



Photo Courtesy of Chad Macfie

## **Nassau Grouper**

*Epinephelus striatus*

**Range:** The Nassau Grouper inhabits coral reefs and seagrass beds in shallow waters less than 100ft (30m) in depth. Juveniles are found closer inshore within seagrass beds which act as protective nursery habitat. In the western Atlantic, the Nassau Grouper ranges from Bermuda to Florida and the Bahamas, as well as the Caribbean Sea south to Brazil.

**Similar Species:** The Black Grouper is similar in appearance to the Nassau Grouper. However, the Nassau Grouper is distinguished from the Black Grouper by the black saddle on its caudal peduncle region.



Black Saddle of Nassau Grouper

**Identification:** The Nassau Grouper is a large, oblong fish with coarse, spiny fins. Members of this species are usually tan or gray with wide, irregular dark brown stripes running from the dorsal to ventral surface on each side of the body. There exists some variation in coloration pattern among individuals, as some may have irregular pale spots on the head and body. The Nassau Grouper also exhibits distinguishing black spots around the eyes and a black saddle on the caudal peduncle region. The caudal fin is round in juveniles and convex in adults.

**Note:** When threatened, the Nassau Grouper will camouflage itself in order to blend in with the surrounding rocks and corals, making it more difficult for predators to spot. Nassau Grouper is