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Grouper/Wrasse Species Survival Group formed

I am pleased to announce the formation of a new Specialist Group under the Species Survival Commission (SSC) of the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) which specialises in groupers (Serranidae) and wrasses (Labridae). The IUCN SSC is a science-based network of experts located around the world whose mission it is 'to conserve biological diversity by developing and executing programmes to study, save, restore and manage wisely species and their habitats'.

Specialist groups carry out the main work of the SSC and are organised by species or group of species, by region, and/or by conservation theme or discipline across a wide range of plants and terrestrial and aquatic animals; their members are experts in their respective fields. They are invited and have, as part of their responsibility, to assess the conservation status of their particular species or group of animals. Assessments are carried out according to internationally accepted categories

and criteria established by IUCN. For those species determined to be under some level of threat, possible restorative action is identified with a view to maintaining biodiversity and healthy populations.

The grouper/wrasse group was formed in 1999 because of growing concerns over the status of several larger groupers and wrasses, which appear to be particularly vulnerable to overharvesting. Two species currently in the live reef fish trade are listed as 'Vulnerable' under IUCN criteria: these are the Humphead (Napoleon or Maori) wrasse, *Cheilinus undulatus*, and the Giant grouper, *Epinephelus lanceolatus*. About 16 other grouper species in commercial fisheries worldwide were also included in the 1996 IUCN Red List of Threatened Animals. For further information on this group, please contact me at: yjsadovy@hkusua.hku.hk

Yvonne Sadovy, Specialist Group Chair

