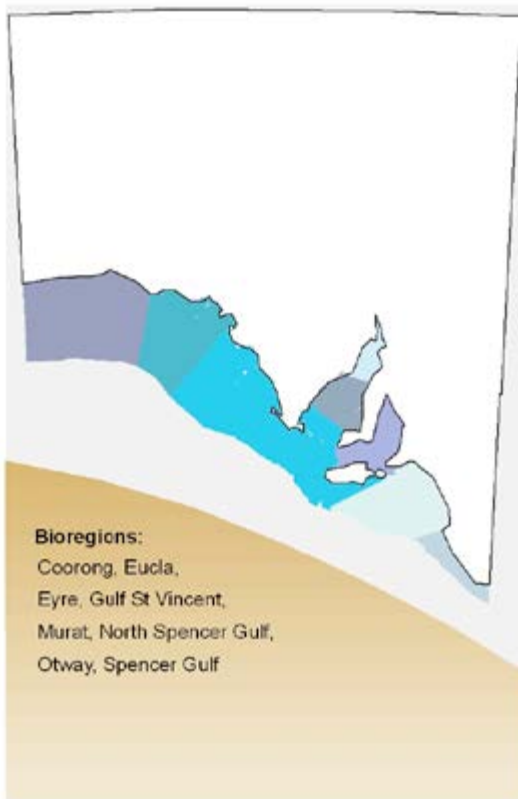


Southern Bluefin Tuna

Thunnus maccoyii



Map courtesy of Mapping Unit, Customer and Commercial Services.

Map is not intended to indicate spatial distribution of the species, only the bioregions in which the species is found.

Southern Bluefin Tuna are large, fast swimming fish that are dark blue above and silvery white below. Up to 2.25 metres long, they can weigh up to 200 kg. Their shape is very dynamic (like a torpedo) which makes it easier for them to move fast. These fish have swim bladders which stop them sinking to the sea floor. However, they can still dive to at least 500 metres.

Just like mammals, Southern Bluefin Tuna have the ability to keep the temperature of their bodies warmer than the outside water. This is an ability that not many other fish have and is possible because they have an advanced circulatory system. They have a lifespan of 20–40 years and do not reach reproductive maturity until they are 8–12 years old.

The farming of Southern Bluefin Tuna is currently the most economically important aquaculture venture in SA. They are caught in nets in the Great Australian Bight and slowly towed back to shore. They are then fattened up in captivity and sold frozen or fresh, mostly to Japan.

Diet

They eat fish, squid and marine invertebrates.

Breeding

Southern Bluefin Tuna spawn in the northern, tropical waters between Indonesia and Australia.

Habitat

Southern Bluefin Tuna live in the open ocean. Juvenile fish travel from tropical waters down the Western Australian coastline, in the Leeuwin Current. As they grow into adults these tuna ride the current south-eastward along South Australia's coast.

Threats

Careful management of catch quotas is essential to the survival of Southern Bluefin Tuna populations. The fact that they reach sexual maturity at a late age and have a slow growth rate makes it harder for them to renew their numbers fast enough. Marine pollution is also a threat to their health.



The Porsche of the Sea! Southern Bluefin Tuna have earned this nickname as they can travel at up to 70 km/h over long distances. They can even form a film over their eyes and hold their fins against their bodies to make themselves more hydro-dynamic!

Conservation

The Australian Commission for the Conservation of Southern Bluefin Tuna is trying to manage the catches of this species and rebuild its stocks, but catches outside their control continue and the total population of this fish is decreasing.

You can help the Southern Bluefin Tuna by:

- finding out more about marine conservation issues and educating others
- not polluting – anything washed down a stormwater drain goes straight out to sea
- never wasting tuna, they are not as abundant as you think.



Photo by Adam Watkins

Southern Bluefin Tuna



Photo by AFMA/ASBTIA

Southern Bluefin Tuna

For further information

Public enquiries

For more local information on any of the species in this resource please contact your nearest Natural Resource Centre office on:

- Eastwood:** (08) 8273 9100
- Gawler:** (08) 8523 7700
- Lobethal:** (08) 8389 5900
- Willunga:** (08) 8550 3400

Education enquiries

For teachers wanting more information about environmental education resources and opportunities please contact the relevant NRM Education sub regional team on:

- Northern Adelaide:** (08) 8406 8289
- Barossa:** (08) 8563 8436
- Central Adelaide:** (08) 8234 7255
- Southern Adelaide:** (08) 8384 0176
- Southern Fleurieu:** (08) 8551 0524

