

Southern Flounder

(Paralichthys lethostimga)



Relatives

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Description

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Size

30in (76cm)

Habitat

Prefer sandy bottoms and bays.

Predators

Eaten by larger fish and humans.

Diet/Prey

Young eat small shrimp and crabs. Adults mainly eat small fish.

Reproduction

Spawning begins in January and lasts through March which occurs at 50-100ft (15- 30m). Eggs are buoyant.

Adaptations

- Southern flounder have flat bodies that allow them to hide effectively on sandy bottoms from both predators and prey.
- Southern flounder have pigment cells that they can expand and contract. This allows these fish to change color and to be masters of camouflage (they blend in with the sandy bottom).
- Southern flounder have both eyes on one side of their head. When they are laying on top of a sandy bottom, having both eyes looking upward is an effective way to see predators and prey. Note: when baby flounder hatch, the larval flounder looks like any other fish with eyes on either side of the body. Soon after hatching, they begin to swim on one side and eventually one eye migrates to the left side of the head. The eye migration is completed by the time the flounder reaches half an inch. These fish also begin life with a swim bladder (a body part that helps fish to rise or sink in the water column). When these fish begin swimming sideways, the swim bladder is lost.
- Flounder have internal organs that function in saltwater. They cannot survive in freshwater.