Lay Summary

Demographic data on deepwater groupers are limited despite the species being highly exploited throughout the Indo-Pacific.

Recently, the Department of Fisheries Western Australia embarked on a monitoring and assessment programme for the data limited offshore demersal scalefish resource that inhabits the upper continental slope (200-600 m deep) along a large eastern Indian Ocean coastline of approx. 3,500 km.

The programme plans to collect important information on the life history, ecology and connectivity of fish species in this deepwater habitat. The eightbar grouper *Hyporthodus octofasciatus* was identified as one of five indicator species, for which the status of their fished stocks provides an indication of the risk to the sustainability of the entire offshore demersal scalefish suite.

The study carried out by Wakefield et al. as highlighted in the ICES Journal of Marine Science, is the first detailed investigation of the life history of *H. octofasciatus* and provides important information critical towards the development of sustainable management strategies for this species.

The results of this study have implications for wide-ranging deepwater groupers and similar inherently vulnerable deepwater species in other areas of the world, as these species are increasingly exploited and little is known about their unusual population dynamics.