

## FACT SHEET

### Milkfish

*Chanos chanos*

**Family:** Chanidae

**Other common names:** Melkvis

#### Description

An elongate, fusiform fish with a large tail fin that is deeply forked. Has a small, terminal mouth and no fin spines. Head and body are silvery with a blue-green sheen above and white below.

#### Distribution

Tropical and warm temperate waters of the Indo-Pacific Ocean, from the Red Sea to Panama. In southern African waters extends southwards to Swartvlei in the Western Cape.

#### Habitat

Nearshore marine waters to depths of 30 m. Frequently enter shallow coastal embayments and estuaries and can penetrate fresh water. Juveniles use tropical mangrove estuaries as nursery areas.

#### Feeding

Larvae eat zooplankton; juveniles and adults eat cyanobacteria, soft algae, small benthic invertebrates and even pelagic fish eggs and larvae.

#### Movement

After hatching the ribbon-like larvae move inshore and enter estuaries and even freshwater streams. Once reaching maturity they move back to the sea. Little is known about the movement behaviour of adults at sea.

## Reproduction

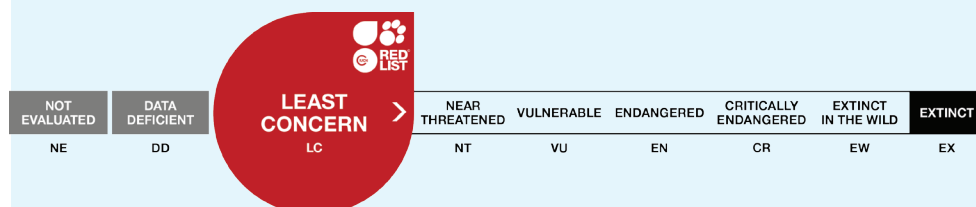
They reach maturity at 50-90 cm total length and an age of 3-5 years. Adults spawn at sea at night in shallow water, normally close to land.

## Age and growth

They can attain a maximum size of about 180 cm total length and a weight of 14 kg. They have been aged up to 15 years.

## Current status

Not assessed in South Africa. They have been evaluated as Least Concern on the IUCN Red List (2019).  
South African Sustainable Seafood Initiative (SASSI) List:  
Not assessed.



Not Assessed

## Capture

Seldom caught on line but sometimes targeted using small hooks and ultra-light tackle. They fight vigorously if hooked. Occasionally speared. Elsewhere caught in beach-seines and gillnets. Farmed in culture ponds in southeast Asia using wild caught or hatchery reared larvae.

## 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):** This species likely benefits from protection within no-take MPAs with suitable habitat throughout its distribution.

## Reference

Information from the ORI Fish App. [www.saambr.org.za](http://www.saambr.org.za)



INCORPORATING

