Fish will shrink in size by 20% to 30% if ocean temperatures continue to climb due to climate change, finds a study published last week by the University of British Columbia in Canada.

As fish grow into adulthood and their bodies become larger their demand for oxygen increases, explains Daniel Pauly, the study’s lead author and a principal investigator of the Sea Around Us at the Institute for the Ocean and Fisheries. However, the surface area of the gills — where oxygen is obtained — does not grow at the same pace as the rest of the body.
Warmer waters will increase fish’s need for oxygen but climate change will result in less oxygen in the oceans. “This means that gills have less oxygen to supply to a body that already grows faster than them.”

Some species may be more affected than others, the study advises. Tuna are fast moving and require more energy and oxygen, so they may shrink even more when temperatures increase.

See the study here.