

Groupe d'Etude du Mérrou

Perpignan, 5th December 2020

Mrs. Gila GAMLIEL
The Minister of Environment
Israel

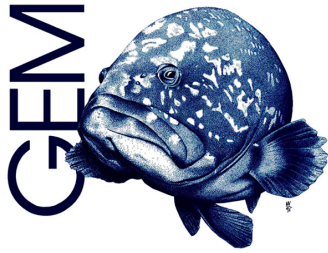
Re: Groupe d'Etude du Merou (GEM) supports declaration of Dusky grouper and Goldblotch grouper as protected species in Israel

Dear Madam,

It has come to our attention that your government is considering to declare two groupers, the Dusky grouper (*Epinephelus marginatus*) and the goldblotch grouper (*Epinephelus costae*), as protected species.

The GEM fully supports the declaration to protect the Dusky grouper and the Goldblotch grouper in Israel, as this measure is in line with current protection measures in France of these species and the current scientific knowledge on their population and conservation status, and one that should confer effective protection.

Maintaining marine biodiversity and the good ecological status of marine ecosystems in Member Countries of the European Union is a priority for the years to come. Protection and ecological restoration through the establishment of Marine Protected Areas or moratoriums are effective tools which have shown very encouraging results. This is of course the case for the dusky grouper and goldblotch grouper which benefits from a fishing moratorium on all French Mediterranean waters. This fishing moratorium established in 1993 and valid until 2023, has allowed an increase in populations in several emblematic sites on our coasts. But this work can only be successful if all the countries around the Mediterranean coordinate their actions for better synergy and therefore more ambitious results.



Groupe d'Étude du Mérrou

The Mediterranean is one of the biodiversity hot spots, but it is also the site of many anthropogenic pressures. We therefore encourage all initiatives that could strengthen positive action on biodiversity in the Mediterranean. The work undertaken by the Israeli authorities to protect these species is important and we support it.

The GEM will be happy to interact with local Israeli authorities and NGOs to benefit from the feedback from France and to see what could be transposed to the Israeli coasts. We hope you can achieve the ambitious goals you have set for yourself and join France as leaders in groupers conservation around the Mediterranean Sea.

We hereby declare on our full support of the declaration of the dusky grouper and the goldblotch grouper as protected species in Israel, and believes that this measure will give substantial benefits to the Israeli public in the medium to longer term, provide economic and social benefits to fishermen and recreation operators, and push forward regional protection of these species.

Sincerely yours,

Dr. Philippe LENFANT

President of GEM

Professor in Marine Ecology
University of Perpignan