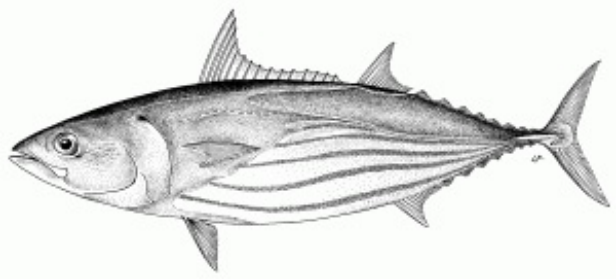
Species Fact Sheets

Katsuwonus pelamis (Linnaeus, 1758)



Black and white drawing: (click for more)

Colour drawing: (click for more)

Synonyms

- *Scomber pelamides* Lacepède, 1800
- *Scomber pelamys* Bloeh & Sehneider, 1801
- *Thynnus pelamys* Cuvier, 1817
- *Thynnus pelamis* Risso, 1826
- *Thynnus vagans* Lesson, 1826
- *Thinnus pelamis* S.D.W., 1837
- *Orcynus pelamys* Poey, 1875
- *Euthynnus pelamys* Jordan & Gilbert, 1882
- *Gymnosarda pelamis* Dresslar & Fesler, 1889
- *Orcynus pelamis* Smitt, 1892
- *Katsuwonus pelamys* Kishinouye, 1915
- *Katsuwonus pelamis* Kishinouye, 1923
- *Euthynnus pelamis* Ehrenbaum, 1924
- *Gymnosarda pelamys* Barnard, 1927

FAO Names

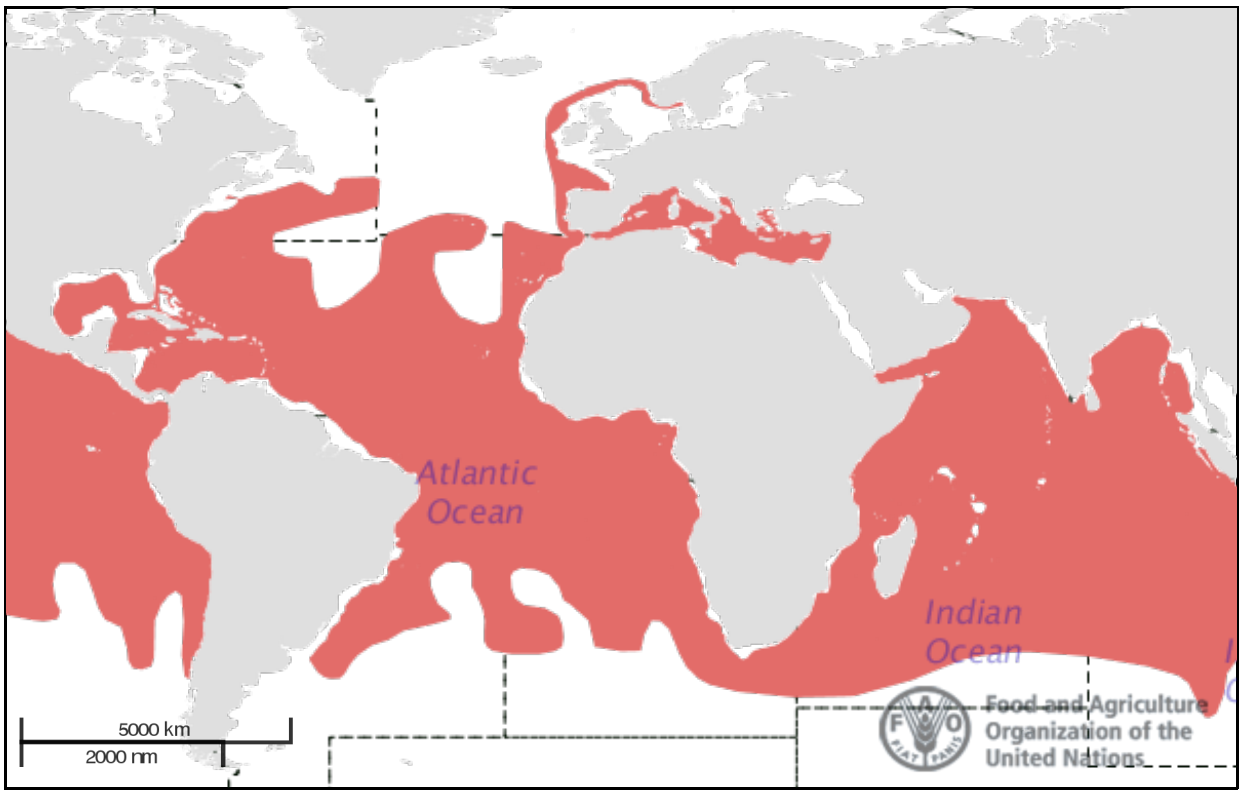
En - Skipjack tuna, Fr - Listao, Sp - Listado.
3Alpha Code: SKJ Taxonomic Code: 1750102501

Scientific Name with Original Description

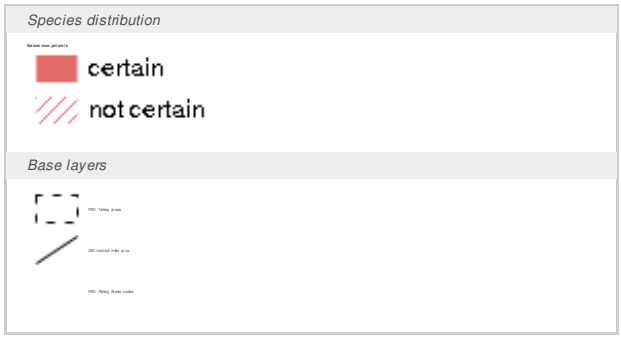
Scomber pelamis Linnaeus, 1758, Systema Naturae, ed. X:297.

Diagnostic Features

Body fusiform, elongate and rounded. Teeth small and conizal, in a single series; gillrakers numerous, 53 to 63 on first gillrakers. Two dorsal fins separated by a small interspace (not larger than eye), the first with 14 to 16 spines, the second followed by 7 to 9 finlets; pectoral fins short, with 26 or 27 rays; interpelvic process small and bifid; anal fin followed by 7 or 8 finlets. Body scaleless except for the corselet and lateral line. A strong keel on each side of caudal fin base between 2 smaller keels. Swimbladder absent. Vertebrae 41. Colour: back dark purplish blue, lower sides and belly silvery, with 4 to 6 very conspicuous longitudinal dark bands which in live specimens may appear as discontinuous lines of dark blotches.



Launch the Aquatic Species Distribution map viewer



Cosmopolitan in tropical and warm-temperate waters; absent from the Black Sea.

Habitat and Biology

An epipelagic,oceanic specieswith adults distributed roughly within the 15° C isotherm (overall temperature range of recurrence is 14.7° to 30°C), while larvae are mostly restricted to waters with surface temperatures of at least 25°C. Aggregations of this species tend to be associated with convergences, boundaries between cold and warm water masses (i.e. the polar front), upwelling and other hydrographical discontinuities. Depth distribution ranges from the surface to about 260 m during the day, but is limited to near surface waters at night.

Skipjack tuna spawn in batches throughout the year in equatorial waters, and from spring to early fall in subtropical waters, with the spawning season becoming shorter as distance from the equator increases. Fecundity increases with size but is highly variable, the number of eggs per season in females of 41 to 87 cm fork length ranging between 80 000 and 2 million. Food items predominantly include fishes, crustaceans and molluscs. Even though Carangidae and Balistidae are part of the diet of skipjack tuna in all oceans, the wide variety of species taken suggest it to be an opportunistic feeder preying on any forage available. The feeding activity peaks in the early morning and in the late afternoon. Cannibalism is common.The principal predators of skipjack are other tunas and billfishes.It is hypothesized that the skipjack tuna in the eastern central Pacific originate in equatorial waters, and that the pre-recruits (up to 35 cm fork length) split into a northern group migrating to the Baja California fishing grounds, and a southern group entering the central and south American fishing areas. Having remained there for several months, both groups return to the equatorial spawning areas. A similar migration pattern has been observed in the northwestern Pacific.Studies of the local movements of skipjack tuna showed that small fish (under 45 cm fork length) made nightly journeys of 25 to 106 km away from a bank but returned in the morning, while big individuals moved around more independently. Skipjack

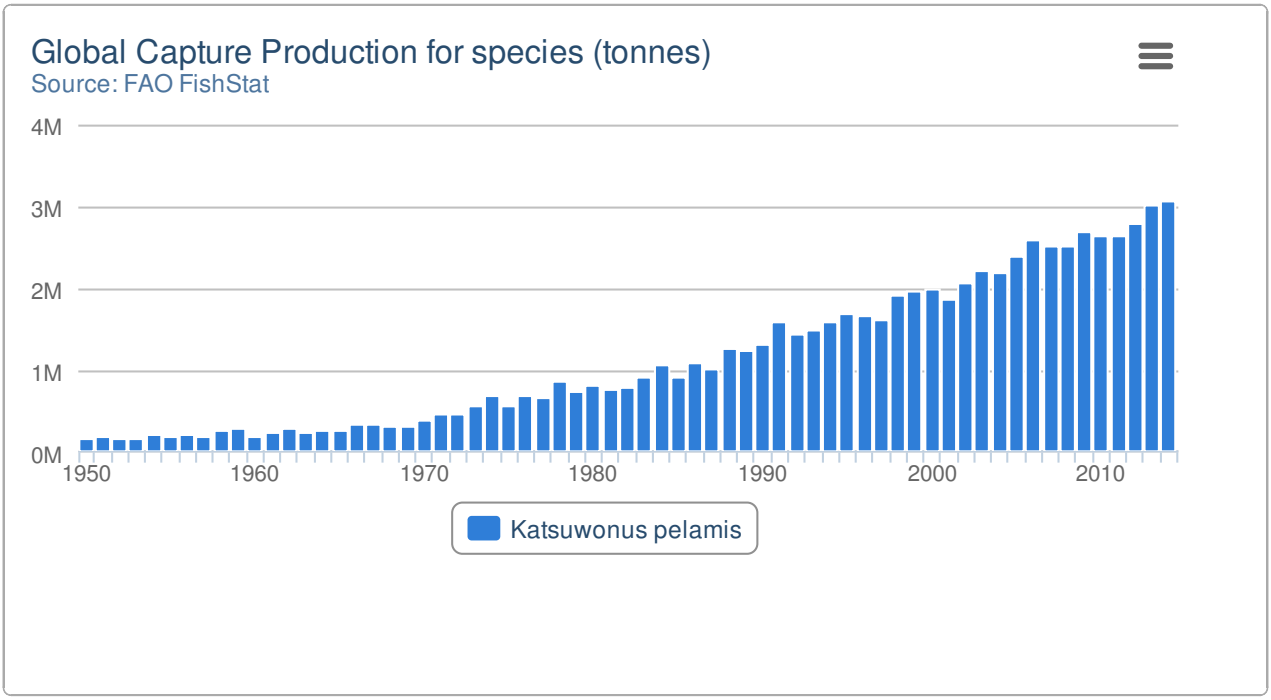
tuna exhibit a strong tendency to school in surface waters. Schools are associated with birds, drifting objects, sharks, whales or other tuna species and may show a characteristic behaviour (jumping, feeding, foaming, etc.).In the absence of reliable age determination methods, estimates of longevity vary at least between 8 and 12 years.

Size

Maximum fork length is about 108 cm corresponding to a weight of 32.5 to 34.5 kg; common to 80 cm fork length and a weight of 8 to 10 kg. The all-tackle angling record is a 18.93 kg fish with a fork length of 99 cm taken in Mauritius in 1982. Fork length at first maturity is about 45 cm.

Interest to Fisheries

Catches of skipjack tuna have been steadily increasing since 1950, reaching a peak in 1991 at 1 674 970 t. In 1995, catches for this species have been reported from 15 fishing areas (practically all except the 4 fishing areas covering the Arctic and Antarctic regions). Most of the catches are taken in the 71 (840 449 t), 51 (218 005 t), 61 (177 991 t) and 34 (130 372 t) fishing areas. The reported world catch reported for FAO Statistics in 1996 was 104 551 t. Skipjack tuna is taken at the surface, mostly with purse seines and pole-and-line gear but also incidentally by longlines. Other (artisanal) gear include gillnets, traps, harpoons and beach seines. Tuna pole and line fishing and Tuna purse seining are the most used fishing techniques. The importance of flotsam or manmade aggregation devices has increased greatly in recent years. Furthermore, supporting exploration techniques such as aerial spotting find increasing application in skipjack fisheries and utilization of remote sensing is being tried experimentally. In the pole-and-line/bait boat fishery, availability of suitable bait-fish presently represents one of the major constraints and hence, efforts to culture bait-fishes are receiving more attention. It appears, however, that bait rearing is hardly feasible on large enough scale to support a major fishery. The total catch reported for this species to FAO for 1999 was 1 976 479 t. The countries with the largest catches were Japan (287 326 t) and Indonesia (205 670 t).
Skipjack tuna are marketed fresh, frozen and canned. In Japan, they are also dried.



Local Names

ADEN (Gulf of) : AF muss , Dabub , Hargheiba .

ALBANIA : Palamida .

ANGOLA : Bonito .

AUSTRALIA : Skipjack , Striped tuna , Watermelon .

BRAZIL : Bonito de barriga listada , Bonito rajado .

CANADA : Oceania bonito , Skipjack , Skipjack tuna , Striped bonito , Thonine a ventre raye .

CHILE : Barrilete , Atun .

SOMALIA : Sehewa .

SOUTH AFRICA : Bonito , Ikatunkel , Lesser tunny , Oceanic bonito , Pensstreep-tuna , Skipjack , Skipjack tuna , Watermelon .

SPAIN : Atún de altura , Bonita , Bonito de altura , Bonito de veintre rayado , Bonito del sur , Bonitol , Lampo , Listado , Llampua , Palomida , Skipjack , Canary Islands: Bonito .

SRI LANKA : Balaya , Bonito , Scorai .

SURINAME : Oceanic bonito , White bonito .

SWEDEN : Bonit .

TAIWAN, PROVINCE OF CHINA : Then chien .

TANZANIA : Sehewa .

TUNISIA : Bonite , Boussenna , Ghzel .

UK : Bonito , Striped bellied bonito , Striped bellied tunny .

USA : Arctic bonito , Bonito , Mushmouth , Ocean bronito , Oeeanie bonito , Oeeanie skipjack , Skipjack , Skipjack tuna , Skippy , Striped bonito , Striped tuna , Victor fish , Watermelon , Hawaii: Aku , Aku kinai .

former USSR : Katsuo , Malyj tunets-bonito , Okeanskij bonito .

SENEGAL : Listao (French).

former USSR : Skipdzhek .

VENEZUELA : Bonito .

YUGOSLAVIA : Tunj prugavac , Trup prugavac .

former USSR : Polosatyj tunets .

CHILE : Cachorreta , Cachureta , Cachurreta .

CUBA : Atun , Merma .

DENMARK : Bugstribet bonit .

EGYPT : Tunna .

FRANCE : Bonite , Bonite `ventre raye , Bonitou , Bounicou , Listao , Tahiti: Auhopu .

GERMANY : Bauchstreifiger / Echter Bonito .

GREECE : Pelamis , Pelamys , Tonina .

INDIA : Bonito , Choora , Kali-phila-mas , Metti , Oceanic skipjack , Varichoora .

INDONESIA : Cakalang , Skipjack , Tjakalong , Tjakalong-lelaki , Tjakalong-merah , Tjakalong-perempuan .

ISRAEL : Balamida .

ITALY : Tonnetto striato .

JAPAN : Hongatsuo , Katsuo , Katsuwo , Katuwo , Magatsuwo , Mandagatsuwo , Mandara .

KENYA : Sehewa (Swahili) , Skipjack .

KOREA REP : Da-raeng-i , Ga-da-raeng-i , Ga-da-ri , Gang-go-deung-so , Mog-maen-dung-i , So-young-chi , Yeo-da-raeng-i .

MADAGASCAR : Bonite , Bonite a ventre raye , Diodary , M'bassi .

MALDIVES : Godhaa (large) , Kadumas (small) , Skipjack tuna .

MEXICO : Barrilete .

MONACO : Bonita , Bunita .

MOROCCO : L'bakoura , Listao , Listaoune .

NETHERLANDS : Gestreepte tonijn .

NEW ZEALAND : Bonito , Skipjack , Skipper , Striped bonito , Striped tunny .

NORWAY : Bonit .

PAPUA NEW GUINEA : Tjakalang .

PERU : Barrilete .

PHILIPPINES : Bankulis , Bonito , Gulyasan , Oceanic bonito , Palawayan , Pundahan , Puyan , Skipjack , Sobad , Striped tuna , Tulingan .

POLAND : Bonite .

PORTUGAL : Bonito , Bonito de ventre rayado , Gayado , Listado , Sarrajao , Serra , Madeira: Gaiado .

ROMANIA : Palamida , Palamida lacherda .

SENEGAL : Bonite a ventre raye (French), Kiri-kiri (Lebou).

Remarks

The East African Swahili name "Sehewa" is also in use for Auxis and small Euthynnus species.

Source of Information

FAO Species Catalogue. Vol. 2. Scombrids of the world. An annotated and illustrated catalogue of Tunas, Mackerels, Bonitos and related species known to date.Collette, B.B. & C.E. Nauen 1983.. FAO Fish. Synop., (125)Vol.2:137 p.

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