

Mr. Grouper

By Captain Dave

Grouper, Grouper, Grouper.....big ones, little ones, red ones, snowy ones, black ones, I love them all.

There is not IMHO (In My Humble Opinion) a better eating fish in the ocean. There are many types of grouper in the world's oceans but they all share one common trait. They hit like freight trains and pull like hell. The entire secret to catching groupers lies in the first few seconds after hook up. So let's take a look at Mr. Grouper and see what it takes to put his butt in the boat.

Where

First we have to find them. Groupers are structure fish. They live in ledges, wrecks and live bottom. They like to hide in small cracks and holes in the side of structure out of the current. Groupers are pretty heavily fished so I like the small spots that everyone else overlooks. They like to stay out of the current, so I look at the structure that I am fishing and figure out what side is the down current side and that is where the fish are going to be hiding. They are ambush predators. Meaning they lie in wait and then lunge at the victim and inhale the meal usually whole. There is a lot of good info in this paragraph, so I would recommend that you go back and read it again and think about what I have told you.

With What

I like large straight hooks like this

on a double hook drooper rig tied out of high test mono, here is a link for a [standard bottom rig](#). I like to use a combination of squid, cigar minnows, whole live or cut bait. They all work.

Let's talk a little theory here. I like to use the top hook to bring in all the little fish to feed. So I load up the top hook with squid pieces. 3,4,5 as many as I can fit on that top hook. On the bottom hook I like to put the Grouper bait. A whole squid works, a whole squid with a cigar minnow inside works, (Called a Chicken Leg), a large slab of cut bait works. There is another way that rules in the grouper bait world. It is Mr. Grouper's most favorite snack. The Vermillion Snapper.

Put him down whole, put him down slabbed, put him down with a split tail but put him down on the hook. Mr. Grouper loves this fish. I like to butterfly him (No head, no backbone) hook both slabs through the back (with the tail holding him together) Mr. Grouper will put the UGLY on a Vermillion Snapper.

How to Put Him in the Boat

Ok, so we are in a good spot, we have good bait and we know that Mr. Grouper is in the neighborhood. Drop it to the bottom, and wait. Let the peckers do their thing. Ignore them. Let them eat and tug all they want. **DO NOT JERK THE LINE EVERY TIME YOU FEEL A FISH!** What will happen is all the little fish come to feed. Mr. Grouper sees and feels all the commotion. He will swim over to see what is going on. All the little fish scatter and Mr. Grouper (Hopefully) sees that pretty bait hanging there and helps himself to the free meal. When he hits the line you have about a second to turn him or he will be back in the rocks before you

know it. When he hits (and he hits like a freight train) raise the stick and reel with everything you have. It has to be a fluid motion of raising the stick and reeling at the same time, this is what puts the fish in the boat. You have to get him away from the rocks. It takes a strong back and a hard pull to do it but boy is it fun.

Now THIS is a GROUPEr!

Tight Lines and Slight Seas

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