



Photo Courtesy of Chad MacFie

## Red Grouper

*Epinephelus morio*

**Range:** The Red Grouper ranges from New England south through Bermuda, Florida, the Gulf of Mexico, the Bahamas and the Caribbean, to southeastern Brazil. Populations of this species occurring north of the Carolinas are believed to be due to larval transport in the Gulf Stream rather than from immigration of adults. Adult Red Groupers inhabit offshore hardbottom habitats at depths of 16.5 to 984ft (5 to 300m), while juveniles seek refuge in shallow reef areas and seagrasses near shore.

**Similar Species:** When resting, the Red Grouper's coloration becomes more banded in appearance, resembling the Nassau Grouper (*Epinephelus striatus*). However, the Red Grouper can be easily distinguished from Nassau Grouper by the absence of a black saddle. (Note: See Nassau Grouper Identification Page)

**Identification:** The Red Grouper exhibits a deep brownish-red coloration with small black dots on the operculum and occasional white spots on its sides. Their dorsal fin is comprised of a sloped, straight line of spines interconnected by a thin membrane. The anal, dorsal, and caudal fins have dark margins.

**Note:** Like most groupers, the Red Grouper is a protogynous hermaphrodite, occurring as a female during the first part of life and transforming to a male later on.