

**What is SCRFA and how
can it help?**

The Society for the Conservation of Reef Fish Aggregations (SCRFA) works to foster and facilitate the conservation and management of reef fish spawning aggregations, through production of educational materials, and by raising awareness and promoting good science.

For more information contact scrfa@hku.hk, or refer to www.scrfa.org



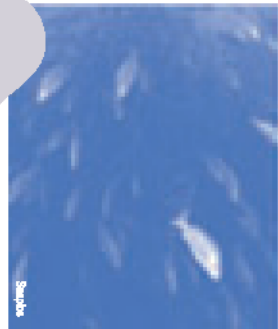
SCRFA
SOCIETY FOR THE CONSERVATION
OF REEF FISH AGGREGATIONS



Reef fish
spawning
aggregations...
seed the future

15% are gone...
60% are in
decline globally

why?



What are spawning aggregations?

Over 100 coral reef fish species aggregate to spawn, whereby males and females gather, briefly, in groups during the reproductive season to release sperm and eggs. Such aggregations can be very big, involving hundreds or thousands of individuals, or may only involve small groups of fish. What they all have in common is that they are temporary, only form for reproduction and typically occur at the same times and places each year. They are among the most dramatic, and remarkable, biological phenomena that occur around coral reefs, globally.

... why... what...

Why are spawning aggregations important for fish and fisheries?

Many species that aggregate to spawn are important for subsistence or commercial activities. Examples include groupers (Serranidae), snappers (Lutjanidae), emperors (Lethrinidae), wrasses (Labridae), and rabbitfishes (Siganidae). Since persistence of these fisheries depends on the ability of target species to reproduce, and since spawning aggregations are important for reproduction, maintaining healthy aggregations is part of ensuring that the fishery continues to provide food and livelihoods to coastal communities in the tropics.

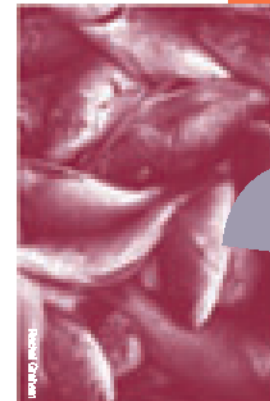
why...

Why is there concern about spawning aggregations?

Many spawning aggregations typically form, consistently and predictably, at the same places and times each year. This makes them easy to find or return to. Given the growing pressures on reef fish fisheries, especially for higher value 'luxury markets' and international trade, spawning aggregations represent a particularly attractive fishing target. Not surprisingly, they are increasingly exploited. Of over 500 aggregation records available (www.SCRFA.org), approximately 60% show evidence of declines, while many may have disappeared completely. Few are currently incorporated into marine protected areas, and most are completely unmanaged. At least one species, the Nassau grouper of the Caribbean, may be threatened with extinction, very probably the result of aggregation-fishing.

How can spawning aggregations be protected?

There are several ways to conserve and manage these important reproductive events. Much, of course, depends on the local cultural context and management capacity. Examples include incorporation of aggregation sites into marine protected areas, temporary site closures and seasonal fishing and/or sales bans during reproduction. Long-term monitoring is important for evaluating and fine-tuning management interventions.



how...