

Anchoa lyolepis (Shortfinger Anchovy)

Family: Engraulidae (Anchovies)

Order: Clupeiformes (Sardines, Herrings and Anchovies)

Class: Actinopterygii (Ray-finned Fish)



Fig. 1. Shortfinger anchovy, *Anchoa lyolepis*.

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anchoa_lyolepis, downloaded 18 October 2016]

TRAITS. *Anchoa lyolepis*, also known as the shortfinger anchovy, was previously known as *Stolephorus lyolepis* (Evermann and Marsh, 1902). The body is round and elongated. Its snout is long and pointed, slightly longer than eye diameter, with a long pointed upper jaw bone (maxilla), which almost extends to the gill opening. The pectoral fin has a bony first fin ray or spine that projects from the body. The anal fin is short with 15-22 rays. The shortfinger anchovy has a silver stripe along the flank between the pigmented portions of the body, which fade in preserved specimens (Fig. 1). It can grow to 7cm but most usually grows to 5-6cm (Nelson et al., 1988).

DISTRIBUTION. It is found in the western Atlantic Ocean from southern New York along the US coast, in the northern Gulf of Mexico, Venezuela, Yucatan, Panama, Bermuda, the Caribbean, south to Brazil (Fig. 2).

HABITAT AND ECOLOGY. *Anchoa lyolepis* usually inhabits coastal areas. They travel in large schools and feed on zooplankton. The species seems to prefer highly saline waters and is normally found at depths of up to 55m (Aiken et al., 2015).

REPRODUCTION. This species has a typical Engraulidae life cycle consisting of the egg, larva, juvenile and adult stages. The exact number of offspring produced and the detailed developmental stages of this species are unknown. However it probably scatters many eggs and the larvae that

hatch are planktonic like many members of its family (Nelson et al., 1988). The species has been characterised as a summer resident in Brazil (Bonecker et al., 2005), a spring and summer resident in Mississippi (Modde and Ross, 1981), a winter and spring resident in southern Brazil (Araújo et al. 2008), and a summer to early fall migrant in the Gulf of Mexico (Modde, 1980). This is due to large numbers of larval and juvenile individuals being identified in these study areas at these periods.

BEHAVIOUR. Modde and Ross (1981) and Bonecker et al. (2005) have described the importance of coastal areas as nurseries or refuges for *Anchoa lyolepis*. In one study the species showed daily activity and the conclusion drawn was that this was a result of the inshore habitat providing some form of refuge or orientation site (Modde, 1980). Another study reported high early morning densities of late larval and juvenile forms and stated that this may be a form of predator avoidance (Modde and Ross, 1981).

APPLIED BIOLOGY. This species is normally used as bait in Colombia, Venezuela, Jamaica and the U. S. Virgin islands (Aiken et al., 2015). In Jamaica it is harvested for bait by artisanal fishermen. Declines in the abundances of this species in Jamaican waters have been noted. However, this has not been considered a major threat to the global population and *Anchoa lyolepis* is thus listed as being of Least Concern (Aiken et al., 2015).

REFERENCES

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Fig. 2. Geographic distribution of the shortfinger anchovy.

[IUCN red list *Anchoa lyolepis*, downloaded 20 October 2015]

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