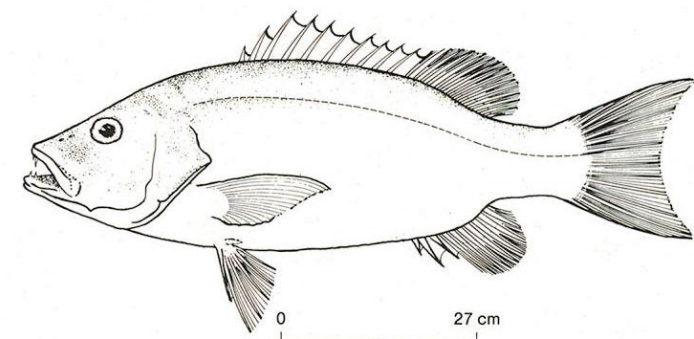


Gray snapper

Lutjanus griseus

Pargo prieto



Description

Range: The gray snapper, a bony fish of the family Lutjanidae, is found in the western Atlantic from New England to southeastern Brazil and throughout the shelf waters of the Gulf of Mexico. The gray snapper is particularly abundant off south and southwest Florida.

Habitat: This snapper inhabits waters to depths of approximately 130 meters, and is considered to be among the more common snappers inshore. Adults are demersal and midwater fish, found around mangroves, sandy grassbeds, and coral reefs and over sandy, muddy, and rocky bottoms in rocky areas. Juveniles inhabit estuaries, mangrove areas and the lower reaches of coastal rivers.

Feeding and Behavior: A predator, the gray snapper feeds on fish and crustaceans found in open areas of reef tops. Juveniles are primarily diurnal feeders, with crustaceans representing a large portion of their diet. Adults are nocturnal feeders and tend to eat more fish than crustaceans. During the day, adults form compact schools over reefs whereas juveniles form loose aggregations. Both will congregate around docks where refuse and fish scraps are discarded.

Reproduction: Spawning occurs throughout adult areas during the summer months from June to August. Nursery areas are in estuaries, as is the case for other snappers. An important nursery area is in the south Florida mangroves.

Movement: In the Florida Keys, adult gray snapper move offshore to spawn in the summer and then return inshore.

Fisheries: The gray snapper is an important component of the south Florida snapper/ grouper fishery. It is marketed mostly fresh and the flesh is considered excellent. This species is a highly esteemed sport fish harvested along the east Florida coast and the Keys.

References: Benson, N.G., ed., 1982; Fischer, W., ed., 1978; Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council, 1980b; Roe, R.B., 1976; Starck, W.A. II, and R.E. Schroeder, 1971.

- Adult Area (Year-round)
- Major Adult Area (Year-round)
- Nursery Area (Year-round)
- Commercial Fishing Ground (Year-round)
- Recreational Fishing Ground (Year-round)

Spawning, from June to August, probably occurs offshore throughout adult areas. Major adult area shown is the only one that has been positively identified. Others probably exist in the Gulf, particularly offshore of nursery areas containing mangrove concentrations, as in south Florida.

References

Rivas, L.R., pers. comm.