

# Catching Mangrove Snapper 101

Mangrove snapper aka Gray snapper, is one of the finest-tasting fish in the near-shore and estuarine waters, and is easy to catch if you know how. Here's the 101 on when, where, and how to catch these tasty fish on any occasion. In Florida, those occasions are year-round because as of this writing, the Mangrove snapper has no 'closed season.'

For both Atlantic and Gulf waters, the minimum size for keepers is 10" and the Daily Limit is 5 fish per harvester.



[Spiderwire Fluorocarbon Line](#)

## Where to Catch Mangrove Snapper

Mangrove snapper can be found year-round in Florida. Summer is often thought of as "snapper season," however there is some variation across the fish's range.

Mangrove snapper aggregate at near-shore and offshore reefs for spawning during the summer months from June through September, and this is where you'll find the biggest fish. During the spawn, some fish will stay in the estuaries and lagoons that have deep salty channels. All other times of the year, the "keeper fish" will be in the deeper portions of the estuaries near structures such as bridges, piers, docks, mangroves, and changes in the bottom topography such as channel edges.

## Tackle for Mangrove Snapper

When it comes to snapper, you have to be fast. A good setup for the job would be a fast-action rod that will allow you to feel the bite and quickly set the hook, combined with a medium spinning or bait-casting reel. As for the terminal gear, you must always remember that these fish have incredible eyesight. You want to be as minimalist as possible, only using the weight needed to get to the bottom. You will also want to use a fluorocarbon leader due to its near-invisibility in the water.



[Seaguar is the original manufacturer of fluorocarbon fishing materials.](#)

## Spinning tackle for Mangrove Snapper

Spinning tackle is the most common gear used for Mangrove snapper, especially inshore, as these fish are rarely over three pounds in the estuaries. Use a medium spinning reel with anywhere from 8-to-20 pound test line depending on the amount of weight needed to get your bait or lure to the bottom.

## Bait-casting Tackle for Mangrove Snapper

Although Mangrove snapper inshore may not be over three pounds, offshore is a whole different story. Offshore, fish up to 10 pounds are not uncommon on the reefs and artificial structures, so using a bait-casting reel to have greater leverage over the fish running you under the structures is a good way to go for the big ones.



## Baits for Mangrove Snapper

When many anglers think of Mangrove snapper, shrimp come to mind. As Mangrove snapper grow however, their diet switches from primarily shrimp to a diet composed mostly of fish. They will of course consume shrimp at will, especially if right in front of them. In general though, using fish such as sardines and small mullet will catch larger fish than shrimp will.



# Lures for Mangrove Snapper

Some of the most effective lures for Mangrove snapper include jigs and soft baits. The lures will often imitate shrimp or fish, and are most effective if fished during a moving current, where the fish are sitting and waiting for their next meal to pass them by. Keep in mind that Mangrove snapper have excellent vision, so when choosing lures select the most life-like ones in terms of their looks and movements in the water.

- See more at: <http://theonlinefisherman.com/mangrove-snapper#sthash.xZUMaYpG.dpuf>

## 10 Mangrove Snapper Tips and Tricks

Sometimes the most targeted species on the pier, the Mangrove snapper offers excellent abundance and table fare for many anglers in the southeast. Even when abundant however, they may not be the easiest fish to catch. That is why we've developed this list of the Top 10 tips to remember when targeting this fish.



# Ten things to remember when Mangrove snapper fishing:

## 1. Know where the fish are.

Mangrove snapper are structure-oriented fish. Find the structure, and chances are fish will be present. Fish near bridges, piers, mangroves and drop-offs on the sea floor.

## 2. Fish the changing tides.

## 3. Summertime is snapper season.

## 4. Sardines always work.

## 5. Use fresh shrimp.

## 6. Switch it up with a crab.

## 7. Go nocturnal.

## 8. Use a sensitive, fast-action rod.

## 9. Keep your rod in hand.

## 10. Use clear, minimal tackle.

Fortunately, these fish are quite easy to find, but it's the catching part that makes it a challenge. Remembering these Top 10 tricks will almost guarantee you go home with a few snappers on your next outing.

- See more at: <http://theonlinefisherman.com/mangrove-snapper/10-mangrove-snapper-tips#sthash.JLopd6l1.dpuf>

# Line and Leader for Mangrove Snapper

Line and leader choice is a very important step when rigging tackle for Mangrove snapper for one reason – eyesight. All snapper have excellent eyesight, especially the Mangrove snapper, which spends a large part of its life cycle in the darker estuarine waters.



## Fishing Lines for Mangrove Snapper Fishing

When it comes to snapper fishing, there are several important factors to consider. One, these fish orient toward structures, which means a higher possibility of getting wrapped around that piling or mangrove root – then, snap! The second thing to consider is that Mangrove snapper have superb eyesight. Fortunately, due to today's fishing line technology, we can overcome both of these factors.

## Monofilament Line for Mangrove Snapper Fishing

Monofilament line, although not as invisible as fluorocarbon, is fairly invisible under water, and works very well for Mangrove snapper in regards to overcoming that excellent eyesight of theirs. Mono does not fare as well as fluorocarbon when rubbed against that sharp barnacle-edged piling; however it is much more sturdy than braided line. Using an 8-to-20 pound test monofilament line tied to a 15-to-30 pound monofilament leader is a good place to start.



## Using Fluorocarbon for Mangrove Snapper Fishing

Fluorocarbon line is the overall best approach to Mangrove snapper fishing. If you don't want to spend the extra bucks for the entire spool, at the very least a fluorocarbon leader is recommended for two reasons. For one, fluorocarbon is the most invisible line (remember that eyesight issue), and is also the most resistant to abrasions on the sharp structures.

# Braided Line for Mangrove Snapper Fishing

Braided line has its pros and cons in every situation, but for Mangrove snapper it appears to have more cons. Braid tends to shred easily against the pilings and mangrove roots that are lined with barnacles, and is also quite visible to the keen-eyed snapper. If braided line is your choice, a long two-foot fluorocarbon or monofilament leader is recommended, so that the snapper aren't spooked by the line.



When using braided line, use at least a 24-inch fluorocarbon leader.

## Final Notes about Mangrove Snapper Lines and Leaders

The two main challenges to overcome are the sharp-edge structures that these fish tend to hang around, and the excellent eyesight of the fish. Using either fluorocarbon line, or at least a fluorocarbon leader on a monofilament line will make your line virtually invisible, while standing up to the abrasion of the structure edges more so than monofilament and especially braid.

- See more at: <http://theonlinefisherman.com/mangrove-snapper/best-line-leaders-mangrove-snapper#sthash.PhuxuVWK.dpuf>



# Natural Baits for Mangrove Snapper

Natural baits are by far the most effective method of catching this shy, but otherwise thieving fish.

## The Best Baits for Mangrove snapper

Mangrove snapper eat a diet comprised of mainly small crabs, shrimp, clams, and sometimes small fishes. While some of those, such as the small crabs called sand fleas, are easily attainable right on the beaches, others are harder to find, but can be purchased either live or frozen from most bait shops. It really seems that some baits work better than others depending on the day, so don't hesitate to bring a variety of options.



Chunks of Blue crab are excellent bait for Mangrove Snapper.

## Sardines

Probably the top Mangrove snapper bait, sardines are very shiny and active – irresistible to the hungry snapper. There are two species in the southeast, the Spanish and Scaled sardines, and work almost as well frozen as they do live.



Scaled sardines are shiny and smelly.

## Grunts

Although not as shiny as a sardine, grunts are also irresistible to a snapper because they make noise – and lots of it when on a hook. Grunts are also hardier than a sardine, and will last a lot longer on a hook.



Grunts make a noise attractive to Mangrove Snapper

## Mullet

Finger mullet – fish of about three to four inches – are also an excellent fish, as they are shinier than grunts, and just as hardy as the grunts.

## Shrimp

Shrimp make up the majority of a juvenile Mangrove snapper's diet, and still a fairly large portion of an adult snapper's. If using shrimp, make sure it is either live or very freshly frozen, or the snapper will turn their noses, leaving all of the smaller grunts picking at your bait.



Shrimp is always good bait.

## Crabs

Often overlooked as bait for snapper, crabs are actually a modest component of mangrove snapper diet. Small crabs (either blue or fiddler) are excellent bait for snapper, especially when they don't seem to be interested in any other bait.

## Other Baits that Will Catch Mangrove Snapper

Essentially any fish that is white and shiny, live or dead can work well for Mangrove snapper, especially when in a frenzy. In other words, small

mojarras or other inshore species will work great whole, but don't overlook a piece of cut ladyfish.

- See more at: <http://theonlinefisherman.com/mangrove-snapper/natural-live-bait#sthash.4iV0QZ98.dpuf>

## **Artificial Lures for Catching Mangrove Snapper**

A schooling fish, Mangrove snapper can be caught quite effectively on artificial lures, especially when in a frenzy. Assuming if you are a diehard artificial fisherman, and not chumming using natural baits, finding the school will be half the battle when targeting snapper using artificial lures. Most inshore structures with deep water, such as channel edges, deeper mangrove trees, and deep basins will hold schools of Mangrove snapper.



## Lures for Catching Mangrove Snapper

Mangrove snapper eat a diet composed of mainly fish and shrimp, with a little bit of crab thrown in there. The most effective lures are certainly the fish and shrimp imitations, which come in a variety of shapes, sizes, colors, and material.

## Artificial Fish for Mangrove Snapper

As Mangrove snapper grow, their diet shifts from one dominated by shrimp to one dominated by fish. In other words, using fish will generally catch the larger fish when it comes to Mangrove snapper, especially in a mixed school where some are keepers, and some are not. Artificial fish baits come in all shapes and sizes, soft or hard, and imitate just about every species of bait out there. When using these artificial fish, matching the bait of the local area will get the most attention, so always have a wide assortment of “species” of lures in your tackle box.



If there is a fish out there in the wild, chances are there is a lure imitating it.

## Artificial Shrimp for Mangrove Snapper

Shrimp – a favorite of Mangrove snapper – is notorious for being snatched by smaller, less desirable fish before your targeted species finds it. Using artificial shrimp allows you to overcome this problem, and get your bait to the fish. Artificial shrimp can be worked in several different scenarios.

When big fish are under the mangroves, the shrimp can be flipped into the roots and allowed to sink to the fish. When under the piers and bridges, the shrimp can be cast near the pilings, and bounced along the bottom, stirring up sediments for attention.

## Spoons for Mangrove Snapper

Spoons mimic small shiny baitfish such as mullet, sardines, shads and others. Spoons are a good choice for Mangrove snapper along seawalls, channel edges, and other structures where snags will not be as much of an issue. When using a spoon for Mangrove snapper, matching the local bait will get most attention. If the mullet are thick, use a silver spoon. If pinfish is what they're after, use a spoon with some blue color on it.



Shiny spoons such as the one shown above, mimic small shiny baitfish such as mullet and sardines – two favorites of Mangrove snapper.

## A general statement about Mangrove snapper lures

When targeting Mangrove snapper, you want to remember to find the school. Casting in the wide-open flats will rarely result in a snapper

(although it may result in a nice trout!). Bounce weighted shrimp-jigs off the bottom to stir sediments around mangroves and deep structures, and swim the weighted fish lures either straight or with a jigging pattern.

- See more at: <http://theonlinefisherman.com/mangrove-snapper/artificial-lures-jigs#sthash.oQcqhGzK.dpuf>