



# Yellowfin Grouper (*Mycteroperca venenosa*)

## Regional Status and Catch Statistics

### *Bermuda & the Caribbean region*

*Mycteroperca venenosa* is one of the more important commercial fishes in Bermuda and one of the most abundant groupers in the Caribbean (including U.S. Caribbean) area; it is also a desirable food fish, where it is not ciguatoxic (Heemstra and Randall 1993).

Graph showing commercial fishery landings of *M. venenosa* in Bermuda shows a sudden decrease of landings of about 80 % (from about 4.5t yr<sup>-1</sup> to about 0.9t yr<sup>-1</sup>) from 1975 to 1981. The landings then gradually increase to about 2.5t yr<sup>-1</sup> in 1987; landings are no more than 5t yr<sup>-1</sup> with an average of about 2.5t yr<sup>-1</sup> from Bermuda (Luckhurst 1996). Recent data from Bermuda are lacking.

### *The U.S. and territories*

Landings of *M. venenosa* from all states and territories in the U.S. from 1984 to 2001 (metric tons) (National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration 2003) are as shown in Table 1 below.

**Table 1.** The landings of *M. venenosa* in the U.S. from 1984 to 2001 (mostly from the U.S. Caribbean).

Year	1984	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992
Landings (metric tons)	?	?	195.9	15.3	11.5	64.5	19.6	4	1.9
Year	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001
Landings (metric tons)	1.8	3.1	4.5	6.5	0.8	0.5	2.5	2.9	1.1

The percentage of the landings from 1990 to 2001 shows a 94% decline in 11 years but with more stability in the 1990s. This implies that the population of *M. venenosa* in waters around the U.S. may be facing problems.

### *Cuba, Belize and Mexico*

Luckhurst (2003) indicates that the landings of *M. venenosa* from the six spawning sites in Cuba show declines, two in Belize are lightly exploited and the one in Mexico is

heavily exploited. Similar studies by Claro and Lindeman (2003) mention the aggregation status of *M. venenosa* spawning sites in Cuba: one is suggested to have a slight decline and the other seven sites are suggested to show a decline in aggregation status. Exact data on exploitation of spawning aggregation are lacking. Tuz-Sulub *et al.* (2003) presented the first evidence on the formation of aggregations for *M. venenosa* from a spawning site in Mexico (Campeche Bank). The catch for groupers, done during five days of fishing in February 2001 at this spawning site, reached a total of 2.4 metric tons.