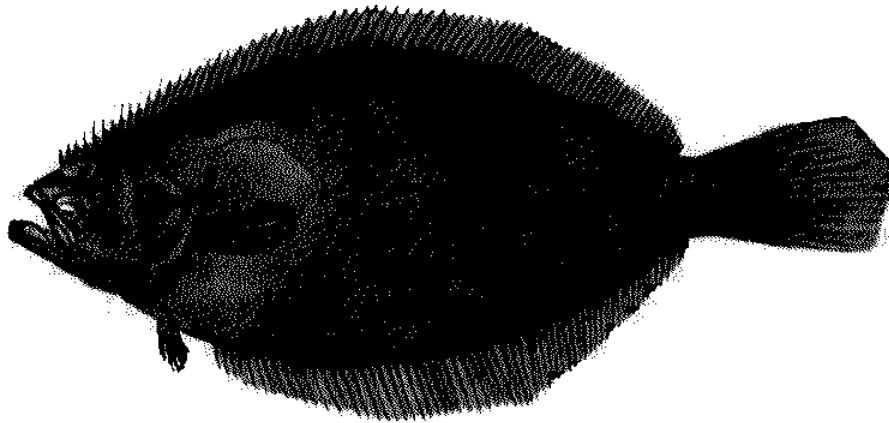


Summer Flounder



*(Drawing courtesy Saltwater Fishes of America by A.J. McClane (ed.),
Illustrated by Frances Watkins & Richard E. Younger, 1974)*

The Facts

Summer flounder is the largest flatfish in the area, which makes it very popular in New York State's marine district. Flatfishes have both eyes on one side of their head, and are bottom-dwelling. Summer flounder is "left-handed" (i.e. both eyes are positioned on the left side of the body). They can change color to match the substrate and they are aggressive predators that feed by sight. They partially bury themselves in sand and feed on unsuspecting prey that ventures too close. They can also be active hunters, attacking schools of eels and spearings. Larvae fish are symmetrical, looking like any other fish, however, they soon undergo a remarkable transformation where the right eye moves to the other side of the body. This fish is referred to locally as "fluke"; "flatties" are the average sized fish (2-4 lbs), whereas "doormat" is the name reserved for fish over 8 lbs.

Migration

They occur from the Gulf of Maine to Florida on the eastern coast. They move offshore during the winter and early spring, and return to inshore waters during the summer months when they are caught by recreational fishers. Summer flounder first appear in April and catches reach a peak by August; they occupy grass beds and wharf pilings where there is greater protection. During the summer months, small and medium-sized adults move into the sandy and muddy bottoms of bays and harbors. Larger fish tend to favor deeper waters (50 to 60 ft). Both males and females mature between ages 2 to 3.

Fish Profile



New York Sea Grant Extension Program

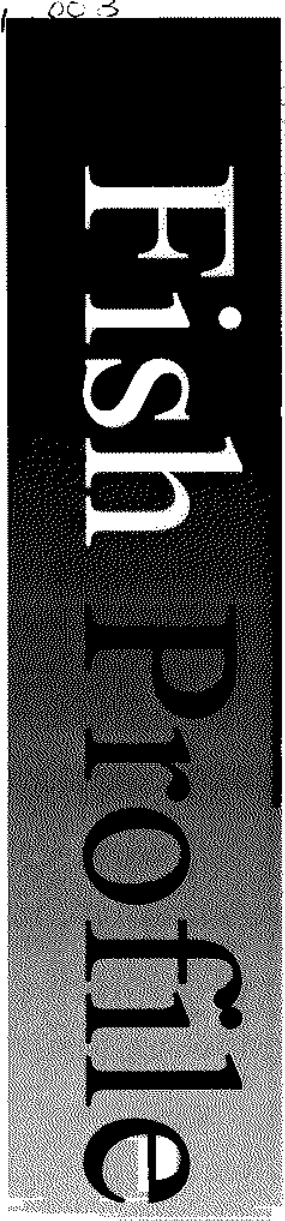
3059 Sound Avenue
Riverhead, NY
11901-1098
(631) 727-3910

www.nysagrant.org

New York's Sea Grant Extension Program provides Equal Program and Employment opportunities in association with Cornell Cooperative Extension, U.S. Department of Agriculture and U.S. Department of Commerce and cooperating County Cooperative Extension Associations.



Summer Flounder



Related Fish Profile Sheets

- > **Bluefish**
- > **Scup**
- > **Striped Bass**
- > **Summer Flounder**
- > **Tautog**
- > **Weakfish**
- > **Winter Flounder**

Fishing Season

Fish start to appear during the last week of April when fishing is restricted to a few areas; the fishing season really starts to pick up in May with peak action in August. Availability continues until October (or as late as November) when the waters begin to cool. The best fishing for summer flounder is in the inshore ocean and bays via open and charter boats, as well as by drift fishing from a rented boat. Pier fishing is less productive but offers good sport and challenges the angler's skill. Conservation measures are being implemented for this fish and you should contact New York State Department of Environmental Conservation or call 1-800-REGS-DEC for update information on fishing regulations.

Angling

These fish can be caught on the edges of deep water where the currents are in motion, and in inlets and rips over shoals. They can be found in shallow water (5-15 ft) early in the season, but they move to the edges of the deep (25-40 ft) by August. The key to successful fluke fishing is simplicity - use light to medium tackle and rigging. Generally, a 5 1/2 to 7 ft rod and matching conventional or spinning reel filled with 15 to 20 lbs test line is sufficient. Hooks are always tied to the main line about 10 inches from the sinker. The preferred bait for fluke includes live killies, fresh (or frozen) spearings, and strips of squid. Most anglers prefer to use a combination of bait (e.g., killies and squid strip) on the same hook. Other productive lures include small bucktails, plastic worms and plastic shrimps (these are often combined with squid-strip). Anglers should use a net or scoop to land fish since fluke have an uncanny ability to slip off the hook when lifted aboard a boat unaided.

Contact your local bait & tackle store for advice about fishing with artificial lures.

Visit our website at www.seagrantsunysb.edu/Fishery/ResourceCenter.htm for additional information.



New York Sea Grant Extension Program
 3059 Sound Avenue
 Riverhead, NY
 11901-1098
 (631) 727-3910

www.nyseagrant.org

RECEIVED
 NATIONAL SEA GRANT LIBRARY

APR 06 2001

Pell Bldg. URI Bay Campus
 Narragansett RI 02882



New York's Sea Grant Extension Program provides Equal Program and Employment opportunities in association with Cornell Cooperative Extension, U.S. Department of Agriculture and U.S. Department of Commerce and cooperating County Cooperative Extension Associations.