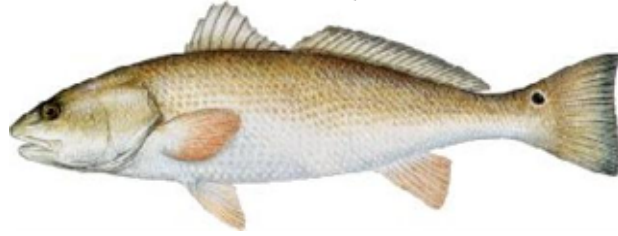


Red Drum Quick Facts



- Red drum are also known as redfish, spottail, red bass, and channel bass.
- Their life span can exceed 40 years.
- They inhabit inshore and offshore waters along the Atlantic coast from Massachusetts to Key West and throughout the Gulf of Mexico.
- On the west coast of Florida they begin spawning in the fall when daylight hours decrease and water temperature begins to cool.
- Males can spawn at two years of age and four pounds in weight, whereas females are sexually mature at about four years old and 13 pounds.
- One female can spawn one million eggs at a time (enough to fill a quart jar), and they may spawn every three to five days, producing millions of eggs over a spawning season (although few will survive to adulthood).
- Fertilized eggs are approximately one millimeter in diameter, are clear and contain tiny oil globules that keep them afloat as they are carried shoreward by tidal currents.
- The fertilized eggs hatch in 20 to 30 hours.
- Larvae have an attached yolk sac which provides nutrients for approximately three days, at which time they begin to feed on microscopic plankton.
- The majority of their life cycle is spent in nearshore waters and in estuaries.
- They are primarily bottom feeders with a fondness for crabs and shrimp.
- In Florida waters, red drum can reach lengths of up to 45 inches and weights up to 51 pounds.
- Commercial harvesting of red drum is prohibited throughout the Gulf coast states with the exception of Mississippi.
- They are an extremely popular gamefish due to their ability to fish for extended periods of time and to its popularity as a food fish.
- They can produce a “drumming” sound using special muscles rubbing against the inflated air bladder, like fingers rubbing on a balloon.
- The color of red drum vary depending on where they live, fish from muddy bottom areas may be dark copper in color, whereas fish that have been using sandy bottom areas will be light copper in color.
- Reds on the Atlantic coast are generally larger than on the west coast of Florida.
- The largest red drum recorded was 94 pounds, the Florida record is 51 pounds, 8 ounces, for a fish caught in Sebastian Inlet in 1983.
- Most red drum have a single black spot just forward of the tail fin, but they can also be found without spots as well as with multi-spots (one with 606 spots was caught in Charlotte Harbor in 2007).

Facts courtesy of the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission and Mote Marine Laboratory. Artwork courtesy of Diane Peebles.