

Bonefish 101

GETTING SCHOOLED IN BONEFISH BIOLOGY

THE RECORD BOOKS

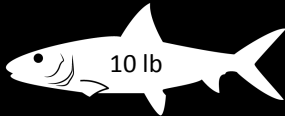
Oldest: 21 yrs (Florida Keys) & 20 yrs (Bahamas)

- Aged by counting annual growth rings of otoliths (ear bones), like the growth rings of trees! P.S. - Older does not necessarily mean larger!

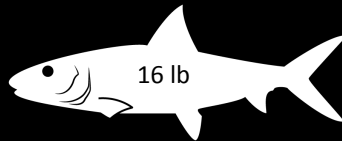
Greatest distance traveled: a tagged fish swam 146 miles

- Pine Pt., Abaco → Cormorant Pt., Grand Bahama (during spawning season)

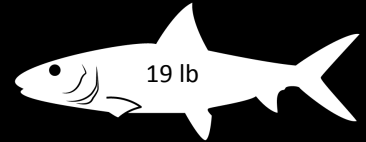
IGFA All-Tackle Records:



Roundjaw bonefish (*A. glossodonta*)
Hawaii, 2013



Bonefish (*A. vulpes*)
Bimini, 1971



Smallscale bonefish (*A. oligolepis*)
South Africa, 1962

BONEFISH DIVERSITY - 12 SPECIES IN THE GENUS *ALBULA*

Atlantic:
Bonefish (*A. vulpes*)
Channel (*A. goreensis*)
Lagoon (*A. conorhynchus*)
Threadfin (*A. nemoptera*)

West & Central Pacific:
Korean (*A. koreana*)
Roundjaw (*A. glossodonta*)
A. virgata (no common name)

East Pacific:
Cortez (*A. gilberti*)
Pacific shafted (*A. pacifica*)
Eastern Pacific (*A. esuncula*)

Indian:
Smallscale (*A. oligolepis*)
Roundjaw (*A. glossodonta*)

South Pacific:
Roundjaw (*A. glossodonta*)
Smallscale (*A. oligolepis*)
A. argentea (no common name)

LIFE CYCLE FACTOIDS



Wittenrich

Bonefish have a leptocephalus larvae

- Roughly 1000 species have this type of larvae (including tarpon, ladyfish & eels)
- For *A. vulpes*, this stage lasts about 2 months, then they metamorphose into a juvenile in 10 days!
Juveniles look like mini adults

Bonefish get busy in deep water

- They gulp air before going offshore to spawn - likely helps with buoyancy. When spawning, they dive deeper in the water - the added pressure helps squeeze out eggs & sperm

HOW COOL IS THAT?

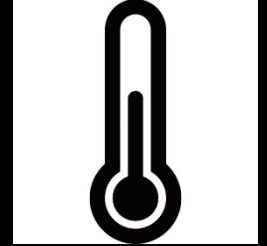
Energy saving behaviours

- Bonefish will actively swim followed by drifting - just like you would peddle a bike then let momentum carry you



Body composition

- Adult bonefish consist of 72% water, 21% protein, 4% ash, & 3% lipids
- Most protein is stored in their muscles, similar to salmon – helping make them excellent swimmers



Temperature tolerances

- An adult bonefish used to waters around 86°F can handle water temperatures up to 100°F!

THREATS TO THE FISHERY

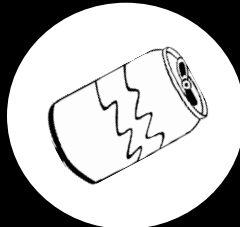


Habitat loss



Illegal netting

Habitat
degradation



Improper
handling



BEST HANDLING PRACTICES

When angling, remember these tips

- Aim to “keep ‘em wet” – bonefish cannot breath out of the water
- When handling fish, remove sun gloves & have wet hands. Avoid oxybenzone-containing sunscreen on your hands – it removes their protective slime
- Use the proper size tackle for the size fish you’re catching to minimize fight time. Barbless hooks make removal easier & increase fish survival
- If there are lots of predators around – consider fishing elsewhere

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