

GAG GROUPER

(06/02 ARCHIVE - NCDMF)

Stock status--Recovering. According to the South Atlantic Fisheries Management Council (SAFMC), the spawning stock ratio from the 2001 assessment is 30% and the gag is considered to be recovering. In 1995 only 5.5% of the fish captured were males versus 19.6% from 1976-1982. Also called black grouper or gray grouper.

Average Commercial Landings and Value 1992-2001--250,844 lb,\$575,254

2001 Commercial Landings and Value--177,030 lb,\$444,388

Average Recreational Landings 1992-2001--45,522 lb **2001** 32,721 lb

Average Number of Award Citations 1992-2001/2001 only--Not recorded by species.

Status of Fisheries Management Plan--Managed under the SAFMC Snapper Grouper Fishery Management Plan of 1983. Amendment 4, effective Jan 1992, established a 20 inches TL minimum size; Amendment 9, effective Feb 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 Minimum Size Limits--State and Federal: 24 inches TL.

Harvest season--Year round except that no more than the 2 fish per person bag limit can be caught in March and April (both recreational and commercial fishermen).

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

Historical and Current Maximum Age--22 years.

Juvenile Abundance Indices --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](#)