



FACT SHEET

Cobia

Rachycentron canadum

Family: Rachycentridae

Other common names: Prodigal son, Kobia

Description

An elongate fish, which is nearly round in cross-section and has a broad, depressed head. The overall body colour is dark brown above and creamy below. Two distinct broad white bands run the length of the body.

Distribution

Found worldwide in tropical and subtropical waters, but absent in the central and eastern Pacific. Common off KwaZulu-Natal in summer but rare south of the Transkei.

Habitat

A pelagic, coastal species usually found in association with reefs or floating objects. Usually near the surface but have been taken at depths of 50 m. Often found swimming with whale sharks and manta rays where their colouration mimics remoras or suckerfish.

Feeding

Feeds almost exclusively on planktonic crustaceans such as swimming crabs, but benthic invertebrates, squid and fish are also taken.

Movement

A migratory species with peak abundance in South African waters during summer.

Reproduction

They mature at 52-84 cm fork length and an age of 1-3 years, with males maturing smaller and earlier than females. Little is known about their breeding habits locally, but they are thought to spawn during summer in more tropical areas.

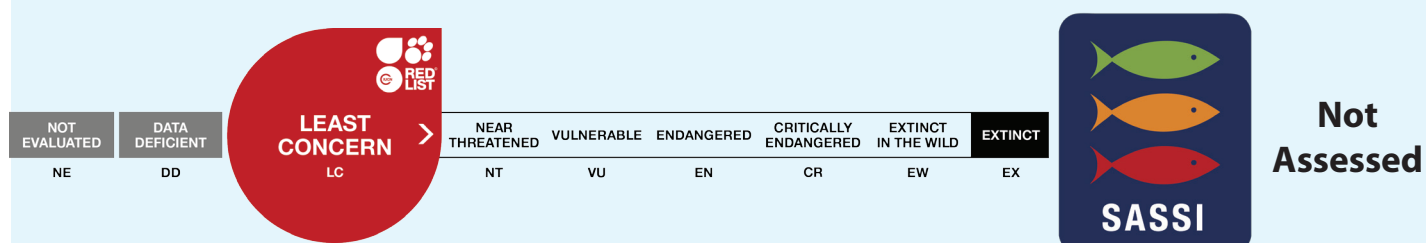
Age and growth

They can reach a maximum size of 200 cm total length and a weight of 68 kg. They have been aged up to a maximum of 15 years.

Current status

This species has not been assessed in South African waters and little is known about their status. However, due to their migratory habits, fast growth rate and high fecundity, the stock is thought to be relatively healthy. They have been evaluated as Least Concern on the IUCN Red List (2015).

South African Sustainable Seafood Initiative (SASSI) List:
Not assessed.



Capture

Cobia are generally taken as an incidental (lucky) catch and form a small component of catches taken by recreational ski-boat anglers and spearfishermen in KwaZulu-Natal. They have good potential for mariculture and are already being successfully farmed in some parts of the world.

Current recreational fishing regulations

Daily bag limit: 10 per person per day
Minimum size limit: None
Closed Season: None
Other regulations: None
Marine protected areas (MPAs): Little protection is provided in MPAs due to the highly migratory behaviour of this species.

Reference

Information from the ORI Fish App. www.saambr.org.za



INCORPORATING

