



Vermilion Snapper Fact Sheet



Image courtesy of Duane Raver

Basic Biology

Latin name: *Rhomboplites aurorubens*

Range: The Atlantic Ocean from North Carolina to Brazil, including Bermuda, the Gulf of Mexico and the Caribbean.

Habitat: Moderately deep water (usually less than 180 ft), over rock and live (coral) bottoms.

Diet: Fish, shrimp, crab, worms, and other species found in the water column.

Age and growth: Maximum size is 24 inches and maximum age is 10 years. Vermilion snapper reach maturity at 8 inches in length and 2 years of age.

Sustainability

- Vermilion snapper are the most commonly harvested snapper off the southeastern coast. They are smaller than their cousin, the American red snapper, but are far more plentiful.
- Vermilion snapper reach maturity at a young age and small size, making them resilient to fishing pressure.
- The South Atlantic vermilion snapper population is not overfished but the rate of fishing in the late 2000s was too high, thus in 2010 the Annual Catch Limit was lowered to a level that was expected to end overfishing. Other regulations include a minimum size limit of 12 inches and a limit on the number of fishermen allowed to harvest and sell vermilion snapper.
- Vermilion snapper are caught with vertical hook and line, one of the most environmentally-friendly fishing gears. There is little to no interaction with seafloor habitats and virtually everything that is caught holds some market value and is retained for sale, unless legally required to be discarded.

Info for Chefs

- The commercial annual catch limit is divided into two sub-quotas, one for the first six months of the year and one for the second six months. Because of heavy fishing pressure, each sub-quota is usually harvested before the end of the six month sub-season. Thus, vermilion snapper is most likely to be available January-April and July-October.
- Local fishermen tend to use the name beeliner (or b-liner) for vermilion snapper. It should not be labeled red snapper.

Info for Servers

- Vermilion snapper is a mild, white, flaky and delicate fish. It is often prepared with the skin on because it is so tender and likely to fall apart when cooked. Small filets are normal because of the naturally small size of the fish.
- Though similar in appearance to red snapper, vermilion snapper should not be called red snapper – according to the Food and Drug Administration, only the true American red snapper (*Lutjanus campechanus*) should be labeled red snapper.

Sources: South Atlantic Fishery Management Council. 2008. Snapper Grouper Fishery Management Plan Amendment 16. Accessed from www.safmc.net/Library/SnapperGrouper/tabid/415/Default.aspx
NOAA FishWatch – www.nmfs.noaa.gov/fishwatch/; The FDA Seafood List – www.fda.gov