



WINTER FLOUNDER

Pseudopleuronectes americanus

Poor

Conservation Status
"Poor" in NYS

Range Map

(fishbase.org)

FACT ONE



Winter Flounder are a species of flatfish also known as Blackback Flounder, Georges Bank Flounder, Rough Flounder, Mud Dab, Gray Sole, or Lemon Sole. The many names suggest how popular and abundant this fish was at one time along the Northwest Atlantic.

FACT TWO



The name 'winter' flounder refers to their annual spawning migrations into nearshore waters in winter. It is a "right-eyed" flatfish meaning that its mouth faces right when its mouth points up.

FACT THREE



The Winter Flounder's flat body allows it to lie half-buried in bottom sands or silts, dark side up for camouflage. This allows it to stay alert for passing prey. It feeds on small crustaceans and worms with its small, toothless, soft mouth.

FACT FOUR



Winter Flounder is a valuable food fish in the twentieth century. It remains a popular commercial and recreational catch. NYS regulations limit 2 fish per angler that are at least 12 inches in size only from April 30-May 1.

For more information about the CCE F.I.S.H. Initiative:

<https://www.localfish.org/>



Overview

Winter flounder is an estuarine flatfish found in almost all shallow water habitats along the northwest Atlantic coast. Winter flounder live 15 to 18 years and grow to more than 2 feet in length. They have an oval shape and a thick body with their eyes on the right side of their body. They have a straight lateral line with dark coloring. They have special "chromatophore cells" in their skin that lets them change color to match the sediment color they are laying in.

Life History

Adults spawn during the winter and spring months in shallow inshore waters. During spawning, females release neutrally buoyant, adhesive eggs. Many factors influence larval and juvenile growth and survival, including temperature, salinity, dissolved oxygen, and food availability. Nursery habitat for winter flounder larvae and juveniles is typically saltwater coves, coastal salt ponds, and estuaries. Larval fish look like all other fish with one eye on each side of their head, swimming upright. As the little flounder becomes a juvenile, its eye moves to the other side of its head... making it a right-eyed flatfish!

Status

The population of Winter Flounder along the northeast has decreased over the years, largely due to overfishing. However, overfished status cannot be determined. Nowadays, winter flounder is a highly regulated aquatic species that is largely managed by the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (ASMFC).

How You Can Help

Become a Citizen Scientist and join Cornell Cooperative Extension's Back to the Bays Initiative at <http://ccesuffolk.org/marine/back-to-the-bays> You can learn about opportunities to "give back to the bays" by learning, getting involved, and enjoying the marine environment! Also, help local fisherman by buying fresh, local, fish at local fish markets and restaurants...available for curbside pick-up, too! Visit localfish.org for an up-to-date listing and learn more about CCE's F.I.S.H. initiative.

