Some sizes may differ but these are the average sizes of fish at maturity.

If you catch, sell or eat fish smaller than these lengths shown here, they are immature. Catching fish younger than their "mature size" is referred to as recruitment overfishing. If fish are continuously caught smaller than this, they will not be able to breed and leave young fishes for next year's catch. Continuous catching of juvenile fishes will leave your stocks of fishes younger, less diverse and lead to lower incomes for fisherfolks and much higher prices in the market.

How to determine if the fish in your municipality is mature or juvenile:

1. Calculate the length of the fish from the tip of its head to the tip of its tail.
2. Compare this length to the maturity length of the species shown.
3. If the fish is smaller than the maturity length, it is considered immature.

Legend:
( ) English/Common name
( ) Local name

For further details on maturity in fishes and fishery laws, please contact your nearest DA-BFAR office.

Reference:
This "fish ruler" can be used to do a "quick assessment" of your priority fisheries. Take the ruler and place on top of a piece of plywood or other hard material. Cover with plastic or have it laminated, then visit the fish market and take samples of different fish being sold. Through this you will be able to assess how mature/immature the fishes being sold are. If more than 20% (approximately) of your fish are "immature", it is a good indicator that your fishing resources are in a state of "recruitment overfishing" and there may be problems ahead that will need resolving. (N.B. ideally you would assess the fishery regularly throughout the whole year, as seasons change). Better law enforcement, closed seasons, a comprehensive CRM code, municipal fishing licensing system and marine sanctuaries are some of the ways to help alleviate overfishing.