



Goliath Grouper • Study Guide

The Goliath Grouper is one of the largest bony fish in the world, and this made it the target of intense fishing efforts for many years. After nearly becoming extinct, the fish was afforded legal protection enacted in 1990. Twenty years later, the protection is finally starting to pay off. Jonathan joins famous National Geographic photographer David Doubilet as he visits a shipwreck in Florida where Goliath Groupers gather to spawn every year, and meets dozens of these massive animals!

Objectives

1. Introduces viewers to the Goliath Grouper.
2. Illustrates the effectiveness of marine conservation policies.

Questions for before watching the program

1. What is a “bony fish”? (Need a hint? Google *osteichthyes*). Name some large bony fish.
2. Why might a very large fish be subject to excessive fishing practices?
3. What happens when a particular species is hunted excessively?
4. What can be done to help a species recover from overfishing?

Discussion for after watching the program

1. Why were Goliath Groupers fished nearly to extinction?
2. What was done to protect the Goliath Grouper and how long did it take for the protection to show noticeable results?
3. Why do the Goliath Groupers seem to like to aggregate near shipwrecks in Florida?
4. Why are all those “Cigar minnows” hanging around the Groupers? (FYI, although the locals call them Cigar minnows, they are technically Round Scad, *Decapterus punctatus*.)
5. Was it a coincidence that a Manta ray showed up near the Goliath Grouper? What was it probably doing?
6. Why might the phase of the moon be important to a spawning fish? (*Hint: what happens to the tides as a function of the moon’s phase?*)