BASS, BREAM AND MULLET

Black bream

Spondyliosoma cantharus

Caught off the Sussex coast | Confirmed record



Black bream (*Spondyliosoma cantharus*). Picture: Diego Delso, CC BY-SA 4.0 (creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/), via Wikimedia Commons: commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Chopa_(Spondyliosoma_cantharus),_Parque_natural_de_la_Arrábida,_Portugal,_2020-07-21,_DD_57.jpg.

IN SHORT

Black bream is an oval fish, mostly dark, with grey to silver stripes, a long-spined dorsal fin and a deeply forked tail. Sussex IFCA says black bream are fished commercially and recreationally in its district, and local reports name Brighton Marina and Shoreham Harbour. British boat record: confirmed.

Key facts

IDENTIFY IT
Oval, mostly dark fish with grey to silver stripes, a long-spined dorsal fin and a deeply forked tail.

SIZE
Up to about 60cm and 7lb.

HABITAT
Sand, mixed and rough ground, wrecks, shellfish beds and weed beds in shallow water. Moves to deeper water in winter.

OFF SUSSEX
Kestrel Warrior lists black bream in summer and August on wrecks, and bream in July and September. Local shore reports mention them in July, September and October.

AROUND BRITAIN
Spring is breeding season. Summer is the main catch period around southern Britain and Ireland. Shore catches drop in colder months.

METHODS
Light tackle, bottom or float fishing with baits such as mackerel, squid strip, sandeel, ragworm, lugworm or mussel. Kestrel Warrior says they are found on wrecks in summer.

GROUP
Bass, bream and mullet

COME FISHING WITH US

Fish with Kestrel Warrior from Brighton Marina

Where you might meet black bream with Captain Ant:

- **Black bream over the Sussex wrecks** (a 10-hour day at anchor over wrecks; 10 hours, £110 per person or £800 whole boat)
- **Black bream on a 4-hour inshore trip** (sand, reefs and rough ground near Brighton; 4 hours, £55 per person or £500 whole boat)

Free tuition and free gutting and filleting of your catch. Rod hire £10 per person; fishing tackle is included on the shark trip. Prices 2027 from £20 per person: kestrelwarrior6.co.uk/charter-boat-fishing-prices/

Scan to book

Book: ring **07896 471691** (8am to 9pm, seven days a week) · info@kestrelwarrior6.co.uk · kestrelwarrior6.co.uk/contact/

About the black bream

Black bream is an oval fish, mostly dark, with grey to silver stripes, a long-spined dorsal fin and a deeply forked tail. It grows to about 60cm and 7lb. It lives over sand, mixed and rough ground, wrecks, shellfish beds and weed beds in shallow water, then moves to deeper water in winter.

Spring is breeding season, and summer is the main catch period around southern Britain and Ireland. Shore catches drop in the colder months. Kestrel Warrior lists black bream on wrecks in summer, with August named, and bream in July and September. Local shore reports also mention them in July, September and October.

Anglers use light tackle, fishing on the bottom or under a float, with baits such as mackerel, squid strip, sandeel, ragworm, lugworm or mussel.

In Sussex, IFCA says black bream are fished commercially and recreationally in its district, and local reports name Brighton Marina, Shoreham Harbour, Worthing Pier and Selsey east beach. Sussex IFCA also has a byelaw protecting juvenile black bream and bass, so it pays to measure before you keep anything.

On the boat

Kestrel Warrior lists black bream on wrecks in summer, with August named, and bream in July and September. Light tackle suits them. Bottom or float fishing with mackerel, squid strip, sandeel, ragworm, lugworm or mussel are the baits the sources name. Local shore reports also mention them in July, September and October. Shore catches drop in the colder months, and the fish move to deeper water in winter, so summer is the sensible time to look for them.

British boat-caught record

Confirmed record

Weight	6lb 14oz 4dr (3.125kg)
Where	Wreck off the south Devon coast, Torquay, Devon
When	1977
Angler	J A Garlick

Confirmed British boat-caught record: 6lb 14oz 4dr (3.125kg), caught by J A Garlick on a wreck off the south Devon coast, Torquay, Devon, in 1977. It is listed by the British Record Fish Committee. The official weight-based boat records were frozen in June 2024, and newer boat claims are by length only. For black bream the qualifying length is 50cm.

Care and rules

The UK minimum size is 23cm. Sussex IFCA enforces a 230mm minimum and has a byelaw protecting juvenile black bream and bass. Measure any fish you plan to keep and return the small ones. Rules change: check the current rules before you fish.

Did you know?

The official boat record black bream, 6lb 14oz 4dr, was taken on a wreck off Torquay in 1977. Today a boat claim needs a fish of at least 50cm in length to qualify.

Sources: British Sea Fishing: Bream species; Sussex IFCA: Species; Kestrel Warrior: Sea fishing seasons Sussex; Prime Angling: West Sussex report 27 Jul 2025; Prime Angling: West Sussex report 13 Apr 2025; BRFC sea fish listings June 2026. The full guide, with links to every source: kestrelwarrior6.co.uk/sea-fish-guide/black-bream/