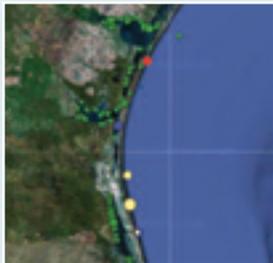


What is the Tarpon Observation Network?

This volunteer-based Web application allows tarpon anglers and others interested in tarpon to enter their catch or observations via the Internet. It also creates a means for anyone interested in tarpon to see historical or current tarpon distribution throughout Texas. The information covered in this application consists of the following:

- Confidential observer contact information for those wishing to enter their data
- Tarpon observation date
- Tarpon observation location
- Length (observed or estimated)
- Weight (if measured)
- Type of observation (landed, jumped or observed)
- Water temperature (if known)
- Photo uploads for sharing with others
- Query for a map, graph or table of a single bay system by date, month, year or area



If you have questions regarding the database content, please e-mail tarpon@tpwd.state.tx.us

Help Us Help Tarpon

For more information, contact:

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*Anglers helping with
 tarpon conservation*

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TARPON OBSERVATION NETWORK

About Tarpon

Nearly all saltwater anglers consider landing a tarpon to be the angling world's premier lifetime achievement. Celebrated for its spectacular fighting ability, the "silver king" is so challenging to land that only about one of every eight hookups ever results in the angler putting their hands on the prize. The tarpon's dramatic struggle at the end of a line includes arguably the most impressive aerial display of any sportfish species.

Capable of weighing in over 300 pounds, most that are hooked or landed in Texas weigh less than 100 pounds. The current state record caught by Jeremy Ebert on October 4, 2006, weighed 210.7 pounds and measured over 7-1/2 feet in length.

In Texas, most tarpon are found in nearshore Gulf waters, making surf anglers and boaters fishing near Gulf passes the most likely to encounter this exciting gamefish.

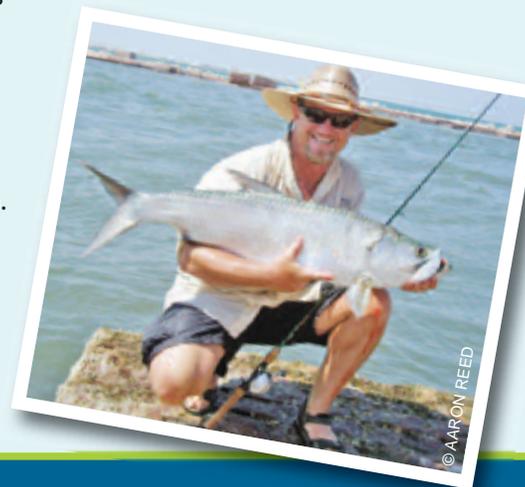
Despite being a popular gamefish, relatively little is known about the tarpon's life history. Found on both sides of the Atlantic Ocean and throughout the Gulf of Mexico and Caribbean Sea, they are thought to spawn in offshore waters. Tarpon are an ancient species, undergoing an elongate, transparent larval stage called "leptocephalus," a larval type characteristic to eels and bonefish and indicating a close kinship to these otherwise dissimilar species. In the leptocephalus stage, they possess a long, transparent, ribbon-like body and undersized head and fins; and grow large fang-like teeth. The larvae lack gills and red blood cells, and the gut is closed, absorbing oxygen and nutrients through the skin. After approximately 20 to 30 days, the leptocephalus actually shrinks in size and begins a transformation into the adult form.

As adults, tarpon are top predators in their world and are susceptible to predation only by the occasional large shark. While the majority of adult tarpon in Texas are caught in nearshore Gulf waters, they have been known to surprise the occasional bay angler.

The Tarpon Observation Network incorporates volunteer-based sightings of tarpon to augment what is known about tarpon in Texas waters.

Each observation is important and can be useful in understanding this interesting and elusive species. Your contribution can go a long way toward better understanding this spectacular gamefish. To participate, simply log on to the Web site and record your observations.

To help or learn more, visit
www.tpwd.state.tx.us/tarpon



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