

Uku

blue-green snapper (*Aprion virescens*)



Blue green snapper is commonly known as the **uku** in Hawaii and grey jobfish in other parts of the world. Most of the uku catch is between 4 and 18 pounds round weight. *Uku* less than 1-2 pounds or over 30 pounds are rarely caught.

Seasonality & How They Are Caught

Availability and Seasonality:

Although *uku* is caught year round in Hawaii, the greatest availability is during its spawning season (May-July).

Fishing Methods:

Uku is harvested mostly with vertical hook-and-line gear however it is the only snapper in Hawaii regularly caught near the surface with trolling lures. Among the three most popular deepwater snapper species in

Hawaii, *uku* occurs at the shallowest depths, usually no deeper than 360 ft.

The summer *uku* season is entirely out of phase with the winter peak for other deepwater snappers (*opakapaka*, *onaga*).

The bottomfish fishery in Hawaii is basically divided into the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands (NWHI) and the main Hawaiian islands. The fisheries are undergoing change. The establishment of the National Monument in the NWHI has set in motion, the phasing out of the sustainable, NWHI limited-entry bottomfish fishery. The main Hawaiian Islands fishery remains under intensive management with an annual commercial catch limit on certain species. However, the *uku* catch is not under a catch limit due to its abundance. At the same time, the

restrictions on the NWHI bottomfish fishery greatly reduce the supply of this important fish.

Distribution:

Fishermen sell *uku* through the Honolulu fish auction, through intermediary buyers on the major islands, and directly to retail fish markets and restaurants.

Product Forms and Yields:

Virtually all of the *uku* catch is landed as whole, iced fish.

When properly cared for, *uku* has a long shelf life, comparable to that of *opakapaka*. *Uku* fillets are often sold to up-scale restaurants. The yield of fillet from a whole fish is about 45%.

Quality

Color, Taste, Texture:

Like other snappers from Hawaii, *uku* has clear, pale pink flesh that is delicately flavored, moist, and firm. Some chefs say that *uku* is slightly stronger flavored than the very delicate *opakapaka*. While *sashimi* from *opakapaka* and *onaga* are more common, *uku sashimi* is thought to be one of the most under rated and underappreciated species for raw fish preparations by local fishermen and others in Hawaii.

Preparations

Uku is excellent prepared bake, broiled, sautéed, steamed and raw. *Uku* harvested during the summer season is often rich in natural fat, a desirable attribute for sashimi.



Hawaii Seafood Council

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