



# Yellowtail Snapper Fact Sheet



Image courtesy of Duane Raver

## Basic Biology

Latin name: *Ocyrus chrysurus*

Range: The Atlantic Ocean from North Carolina to Brazil, though most common in the Bahamas, south Florida and the Caribbean

Habitat: Sandy reefs in shallow water (30-230 feet deep)

Diet: Fish, shrimp and crabs

Age and growth: Most yellowtail snapper can reproduce at 1-3 years of age (8-9 inches long) and live less than 20 years

## Sustainability

- Florida yellowtail snapper are well managed and sustainable. The 2003 stock assessment indicated that the population was not overfished or experiencing overfishing and fishing pressure did not seem to be increasing.
- Regulations have been adequate for sustainable management of the yellowtail snapper fishery, but are minimal. There is a requirement for commercial fishermen to have a permit and there is a minimum size limit for the fish. A harvest quota would prevent future overharvest, especially as Florida fishermen may start to target yellowtail snapper more as other snapper and grouper fisheries are restricted.
- No take zones, such as marine sanctuaries and parks, contribute to the sustainability of yellowtail snapper by providing protection for spawning fish and critical habitat.
- Many snapper and grouper species co-occur with yellowtail snapper but there is little real bycatch; virtually every species captured is harvested. Bycatch that does still occur is associated with the release of undersized fish or prohibited species. This type of bycatch is accounted for in stock assessments.
- The primary gear used to harvest yellowtail snapper is hook and line, which has little impact on the environment and has little bycatch. Some fishermen chum for yellowtail snapper by throwing cut bait into the water to attract the fish to the surface. The snapper are then caught on handlines. This method allows for much higher selectivity in harvest, avoiding even more bycatch than traditional hook and line.

## Info for Chefs

- The U.S. fishery for yellowtail snapper is concentrated in south Florida, though the fish are available throughout the southeast. Harvest peaks in the summer and early fall.

## Info for Servers

- The Latin name, *Ocyrus chrysurus*, translates to "swift-swimming golden fish".

Sources: Southeast Data Assessment and Review, Complete Stock Assessment Report of Yellowtail Snapper in the Southeastern United States, SEDAR 3 Stock Assessment Report 1, 2003. Accessed at [www.sefsc.noaa.gov/sedar/](http://www.sefsc.noaa.gov/sedar/) on 6 March, 2008. South Atlantic Fishery Management Council. 2006. Snapper Grouper Fishery Management Plan, Amendment 13C. Accessed at [www.safmc.net](http://www.safmc.net) on 6 March, 2008.