



FACT SHEET

Cape Knifejaw

Oplegnathus conwayi

Family: Oplegnathidae

Other common names: Black parrotfish, Beaked galjoen, Cuckoo bass, Kaapse kraaibek

Description

Adults have an oblong-shaped body with a parrot-like beak. They are a silvery-grey colour overall becoming darker on the upper head and body. They become almost black after death. Juveniles are bright yellow with two vertical black bars, one through the eye and one just before the tail.

Distribution

Endemic to the east coast of South Africa from False Bay to the Thukela River.

Habitat

Found on inshore reefs in depths from 5 to 32 m. Small juveniles may sometimes be found under flotsam at sea.

Feeding

Omnivorous diet consisting of red and green algae, sponges and ascidians.

Movement

Little known about their movement behaviour but they may form pairs and display strong territorial behaviour, which suggests residency.

Reproduction

They start maturing after about 45 cm fork length. Spawning takes place along the KwaZulu-Natal south coast mainly during spring (August-October) with most eggs being found inshore of 30 m.

Age and growth

They can reach a maximum size of 90 cm total length and a weight of 5.8 kg. They have been aged up to a maximum of 13 years.

Current status

Their status has not been assessed. However, declines in spearfishing catches have been noted along the KwaZulu-Natal coast. They have not been evaluated on the IUCN Red List. South African Sustainable Seafood Initiative (SASSI) List: Red.



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Capture

This species is primarily shot by spearfishers and it makes up a large proportion of the spearfishing catch, particularly in the Eastern Cape. It is rarely caught by linefishers as they seldom take a baited hook.

Current recreational fishing regulations

Daily bag limit: 5 per person per day

Minimum size limit: None

Closed Season: None

Other regulations: No sale recreational species

Marine protected areas (MPAs): Receives protection in most of the inshore no-take MPAs along the south-eastern seaboard of South Africa, where there is suitable reef habitat and spearfishing is prohibited.

Reference

Information from the ORI Fish App. www.saambr.org.za



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