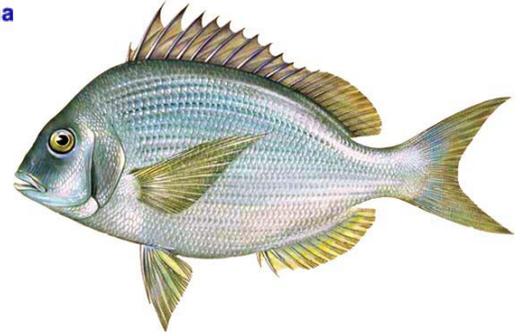


This Month

SCUP

Colloquial Nicknames: Porgy
Scientific name: *Stenotomus chrysops*



Field Markings: Silvery-gray with faint, irregular, dark bars and pale blue flecks on its side

Size: 4 to 10 inches long

Habitat: Sandy and rocky bottoms, open water

Seasonal Appearance: May to October

During the summer months they tend to gather near the coastline and are never found more than a few miles offshore.

RELATIONSHIP TO PEOPLE

Scup are a favorite sport fish for anglers in the Bay. Second only to bluefish in number of pounds landed by recreational fishermen, they are fished with worms, clams or squid from June to August over sandy bottoms. Scup are also an important commercial species, harvested in great numbers each year. This species is commonly exported to Japan.

15-20 years ago, scup in Narragansett Bay were in decline, but through effective fisheries management, the stock has rebounded and the coastwide stock is now considered healthy. According to the ASMFC, scup is not overfished and overfishing is not occurring relative to biological reference points.

DISTINGUISHING FEATURES AND BEHAVIORS

The scup is a medium-sized fish with a deep, vertical compressed body. Its scales are iridescent, often reflecting the color of the rainbow. Scup have small mouths with strong jaws and pointed teeth used to crush small mollusk shells. Its dorsal fin is composed of sharp spines that make up more than half the entire fin length.

Scup are migratory species that travel in schools of similarly-sized fish. The thin, dark lateral line acts as a sense organ, helping the fish to detect tiny movements in the water. This allows them to sense danger, find food and move quickly in a school without bumping into each other. Scup are bottom feeders, often gathering near rocks and submerged pilings to feed on barnacles, mollusks, worms and other invertebrates.

Sensitive to cold water temperatures, scup will move offshore into deeper waters during the winter. If caught in shallow waters during extremely cold weather, these fish often die.



HOW TO GET YOUR OWN COPY

RISAA members can purchase their own copy of *The Uncommon Guide To Common Life on Narragansett Bay* for \$15 from the RISAA Merchandise Committee. Stop by the committee table at any monthly RISAA meeting.



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