



MLA-115-Goliath Grouper Regulations

Join WFCRC

The World Federation for Coral Reef Conservation
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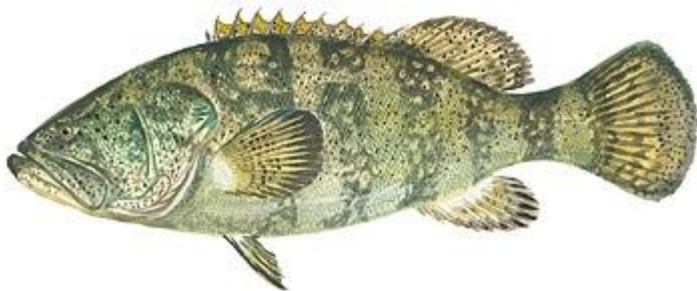
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Conserving and managing America's fisheries from three to 200 nautical miles off the coasts of North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia and Florida.

Goliath Grouper Regulations

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Goliath Grouper

Epinephelus itajara

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Managed by:

SAFMC

Physical description:

The largest of the groupers, weighing up to 750 pounds. Head and fins covered with small black spots; irregular dark vertical bars present on the sides of body; pectoral and caudal fin rounded; first dorsal fin shorter than and not separated from second dorsal; adults huge, up to 800 pounds; eyes small.

Biological description:

Found nearshore around docks, in deep holes, and on ledges; young often occur in estuaries, especially around oyster bars; more abundant in southern Florida than in northern waters. Spawns over summer months; lifespan of 30 to 50 years; feeds on crustaceans and fish. **CLOSED TO HARVEST OR POSSESSION IN THE SOUTH ATLANTIC EEZ (FEDERAL WATERS) SINCE 1990.**

Note: Goliath grouper must be released by cutting the line and NOT removed from the water. The Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission has provided additional guidelines on release techniques for Goliath grouper.

South Atlantic Federal Regulations

CLOSED TO HARVEST OR POSSESSION IN THE SOUTH ATLANTIC EEZ (FEDERAL WATERS) SINCE 1990.

Note: Goliath grouper and Nassau grouper must be released by cutting the line and NOT removed from the water. The Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission has provided additional guidelines on release techniques for Goliath grouper. [Click here](#) to download a PDF version of the guidelines.

Commercial:

- **Size Limit:** Closed to possession or harvest
- **Trip Limit:** Closed to possession or harvest

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- **Gear Requirements:** Allowable gear includes vertical hook-and-line, including hand line and bandit gear, and spearfishing gear without rebreathers.
 - **Dehooking Tool Requirement:** Recreational and commercial fishermen are required to use dehooking tools when fishing for snapper grouper species.
 - At least one dehooking device is required and must be used as needed to remove hooks embedded in South Atlantic snapper-grouper with minimum damage.
 - The hook removal device must be constructed to allow the hook to be secured and the barb shielded without re-engaging during the removal process.
 - The dehooking end must be blunt, and all edges rounded. The device must be of a size appropriate to secure the range of hook sizes and styles used in the South Atlantic snapper-grouper fishery.
 - **Descending Device Requirement:**
 - **Requirement:** A descending device is required to be on board and readily available for use on all vessels fishing for or possessing snapper-grouper species;
 - **Definition of a Descending Device:** an instrument to which is attached a minimum of a 16 ounce weight and a length of line that will release the fish at the depth from which the fish was caught or a minimum of 60 feet.
 - The descending device attaches to the fish's mouth or is a container that will hold the fish. The device **MUST** be capable of releasing the fish automatically, by the actions of the operator of the device, or by allowing the fish to escape on its own.
 - Since minimizing surface time is critical to increasing survival, descending devices shall be readily available for use while engaged in fishing.
 - **Hook Requirements:** All hooks, regardless of type, must be constructed of non-stainless steel.
 - **North of 28° North Latitude:**
 - **The use of *Non-offset, non-stainless steel circle hooks*** is required when fishing for snapper-grouper species with hook-and-line gear and natural baits north of 28° north latitude.
 - A circle hook is defined as a fishing hook designed and manufactured so that the point is turned perpendicularly back to the shank to form a generally circular, or oval, shape.
 - **South of 28° North Latitude:**
 - **The use of non-stainless steel hooks** when fishing for snapper-grouper species with hook-and-line gear and natural baits south of 28° north latitude.

[Click here for helpful resources, including:](#)

-
- **best fishing practices tips**
- **information on hook types**
- **how-to videos**

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Recreational:

- **Size Limit:** Closed to possession or harvest
- **Trip Limit:** Closed to possession or harvest
- **Gear Requirements:** Allowable gear includes vertical hook-and-line, including hand line and bandit gear, and spearfishing gear without rebreathers.
 - **Dehooking Tool Requirement:** Recreational and commercial fishermen are required to use dehooking tools when fishing for snapper grouper species.
 - At least one dehooking device is required and must be used as needed to remove hooks embedded in South Atlantic snapper-grouper with minimum damage.
 - The hook removal device must be constructed to allow the hook to be secured and the barb shielded without re-engaging during the removal process.
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The only thing necessary for the triumph of evil is that good men do nothing”....Edmund Burke

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