

**AMERICAN FOOD AND
GAME FISHES. A POPULAR
ACCOUNT OF ALL THE SPECIES
FOUND IN AMERICA NORTH OF
THE EQUATOR, WITH KEYS FOR
READY IDENTIFICATION, LIFE HIS-
TORIES AND METHODS OF CAPTURE**

BY

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**ILLUSTRATED WITH COLORED PLATES AND TEXT
DRAWINGS, AND WITH PHOTOGRAPHS FROM LIFE BY
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Silk Snapper

Colour, crimson in life, silvery below but flushed with crimson; axil and base of pectoral jet-black; eye orange; dorsal crimson, its edge scarlet; caudal orange-yellow, this colour extending upon the caudal peduncle; last rays of soft dorsal and most of anal and ventrals yellow; pectoral, base of anal, and ventral spine pinkish.

Silk Snapper

Lutianus vivanus (Cuvier & Valenciennes)

This handsome snapper is found in the West Indies and is rather common about Havana, where it is known as pargo de lo alto. It reaches a foot or more in length and is of food-value. When fresh it may always be known by the bright yellow colour of the eye, a colour which does not entirely fade in spirits.

Colour in life, bright rose, paler below; some narrow, undulating, light golden streaks following the rows of scales above the lateral line; mouth reddish within; traces of a dark lateral spot in some specimens; dorsal rosy, pale at the base, its edge yellow; caudal rosy, dusky posteriorly, the tip sometimes blood-red; pectoral pale yellow; ventrals and anal pale rosy, the latter yellowish posteriorly.

Red Snapper

Lutianus aya (Bloch)

Of all the snappers, this is by far the most important and best known. It reaches a length of 2 to 3 feet and a weight of 10 to 35 pounds. Its range extends from Long Island to Brazil, but its centre of abundance is in the Gulf of Mexico, in rather deep water on the rocky banks off the west coast of Florida and the coasts of Campeche and Yucatan. On the American coast it is known everywhere as the red snapper. To the Spaniards it is the pargo colorado, while in the Havana market it is the pargo guachinango, or Mexican snapper, because it is brought to that city from the Mexican coast. It is not common in Cuban and Porto Rican waters, and appears to be rare off the coast of Brazil. Off the east coast of Florida and the coast of Georgia it is abundant.

SCHOOLMASTER LUTAJAS AQUARIUM
FISHES IN NATURAL SIZE



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Gulf Snapper

Lutjanus griseus (Günther & Valenciennes)

This handsome snapper is found in the West Indies and is not so common at Havana, where it is known as *griete de la calle*. It reaches a foot or more in length and weighs a pound. When in the male always be known by the long yellowish white line on the side of the body which does not change in spots.

Color orange, light rose, paler below; some narrow and thin light yellow streaks to the gill cover; red on the sides above the snout and mouth; red fin with a piece of a dark lateral spot in some specimens; dorsal rosy, pale at the base; its edge yellow, reddish rosy, dusky posteriorly; the tip sometimes blood red; pectoral pale yellow; ventral and anal pale rosy, the latter yellowish posteriorly.

Red Snapper

Lutjanus gah (Bloch)

Of all the snappers, this is by far the most important and best known. It reaches a length of 2 to 3 feet and a weight of 10 to 20 pounds. Its range extends from Long Island to Brazil, but its centre of abundance is in the Gulf of Mexico, in rather deep water on the rocky banks off the west coast of Florida and the coasts of Campeche and Yucatan. On the American coast it is known everywhere as the red snapper. To the Spaniards it is the *pargo colorado*, while in the Havana market it is the *pargo guachinango*, or Mexican snapper, because it is brought to that city from the Mexican coast. It is not common in Cuban and Porto Rican waters, and appears to be rare off the coast of Brazil. Off the east coast of Florida and the coast of Georgia it is abundant.



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SCHOOLMASTER (LUTJANUS APODUS).
ABOUT $\frac{1}{2}$ NATURAL SIZE.

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Red Snapper

The history of the growth of the red-snapper fishery is an interesting one. In the late forties or early fifties some New London fishermen ventured into the Gulf of Mexico, with their small sloops such as they used in the cod fisheries, none over 15 or 20 tons measurement. They fell in with the red snappers off the west coast of Florida, and made good catches, which they marketed at New Orleans at good prices. Others were induced to leave the whirling tide-rips of the Vineyard Shoals and wet a line on the Snapper Banks. Later, winter voyages were made, in better and more fully equipped smacks, and these for a time held a monopoly of the trade. This trade, however, was local and mostly retail, in New Orleans and Mobile, and not until in the early seventies was an effort made to extend the trade. This was by the Pensacola Ice Company and by Warren & Stearns of Pensacola, while the Hon. Eugene Blackford was active in introducing the red snapper into the New York trade. The business grew rapidly, and in 1898 there were engaged in the red-snapper fishery in the Gulf of Mexico more than 40 vessels.

At first the smacks were provided with wells in which the fish could be kept alive, but now ice is used and the fish are put upon the market in better condition. Pensacola is the centre of the red-snapper trade. From this place the smacks make voyages to the Tortugas and the Campeche banks, some 700 miles distant.

The fish are found by continually throwing the lead when the smack has, by dead reckoning, reached the vicinity of a bank. A man standing on the weather-rail, supporting himself by a hold on the main-shroud, swings the line, to which is attached a baited hook and a 9-pound lead. He releases it as it swings under and forward, and lets it swing to the bottom, and 40 fathoms depth is reached as the hand of the leadsman comes over the lead, although the vessel may be moving forward 3 or 4 knots an hour.

If fish are present and hungry, they snatch at the hook, and one is brought to the surface. As soon as a bite is announced, a dory, with one man provided with fishing-gear, is at once launched, and if the fish bite well the smack is brought back to the spot and either anchored or permitted to drift broadside across the ground. When she drifts away from the fish she is again worked to windward, and the same process repeated until the fish cease biting or the fare is completed. This process of sounding is sometimes followed all day without success; and again, the fish are quickly found. Sometimes six men will catch a thousand fish in a few hours, and at other times two

Mutton-fish

or three hundred fish will be the limit of a day's hard sounding and patient fishing. When the snappers are spawning, they often are so abundant around the smack as to colour the water, but refuse to take the hook, and in such times the only recourse is to search for other schools. The fare is taken to Pensacola as promptly as possible, packed in ice, and shipped to many points in the North and West, from Boston to Denver and from Texas to the Great Lakes. So widely are they shipped that, as one dealer aptly remarks, "No man who is willing to buy a red snapper has lacked the opportunity."

Colour in life, deep rose-red, paler on throat; bluish streaks along rows of scales, above becoming fainter and disappearing with age; fins brick-red; dorsal bordered with orange, with a narrow blackish edge; caudal narrowly edged with blackish; a large blackish blotch above lateral line and below front rays of soft dorsal in the young, usually disappearing with age; axil of pectoral dusky; eye red. The intensity of colour in this species varies much with the locality. Specimens from Porto Rico have the general colour paler and the black lateral blotch more persistent.

Mutton-fish

Lutianus analis (Cuvier & Valenciennes)

This snapper, which is also called pargo or pargo criollo, reaches 2 feet or more in length and a weight of 25 pounds, and is found from Pensacola to Brazil, straying occasionally northward in the Gulf Stream to Woods Hole. It is common at Key West, and in the Havana markets it is the most important food-fish, being always abundant and highly esteemed. About Key West it is found on rock bottom in 3 to 9 fathoms, and is caught with hook and line. They are quite gamy, taking the hook promptly and fighting well. They are found throughout the year, but are scarcest in July and August, which is their spawning-time; the eggs are non-adhesive and the size of a rice-grain.

In Porto Rico this species is highly esteemed. It is called sama or pargo criollo. It is usually taken in the fish-traps set in 5 to 20 fathoms, though considerable numbers of the smaller individuals are caught with the haul-seines in shallow water along the shore.

Colour in life, dark olive-green above, many of the scales with pale blue spots, these forming irregular oblique streaks upward and backward; similar stripes more regular and numerous on caudal