

BONITA

Bonita Images

Found off Florida's atlantic and gulf side

(Euthynnus alletteratus)

Other names

*Little Tunny

Bonito

Bobo

false albacore

Little Tuna

Mackerel Tuna

General information: Actually grows to several pounds, but the smaller Bonitas are used .for bait. The larger ones are used as fresh cut strip baits

Range & Habitat: This fish is distributed Gulfwide in blue and green water at all depths. It comes closer to shore than any other tuna species

Identification & Biology: This fish has a "tuna-shaped", but streamlined body. The back is steel blue to dark blue in color and has a patch of wavy lines on the rear part of the back. The belly is very white and has several dark spots on each side between the pectoral and pelvic fins. No other species with a back-patch of wavy or mottled lines has these spots, although the spots may be hard to see on some fish. The closest look-alike to the little tunny is the less common Atlantic bonito. Besides lacking the belly spots, the patch of wavy lines on the back of the Atlantic bonito extends further forward, to a point equal to the front of the dorsal fin.

In the little tunny, the patch of lines begins at a point about halfway back from the beginning of the fin.

Little tunny are a strongly schooling species that can form schools nearly a mile long. When a large school is actively feeding, they are very noisy, keeping the water splashing and foaming in what is called locally a "Bonito Boil". They feed most heavily on fishes such as herrings, sardines and scads, but they will also readily take squid and crustaceans. They are fast-growing, but short-lived fish. At one year of age and 14 inches, they are mature enough to spawn, which takes place offshore in waters over 100 feet deep.

Little tunny seldom live over 5 years

Size: Little tunny average 10-12 pounds, but are not rare over 20 pounds.

Food Value: Good; better than its reputation, but because of the very red flesh, not many people eat them.

When Available: Year round, but more prominent in the summer.

Where to find: Normally found close to shore (within 5-10 miles) but can be found out at sea

They travel in large schools and can

.be seen feeding at the surface

When feeding, they make a very

,prominent disruption in the water

referred to as a "BOIL"here. The

boil may be half the size of a football

field and usually has a flock of birds

associated with it. At times, you will

also have other fish (sharks) feeding

on the bonito. I have hooked a Bobo

several times and end up just pulling
up half a Bonita attached to my
hook. The schools of Bonita can be
seen for a few miles. They are
caught off of the Okaloosa Island
Pier in the winter and can be caught from the jetties. Best bet is in a boat.

How to catch: The larger ones are used for strip bait can be caught on
Stretch 25s (red/white) trolled close to their school. Or, you
can maneuver to get in front of one of their schools and toss a lure to them
which is great fun on light tackle. For lures, use:

Clarks spoons on a bubble rig
White pompano jigs, 1/4 to 1/2 ounce
Small silver spoons

They don't have sharp teeth so you do not need a
.leader normally

For a retrieve, just toss toward them and retrieve
straight back as fast as you can reel

Hardiness in the live well Very hard (Impossible?) to keep alive. When
you catch them, they go into a rapid "death shake" and die
after a few minutes, even in a live well. Best to just put them on ice to start
with. OR USE TUNA TUBES

My list of fish related term

[Amberjack](#), [Ballyhoo](#), [Banded Rudderfish](#), [Bluefish](#), [Bonefish](#), Bonita, [Chumming](#), [Cobia](#), [Florida](#), [Flounder](#), [Flying Fish](#), [Gag Grouper](#), [Greater Amberjack](#), How to Make pilchard rings, [Ladyfish](#), [Lesser Amberjack](#), [Mahi Mahi](#), [Mangrove Snapper](#), [Menhaden](#), [Mud Minnow](#), [Mullet](#), [Permit](#), [Pinfish](#), [Red Snapper](#), [Redfish](#), [Sailfish](#), [Salt Water](#), [Shrimp](#), [Snook](#), [Spanish Mackerel](#), [Spotted Seatrout](#), [Squid](#), [Tarpon](#), [Tides](#), [Tilefish](#), [Triggerfish](#), [Triple Tail](#), [Vermillion Snapper](#), [Wahoo](#),
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