

Did You See the Size of That Fish??

In Biscayne Bay, there are fish that can reach up to 8 feet in length, weigh nearly 800 pounds, and live over 35 years! The Goliath Grouper (also known as the Jewfish) is the largest species of grouper. The goliath grouper (*Epinephelus itajara*) is a member of the sea bass family. Goliath groupers are found around reefs, wrecks, and pilings, often seen peeking out from enclosed spaces. They have blackish-brown spots on their head and fins and diffuse, dark vertical bands on the sides of their body. Their large size allows them to feast largely

on crustaceans such as lobsters, crabs, and shrimp, as well as fish. Goliath groupers literally inhale their prey, swallowing it whole. Goliath groupers can produce a very loud underwater sound called "booming".

This sound can be heard for great distances and is used during mating or if it is disturbed. Due to overfishing, mostly by spearfishing, not many goliath groupers remain in Florida's coastal waters. Therefore, the goliath grouper has been protected by Federal law since 1990.

