RARER VISITORS AND OTHERS

Ocean sunfish

Mola mola

Caught off the Sussex coast | Confirmed record



Ocean sunfish (*Mola mola*). Picture: U.S. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, Public domain, via Wikimedia Commons: commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Mola_mola.jpg.

IN SHORT

The ocean sunfish is one of the strangest things you can see from a boat. Two sunfish were seen in the shipping lanes off Brighton in July 2026, by charter skipper Kurt Lander of Yellowfin while drifting a wreck for bass and bream. British boat record: confirmed.

Key facts

IDENTIFY IT
A huge flat disc of a fish that looks like a head with no tail. Tall dorsal and anal fins, small mouth. Often seen basking at the surface.

SIZE
Mature fish are usually several hundred pounds (British Sea Fishing). Wikipedia gives adults of 247 to 1,000 kg and about 1.8 m long.

HABITAT
Open water. Feeds mainly on jellyfish and is often seen basking at the surface.

OFF SUSSEX
A July 2026 report has two sunfish seen over a weekend in the shipping lanes off Brighton. No wider Sussex season is stated.

AROUND BRITAIN
Summer: it visits UK seas in the summer months (Wildlife Trusts); seen more often off southern England as the sea warms (British Sea Fishing).

METHODS
A sighting rather than a catch. The sources give no angling method.

GROUP
Rarer visitors and others

COME FISHING WITH US

Fish with Kestrel Warrior from Brighton Marina

The ocean sunfish has been recorded off the Sussex coast, but none of our trips sets out to catch it. Come and see what is biting on one of our eight trips (Prices 2027):

- **Sightseeing tour** 1 hour, £20 pp
- **Squid and cuttlefish trip** 3 hours, £55 pp
- **Sea fishing trip at anchor, multiple species** 8 hours, £75 pp
- **Wreck fishing at anchor** 10 hours, £110 pp
- **Mackerel trip** 90 minutes, £27 pp
- **Sea fishing trip, multiple species** 4 hours, £55 pp
- **Flatfish drift trip** 8 hours, £90 pp
- **Shark fishing trip** 10 hours, £150 pp

Free tuition and free gutting and filleting of your catch. Rod hire £10 per person; fishing tackle is included on the shark trip.

Scan to book

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

About the ocean sunfish

The ocean sunfish is one of the strangest things you can see from a boat. It is a huge flat disc of a fish that looks like a head with no tail, with tall dorsal and anal fins and a small mouth. It is often seen basking at the surface in open water. Mature fish are usually several hundred pounds, according to British Sea Fishing, and Wikipedia gives adults of 247 to 1,000 kg and about 1.8 m long. It feeds mainly on jellyfish. In Britain it is a summer visitor, according to the Wildlife Trusts, and British Sea Fishing says it is seen more often off southern England as the sea warms. So on a boat trip, a sunfish is a sighting rather than a catch, and the sources give no angling method. It is listed as Vulnerable by the IUCN and is not commercially caught in Europe. If you do see one lying on the surface, leave it alone and enjoy the view. The British boat-caught record stands at 108 lb, from off Saundersfoot in 1976.

On the boat

A sunfish is a sighting rather than a catch, and the sources give no angling method. It is a summer visitor to UK seas, often seen basking at the surface in open water. A July 2026 report has two seen over a weekend in the shipping lanes off Brighton. No wider Sussex season is stated.

British boat-caught record

Confirmed record

Weight	108 lb (48.986 kg)
Where	off Saundersfoot, Wales
When	1976
Angler	T F Sisson

Confirmed British boat-caught record: T F Sisson caught an ocean sunfish of 108 lb (48.986 kg) off Saundersfoot, Wales, in 1976. That is the entry on the official British Record Fish Committee list. It gives the year only. The official weight-based boat records were frozen in June 2024, and newer claims are by length only.

Care and rules

The ocean sunfish is listed as Vulnerable by the IUCN and is not commercially caught in Europe. If you see one, leave it alone. Our record gives no landing size or eating advice. Rules change: check the current rules before you fish.

Did you know?

Ocean sunfish feed mainly on jellyfish, and are often seen basking at the surface. Wikipedia gives adults as 247 to 1,000 kg and about 1.8 m long.

Sources: British Sea Fishing: sunfish; Wikipedia: ocean sunfish; The Wildlife Trusts: sunfish; Discover Wildlife: sunfish off Sussex; BRFC sea fish records, June 2026. The full guide, with links to every source: kestrelwarrior6.co.uk/sea-fish-guide/ocean-sunfish/