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## Sea of Cortez / Gulf of California – Grunts and Snappers

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### **Burrito Grunt (*Anisotremus interruptus*)**

Golden eye. Steep body profile and black spots on each scale that don't form obvious rows distinguish it from other grunts. Fins can be dusky gray, black, or yellowish. Generally found on shallow rocky slopes. Up to 12"

Distribution: Occasional throughout Gulf, along Pacific coast to Panama and oceanic islands.

Photo by: Carol Cox



### **Graybar Grunt (*Haemulon sexfasciatum*)**

Silvery gray body with 5-6 wide dark bars along back (can be light or dark), dark spots on scales. Fins are dark. Often seen in large schools, typically over sand where they feed. Up to 12"

Distribution: Common throughout Gulf, along Pacific coast to Panama and oceanic islands.

Photo by: Dan Grolemond



### **Cortez Grunt (*Haemulon flaviguttatum*)**

Pearly spots on scales form diagonal rows above lateral line and horizontal rows below lateral line. Spots are widely spaced (vs. Latin Grunt which has closely spaced spots). Tail is yellowish with large dark diffuse spot. Fins yellow. Up to 16"

Distribution: Common throughout Gulf, along Pacific coast to Peru.

Photo by: John Wolfe



### **Latin Grunt (*Haemulon steindachneri*)**

Similar scale spots as Cortez Grunt (diagonal on top and horizontal below) but spots are closely spaced. Tail is yellowish with well-defined black spot in center. Fins pale yellow. Anal fin more rounded than Cortez Grunt. Up to 12"

Distribution: Common throughout Gulf, along Pacific coast to Peru.

Photo by: Gerry Allen



### **Spottail Grunt (*Haemulon maculicauda*)**

Pearly white spots on scales form horizontal stripes above and below lateral line. Dark patch on tail similar to previous species, but tail and fins are silvery/gray (not yellow). Up to 12"

Distribution: Common throughout Gulf, along Pacific coast to Panama, also north to California.

Photo by: Beth Bruton



**Mojarra Grunt (*Haemulon scudderii*)**

Dark spots on scales form diagonal scale rows along body, and bright golden eye (more slender head profile than Burrito Grunt). Fins are dark. Can be found in large schools. Up to 12"

Distribution: Rare central and southern Gulf and Mexican coast, more common farther south along Central America and oceanic islands.

Photo by: Paul Humann



**Brassy Grunt aka Humpback Grunt (*Microlepidotus brevipinnis*)**

Alternating brown and pale wavy diagonal lines above lateral line, spots on scales below lateral line form horizontal rows. Yellow pectoral and ventral fins, tail and dorsal are dusky dark. Can be found in large schools. Up to 15"

Distribution: Occasional throughout Gulf, along Pacific coast to Ecuador.

Photo by: Gerry Allen



**Wavyline Grunt (*Microlepidotus inornatus*)**

Approx. 8 narrow orange stripes along side of body. Fins are dusky. More slender body than other grunts. Can be found in large schools, typically in sandy areas near reef edge. Up to 18"

Distribution: Common in the Gulf, along Pacific coast of Baja and central Mexico.

Photo by: Kreg Martin



**Juvenile Grunts (*Haemulidae* species)**

Juveniles of most grunt species are difficult to identify to species, can report generic Juvenile Grunt spp on REEF survey. Slender silvery fish with 1-3 dark stripes along side and often dark spot at tail or on dorsal. Up to 1-3"

Distribution: Common wherever adult grunts are found.

Photo by: Eric Riesch



**Barred Pargo (*Hoplopagrus guentherii*)**

Deep bodied snapper (more than other species in region). Six pairs of dark bars along body to base of tail. Can rapidly become dark or light. Noticeable nostrils extend beyond lip. Solitary, sometimes mix with Amarillo Snapper. Up to 2.5'

Distribution: Occasional to uncommon throughout Gulf, along Pacific coast to Panama and oceanic islands.

Photo by: Paul Humann



**Amarillo Snapper aka Yellow Snapper (*Lutjanus argentiventris*)**

Silvery body with yellow rear body and tail. Body is sometimes reddish. No distinguishing bars or stripes. Often has brilliant blue line of dots and dashes below eye. Juveniles have dark stripe through eye. Can be found in large aggregations. Up to 2'

Distribution: Common to occasional throughout Gulf, along Pacific coast to Panama and oceanic islands.

Photo by: Paul Humann



**Pacific Dog Snapper (*Lutjanus peru*)**

Large robust snapper, silvery body (sometimes reddish tinge). Typically displays 9 dusky bars along top, but they can be almost non-visible. Solitary, often in caves during day. Up to 3.5'

Distribution: Occasional throughout Gulf, along Pacific coast to Panama and oceanic islands.

Photo by: Paul Humann



**Blue-and-Gold Snapper (*Lutjanus viridis*)**

Five blue stripes along yellow body and fins, white belly. Up to 12"

Distribution: Abundant to common southwestern Gulf, along Pacific coast to Panama and oceanic islands.

Photo by: Paul Humann



**Spotted Rose Snapper (*Lutjanus guttatus*)**

Silvery body, sometimes with reddish or yellow tinge. Large black or dusky spot on back. Yellow stripes below lateral line. Watermelon-shaped pupil (found in snapper but not grunts). Typically found in schools. Up to 2.5'

Distribution: Occasional throughout Gulf, along Pacific coast to Panama and oceanic islands.

Photo by: Gerry Allen