

Family Serranidae (groupers)

Groupers are a highly-exploited family of fishes taken in sport, artisanal, and commercial fisheries. The larger species are often territorial (with high site fidelity), grow slowly to maturity over several years, and congregate in large offshore spawning aggregations. These behavioral and life-history characteristics, as well as the market for their meat, make them especially vulnerable to overfishing. Groupers are present in various habitats, including coral reefs, estuaries, and rocky reefs of the tropical and subtropical regions of the world. Juveniles generally inhabit seagrass beds. Many species are top-predators, consuming other fishes, crustaceans (e.g., crabs, shrimps), and squids. From Heemstra and Randall (1993).