



## FACT SHEET

### Natal Emperor

*Lethrinus scoparius*

**Family:** Lethrinidae

**Other common names:** Scavenger, Natal keiser

#### Description

A recently described species that was previously confused with the blue emperor, *Lethrinus nebulosus*. Very similar in appearance to the blue emperor but does not grow as big and has less blue colouration on the face and body. Can change colour rapidly from pale to dark, with irregular barring. Dorsal and tail fin have red edges. Juveniles are yellow on the head and upper back.

#### Distribution

Common along the KwaZulu-Natal and Transkei coasts, extending south to Algoa Bay. Its northern distribution limit is not known.

#### Habitat

Found on offshore rocky reefs from 10 to at least 50 m. They tend to prefer flatter, low profile reefs and the sandy edges of reefs.

#### Feeding

Little known but they probably feed on a variety of benthic and reef associated invertebrates similar to other emperor species.


#### Movement

Limited tag recapture data from the Pondoland Marine Protected Area has shown that this species is resident.

**Reproduction** Unknown.


**Age and growth** They can reach a maximum size of at least 45 cm total length, but larger specimens are possible. They have not been aged.

**Current status** Not assessed in South Africa. They have not been evaluated on the IUCN Red List.  
South African Sustainable Seafood Initiative (SASSI) List: Not assessed.



**NOT EVALUATED**  
NE

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**Not Assessed**

**Capture** One of the most common emperor species found along the southern KwaZulu-Natal and Transkei coasts. Commonly caught by recreational and commercial ski-boat fishermen and they comprise about 5% of the commercial catch in KwaZulu-Natal.

**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 is likely to benefit from protection within offshore no-take areas throughout their distribution.

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

