Stock Status - **Viable** - According to the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council (SAFMC), the stock is recovered. The spawning stock ratio from the 2001 assessment was 30%. The assessment is currently undergoing peer review. In 1995, only 5.5% of the fish captured were male, versus 19.6% from 1976-1982. Also called black grouper or gray grouper.

**Average Commercial Landings and Value 1996-2005** - 231,604 lbs./$580,765

**2005 Commercial Landings and Value** – 251,645 lbs./$697,713


**Average Number of Award Citations 1996-2005/2005 only** - Not recorded by species.

**Status of Fisheries Management Plan (FMP)** - In North Carolina, gag is currently included in the Interjurisdictional FMP, which defers to SAFMC Snapper Grouper FMP compliance requirements, which was initially approved in 1983. Amendment 4, effective in 1992, established a 20-inch Total Length (TL) minimum size; Amendment 9, effective 1999, increased the minimum size to 24 inches TL, created a 2-fish recreational bag and a March-April closure (bag limit only, no sale).

**Data and Research Needs** - Develop juvenile index, assess release mortality values, conduct population assessment, expand age and growth studies, determine migration patterns.

**Current Regulations (2006)** - State and federal: 24 inches TL

**Harvest season** - Year round, except no more than 2-fish per person can be caught in March and April by recreational and commercial fishermen

**Size and Age at Maturity** - First mature as females at 5 years, possibly 4 years, when fish are greater than 26 inches TL. Transformation to the male generally occurs around 10 years and greater than 39 inches TL.

**Historical and Current Maximum Age** - 22 years/30 years

**Juvenile Abundance Index** - None available

**Habits/Habitats** - Large juveniles and adults occur on hard or “live” bottom on the outer continental shelf. Larval gag are estuarine dependent. Spawning occurs offshore and pelagic larvae are carried into estuaries where they reside in sea grass beds or oyster rocks. The juveniles emigrate in the fall to nearshore reefs.

For more information, see [DMF Species Leads page](#)