

Albert Idu, K. V. Akhilesh, V.V. Singh

Mumbai Research Centre of ICAR- Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute, Mumbai

e-mail: albert.idu@gmail.com

Grouper fishery of Maharashtra is dominated by *Epinephelus diacanthus* with occasional landing of *E. bleekeri*, *E. malabaricus*, *E. coioides*, *E. areolatus*, *E. polylepis*, *E. morrhua*, *E. latifasciatus*, *E. epistictus*, *E. radiatus* and *Cephalopholis sonnerati*. During the routine fishery survey at Sassoon Dock on 9th October 2016 a single specimen of Potato grouper *Epinephelus tukula* measuring 35 cm TL (1.7 kg) was observed in the landings of a trawler operated at a depth of 40 off Ratnagiri. Reports of *E. tukula* is rare from Indian coast and other reports are from Lakshadweep, Vizhinjam (Kerala), Grand Island (Goa), Muttom, Enayam

(Tamil Nadu) coasts (Sluka and Lazarus, 2010 *Marine Biodiversity Records* 3:1-3). Potato grouper, is a widely distributed Indo-Pacific species, but sparsely known in their distribution range from Red Sea to Kenya and Australia. The name refers to the potato-shaped dark blotches on the body. A reef-associated species, it can grow to maximum size of 200 cm and weigh around 110 kg. Though reported as a rare and uncommon species, it is listed as “Least Concern” in the IUCN red list category. The distinctive colour pattern and blotches makes *E. tukula* easy to identify from other species of groupers.



Potato grouper *Epinephelus tukula*



Cloudy grouper, *Epinephelus erythrurus*

On 28.12.2016, a single specimen of Cloudy grouper, *Epinephelus erythrurus* was collected from the by-catch of a trawler operated off Maharashtra coast. Olive brown coloured with irregular pale blotches, the specimen measured 268 mm TL and 303 g weight. A rare Indo-West Pacific grouper

species, it is listed as “Data Deficient” in the IUCN red list category. It occurs in muddy/sandy bottoms with a geographical distribution range from Pakistan to Borneo (Heemstra and Randall, 1993 *FAO Species Catalogue Vol. 16. Groupers of the world*).