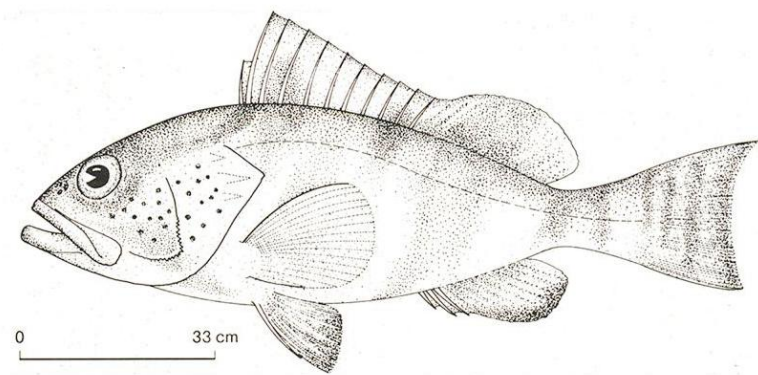


Red grouper

Epinephelus morio
Mero americano



Description

Range: The red grouper, a bony fish of the family Serranidae, is found in ocean waters along the western Atlantic coast from Massachusetts to Brazil and throughout the Gulf of Mexico. The species is particularly abundant off the west Florida and Yucatan coasts.

Habitat: A demersal fish, the red grouper favors sublittoral habitats with rock outcroppings, reefs, and wrecks. This grouper occurs at depths from 3 to about 200 meters, preferring 30 to 120 meter depths.

Feeding and Behavior: The red grouper feeds on fishes, crustaceans, and molluscs found at or near the bottom.

Reproduction: On the Florida Banks, spawning occurs at depths of approximately 25 to 90 meters during the months of April and May. Juveniles favor grass beds, rock formations, and shallow reef areas as nursery areas.

Movement: Juveniles remain in nursery areas until mature before venturing into deeper ocean waters.

Fisheries: Commercially caught throughout its range, the red grouper is one of the most important species of the grouper fishery, both in U.S. and Mexican waters. The red grouper is considered a valuable sport fish throughout its range.

References: Baughman, J.L., 1943; Bullis, H.R., Jr., and A.C. Jones, eds., 1976; Fischer, W., ed., 1978; Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council, 1980b; Moe, M.A., Jr., 1969.

- Adult Area (Year-round)
- Spawning Area (April to May)
- Occurrence
- Commercial Fishing Ground (Year-round)
- Major Commercial Fishing Ground (Year-round)

Spawning area shown is one of several in Gulf, but is the only one that has been positively identified. Adult area is also year-round nursery area.

References

Heald, E.J., 1970; Hildebrand, H.H., pers. comm.; Huntsman, G.R., pers. comm.; Roe, R.B., 1976.

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