 50- or 80-pound test can handle the heavy weights needed to do the job. As for baits, dead Cigar Minnows, Pilchards or cut fish and squid do well at times, although in heavily fished spots (which most are these days) it will probably be necessary to use live small baitfish to coax bites from Reds of praiseworthy size.

FISHING SYSTEMS: Still Fishing; Casting; Drifting.