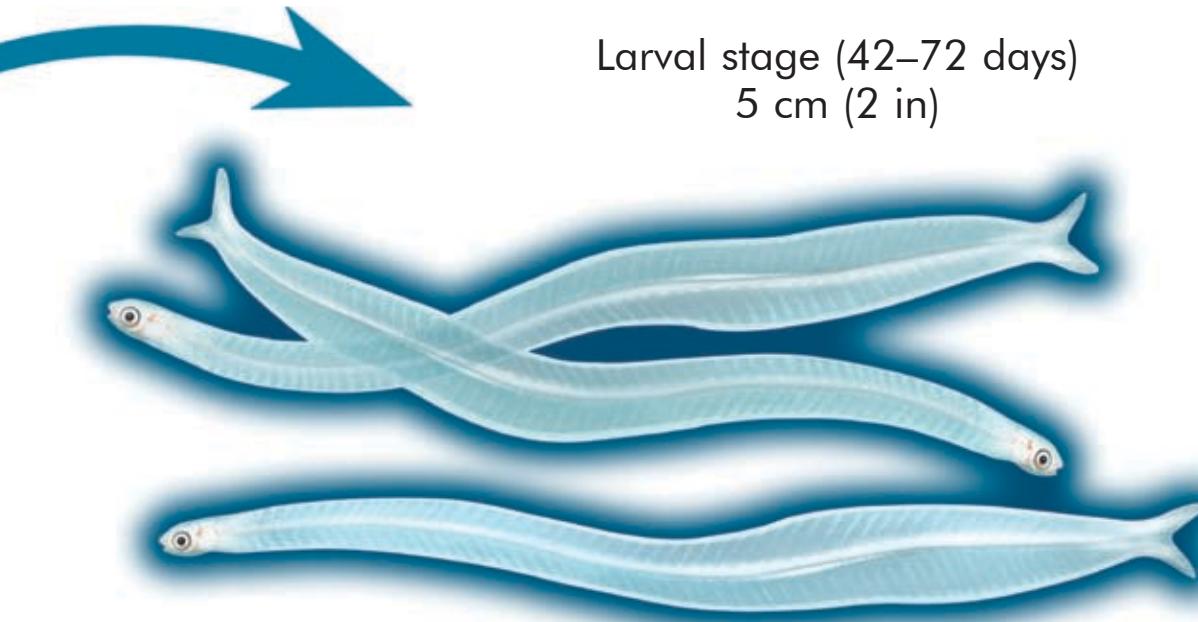


1 Bonefish are believed to spawn in deep water between the months of October and May.

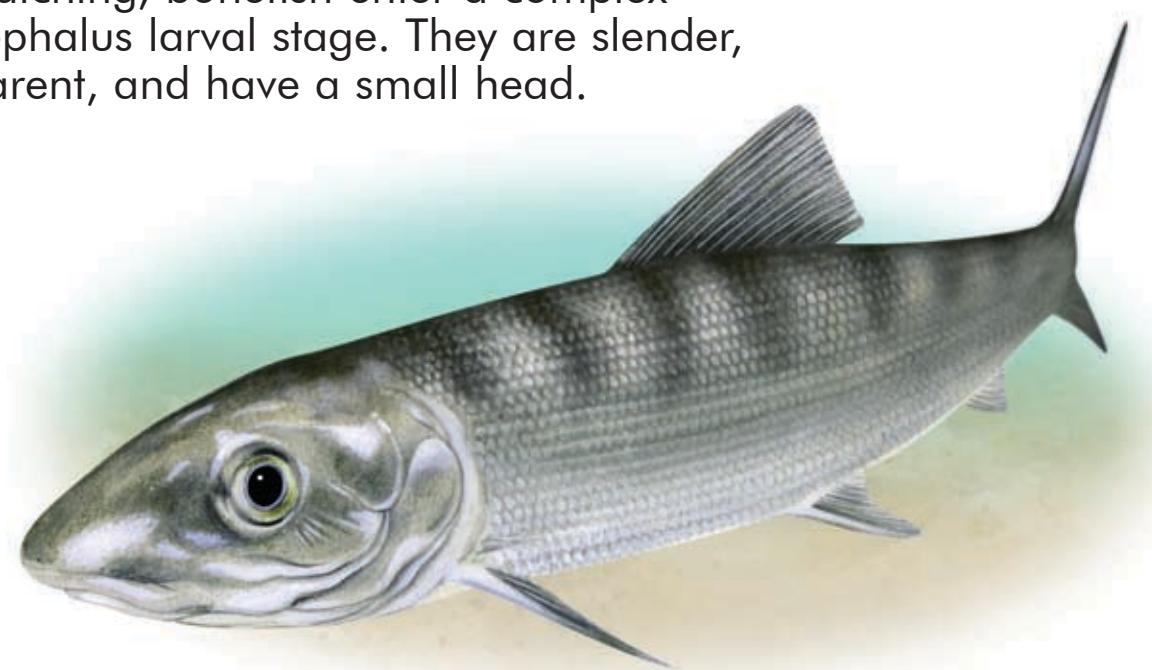


Larval stage (42–72 days)
5 cm (2 in)

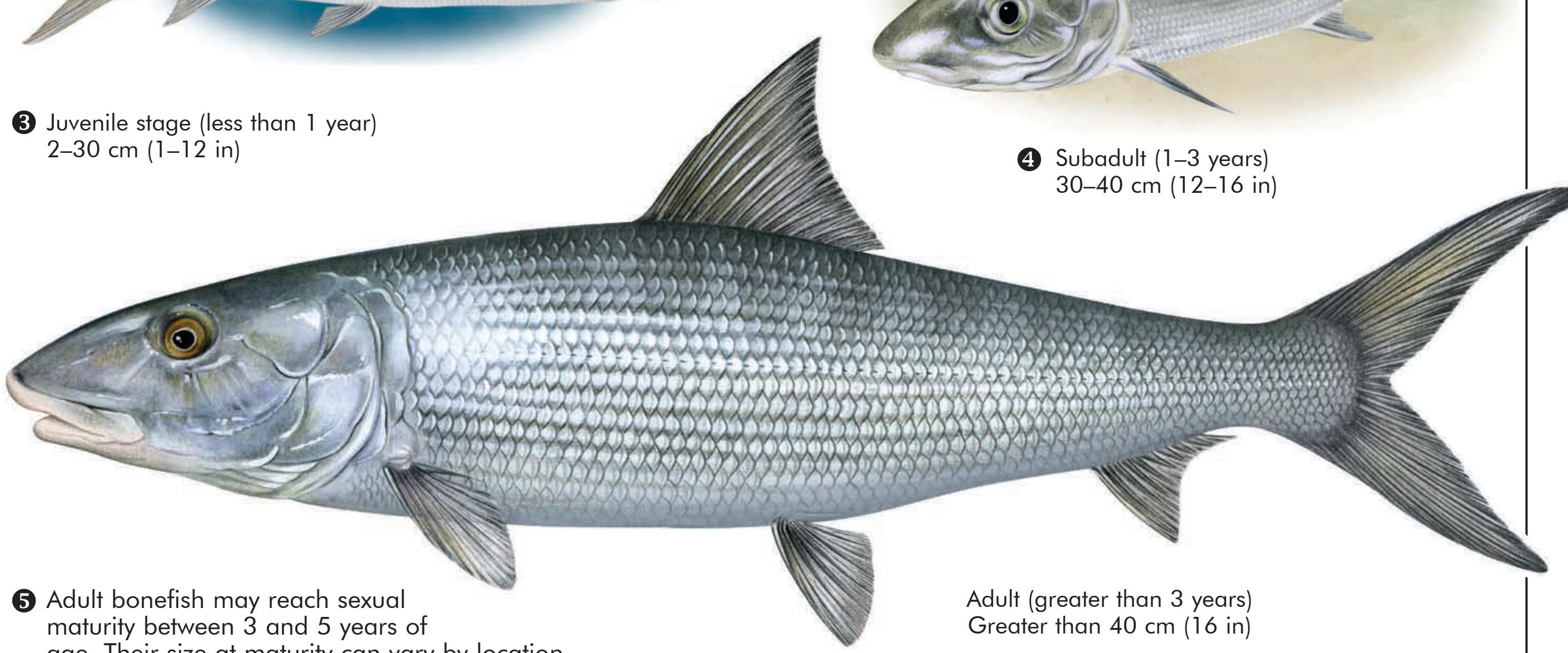
2 After hatching, bonefish enter a complex leptocephalus larval stage. They are slender, transparent, and have a small head.



3 Juvenile stage (less than 1 year)
2–30 cm (1–12 in)



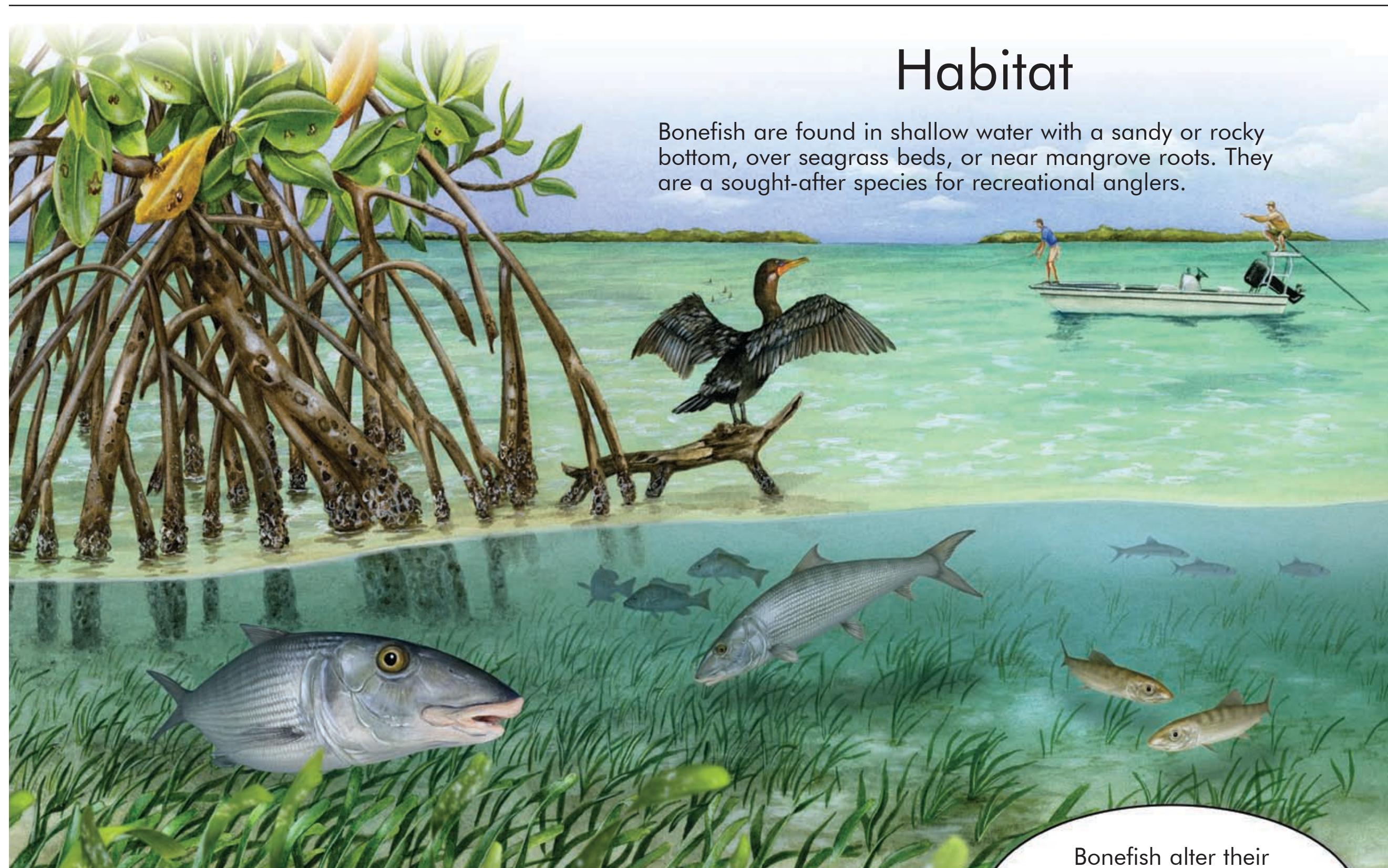
4 Subadult (1–3 years)
30–40 cm (12–16 in)



5 Adult bonefish may reach sexual maturity between 3 and 5 years of age. Their size at maturity can vary by location.

Habitat

Bonefish are found in shallow water with a sandy or rocky bottom, over seagrass beds, or near mangrove roots. They are a sought-after species for recreational anglers.



Bonefish alter their coloration to blend in with their environment and may develop vertical bars while over seagrass.



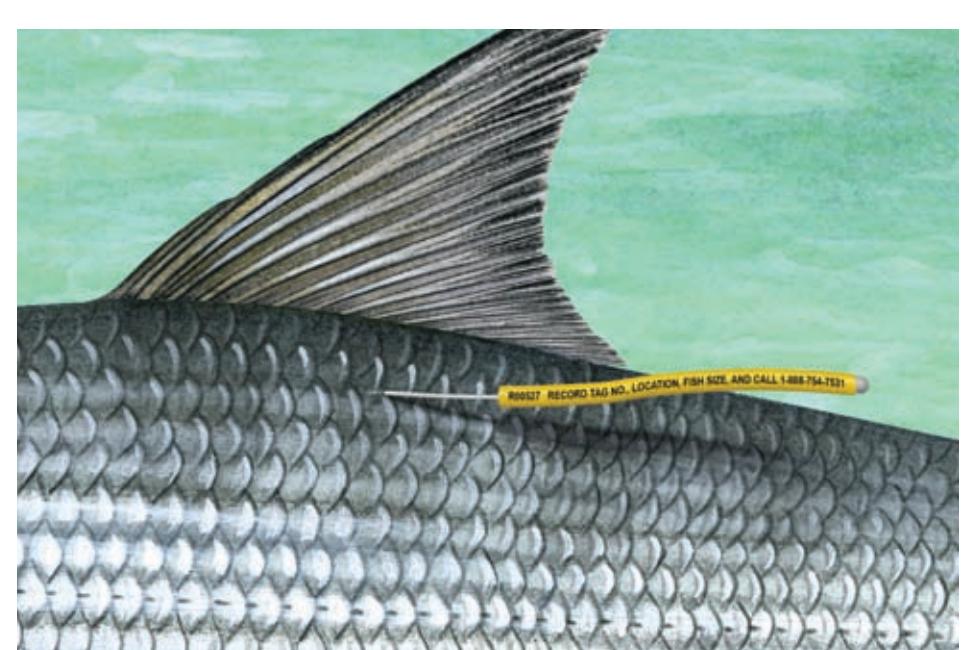
Ecological and Economic Significance

Because of their renowned fighting ability, bonefish are a prized sportfish in Florida and throughout the Caribbean. They are a mid-size predator and provide a vital link in the food web. Bonefish populations are declining in some areas. Habitat loss and mortality from harmful catch-and-release practices may be contributing to this decline.

How You Can Help

- Learn about and comply with local bonefishing regulations. Netting and harvesting is illegal in most areas.
- Use barbless hooks and limit fight time; exhausted fish are vulnerable to predators.
- Handle fish gently with wet hands.
- Keep fish underwater when releasing if possible.
- Release only in areas where predators are not present.
- Do not damage critical bonefish habitat such as a seagrass beds and mangroves.

When practicing catch-and-release fishing, keep the fish underwater and allow it to swim away. This helps to increase its chances for survival.



Tagging programs help researchers monitor bonefish populations and provide information for fisheries management.



Netting bonefish is illegal in the Bahamas and the United States.

Caribbean and Florida Bonefish *Albula spp.*

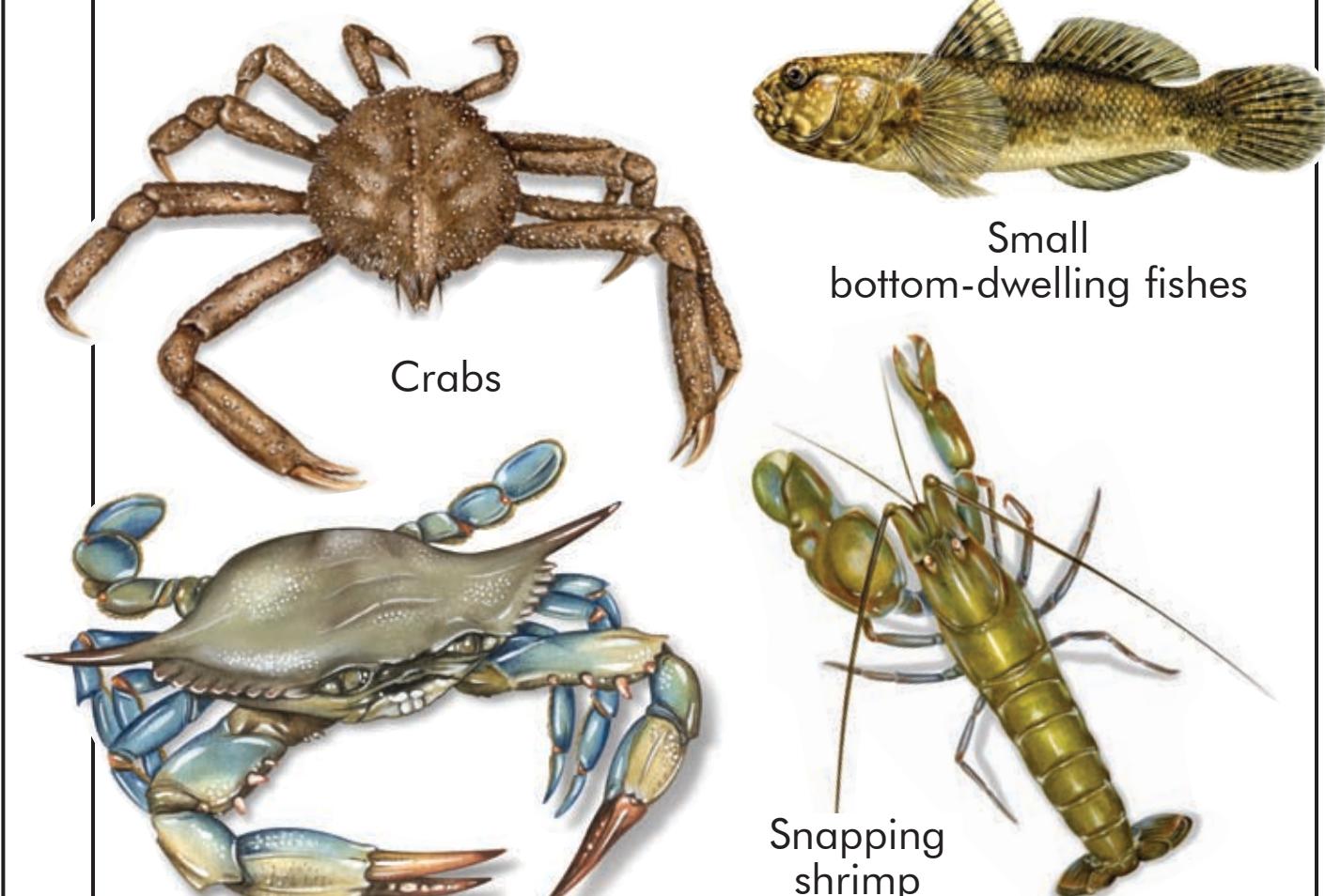
The powerful and elusive bonefish is one of the ultimate prizes for an angler. Surprisingly, knowledge of the life cycle of the *Albula* spp. is limited. *Albula vulpes* and *Albula* Species B are the most common species found here, however it is difficult to distinguish between the species based on physical appearance. At least ten species of bonefish are found worldwide.

Bonefish feed principally on bottom-dwelling organisms using their snout to root out prey, and use specialized dental plates to grind hard-shelled prey, such as crabs and mollusks.

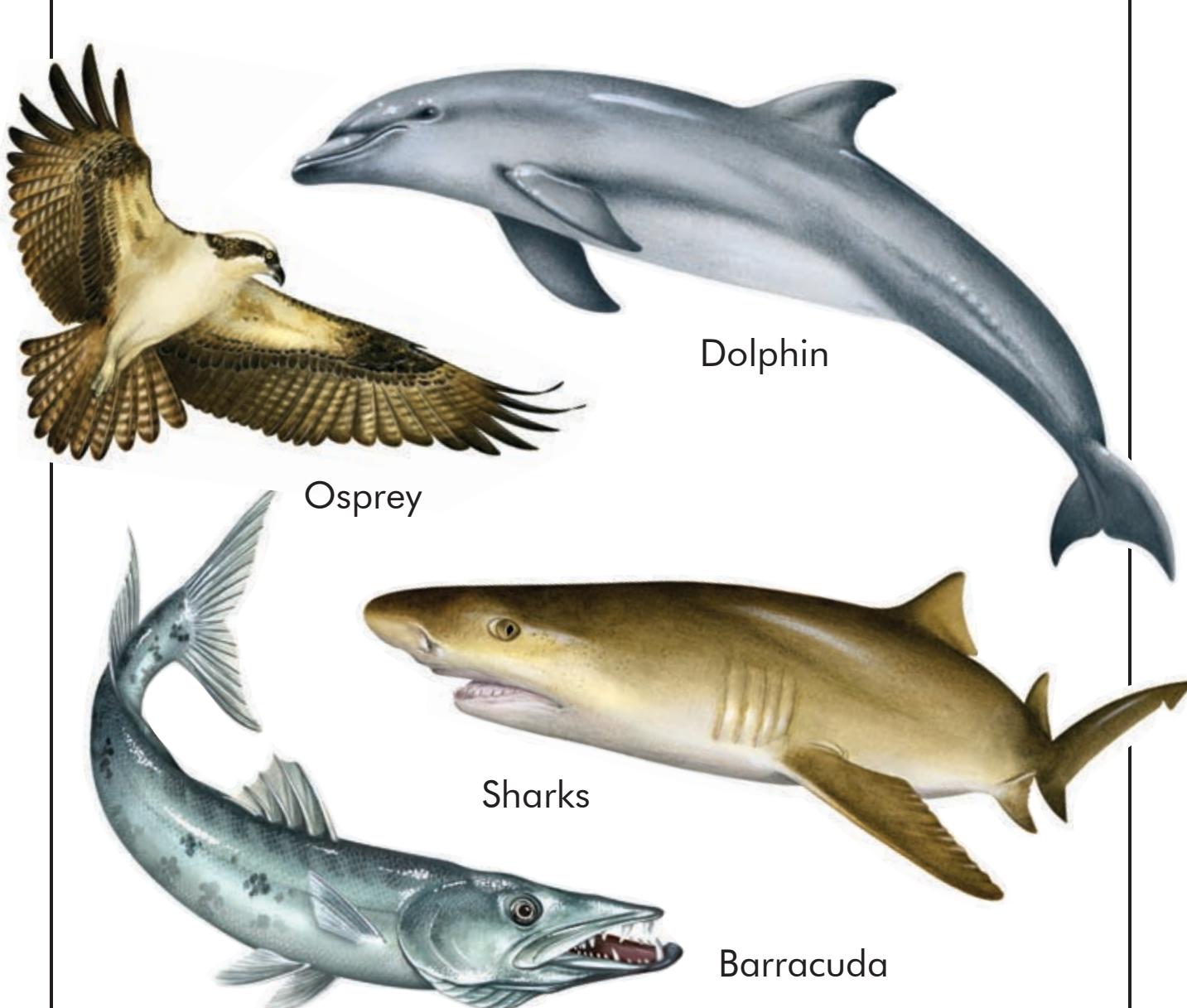
Juvenile Diet



Adult Diet

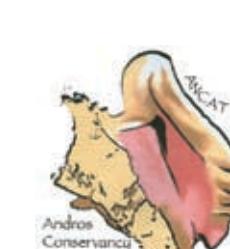


Natural Predators



The Nature Conservancy

Protecting nature. Preserving life.



kerzner marine foundation

PARTNERS FOR THE OCEANS



Loxahatchee River District

"Preserving Nature by Design"™
Poster Series, No. 2
www.loxahatcheeringer.org