

SAILFISH

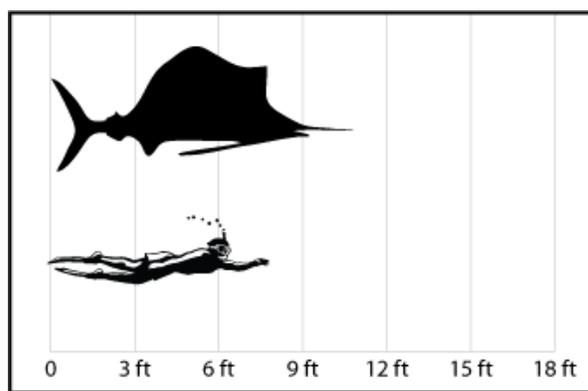
Istiophorus platypterus



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Predator Power

Sailfish are capable of extreme bursts of speed and have been known to strike bait trolled at 20 mph. That's over four times faster than Olympic Gold Medal Swimming Champion Michael Phelps.



Billfish Basics

Diet: sardines, mackerel, squid, and jacks

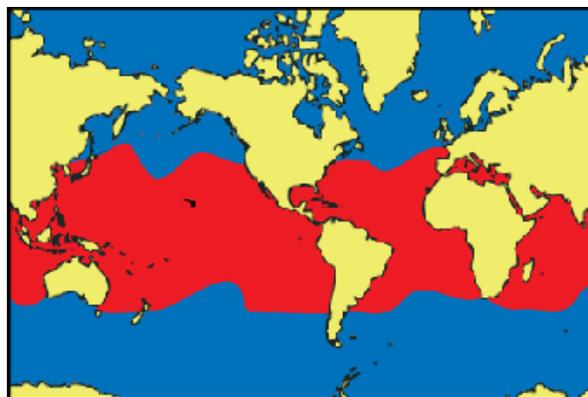
Size: *Pacific sailfish:* Up to 11 feet (3.3 m) and 221 pounds (100 kg)

Atlantic sailfish: Up to 10 ft (3.0 m) and 141 pounds (64 kg)

Lifespan: Up to 16 years

Range and Habitat:

Sailfish prefer warm water (77-82° F) and can be found throughout tropical and temperate regions of the Pacific, Indian, and Atlantic Oceans. Unlike other billfish, sailfish often venture near-shore. They are highly migratory will travel an average of 200,000 miles in their 16-year lifetime. Because of the marked difference in body and fin size, Atlantic and Pacific sailfish were originally classified as two separate species - Atlantic sailfish (*Istiophorus albicans*) and Indo-Pacific sailfish (*Istiophorus platypterus*). Recent research has confirmed that they are indeed the same species, though there is no interbreeding between the two.¹



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¹ Collette et al 2006. Phylogeny of Recent Billfishes (Xiphoidei). Bulletin of Marine Science, 79(3):455-468.

How a Sailfish Uses its Sail

Feeding: Divers have observed groups of sailfish working cooperatively, using their fins and sails to herd prey into a tight ball. Then at full speed and with fins folded back, the sailfish take turns striking the prey with their bills, circling back to feed on the injured fish.

Breeding: To signal males that she is ready to breed, a female sailfish will swim slowly with her dorsal fin extended above the surface. Once she is joined by one or more males, they will spawn near the surface. A large female may release 4,500,000 eggs in a single spawn.

for more info, visit <http://www.takemarlinoftthemenu.org>