



# Scamp Fact Sheet



Image courtesy of Duane Raver

## Basic Biology

Latin name: *Mycteroperca phenax*

Range: The western Atlantic from North Carolina to Key West, in the Gulf of Mexico and the southern portion of the Caribbean Sea

Habitat: Juveniles often use estuaries as nursery habitat while adults are usually found over hard bottom habitat on the continental shelf at depths ranging from 100-300 feet

Diet: Crab, fish and shrimp

Age and growth: Scamp live 30 years, reach lengths of 42 inches and weights of 30 lbs and are the smallest of the shallow water groupers

## Sustainability

- The grouper fishery is one of the most important in the southeast U.S. It is a multispecies fishery, where many species are caught with the same gear (vertical hook and line) in the same area.
- The grouper fishery is managed by the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council under the Snapper Grouper Fishery Management Plan.
- Current regulations include a limited entry fishery where a limited number of commercial fishing permits are available, a seasonal closure during March and April to reduce the commercial catch and minimum size limits.
- These regulations have helped some stocks to recover; the most recent stock assessments show that scamp is not overfished or undergoing overfishing.
- Regulations are under consideration that would establish a Total Allowable Catch (TAC) and a longer seasonal closure (January through April) for the commercial grouper fishery in the southeast. A TAC will greatly enhance the sustainability of the grouper populations.

## Info for Chefs

- Scamp comprises 16% of the overall grouper catch in the southeastern U.S. Gag comprises 46% of the commercial catch, red grouper comprises 18% and black grouper comprises only 12% (other less common species comprise the remainder).

## Info for Servers

- Scamp, like many snappers and groupers, are protogynous hermaphrodites, changing sex from female to male with increased size and age. Females begin to reach sexual maturity around age one and at a length of just over 12 inches. The sexual transition occurs after females reach sexual maturity and is spread across a wide range of size and age, sometimes dependent upon the ratio of sexes in the population (an absence of large males can stimulate earlier transition in females.) Most fish less than 24 inches in length are female.