CORAL TROUT
SPECIES OF QUEENSLAND

Coral trout belong to the Cod and Grouper Family known scientifically as Serranidae.
There are a number of different species of Coral Trout and each of these species has different biology and in some cases, different management requirements such as legal size limits. This is why it is important to correctly distinguish between these species.
While there are generally recognisable skin patterns for each species, these can be highly variable.
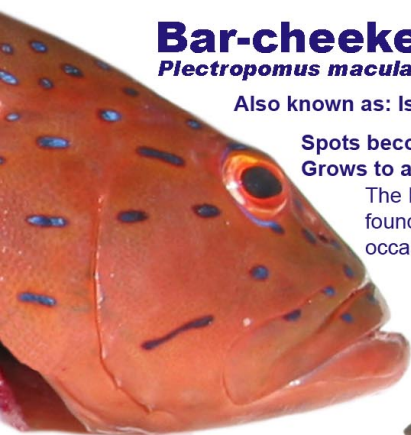
Bar-cheeked coral trout
Plectropomus maculatus

Also known as: Island trout & Inshore trout

Spots become elongated into bars on side of the head. Grows to at least 80cm and 8kg.

The Bar-cheeked trout is a coastal species found around inshore reefs and islands and occasionally on mid-shelf reefs.

Common coral trout
Plectropomus leopardus

Also known as: Leopard trout & Strawberry trout

Numerous small dark-edged blue spots on head, body and fins. Distinctive blue ring around eye. Grows to at least 70cm and 6kg.

Common coral trout are the most wide spread species on the Great Barrier Reef and are found from inshore to outer reefs.
These pictures (left) show some of the variations in skin colour seen in this species. They can be red, green, brown, pink or orange.

In the Common coral trout (above) and the Blue-spot trout in its dark form (below), the skin colouration and size of spots can be variable, which may lead to confusion in identification. Generally, the spots on the Blue-spot trout are larger than on Common coral trout, but the most reliable way to differentiate these species, is the transparency of the pectoral fin (circled).
The Blue-spot trout *always* has dark, non-transparent pectoral fins, whereas the Common trout (and in fact all other coral trout species), have transparent pectoral fins.

Blue-spot trout
Plectropomus laevis

Also known as: Tiger trout, Chinese Footballer trout & Oceanic trout
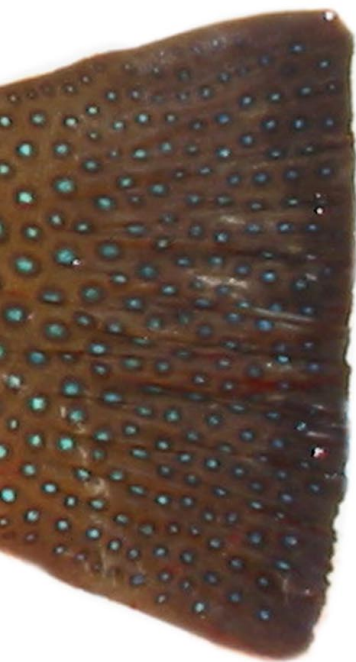**Medium dark-edged blue spots on head, body & fins. Grows to at least 120cm and 25kg.**

There are two common colour phases in the species, the Footballer form (yellow, black & white) and the Blue-spot form (usually dark brown or red with distinctive blue spots). While radically different looking, both forms are actually the *same* species and some fish have even been observed changing between these forms. (as shown by the intermediate fish, left).

CORAL TROUT
SPECIES OF QUEENSLAND

CRC Reef Research Centre's
Fishing & Fisheries Project

Passionfruit trout
Plectropomus areolatus

Also known as: Leopard trout and Squaretail trout

Many medium dark-edged blue spots over entire body
including abdomen.
Grows to at least 70cm and 6kg.

VARIOLA SPECIES

Though similar looking, the Coronation trout and
Lyretail trout are actually two different species.
Although commonly known as 'trout' they are more closely
related to the other reef cods and not the true coral trout (*Plectropomus*)
species, hence the different scientific name *Variola*.
The obvious characteristic separating the *Variola* species
from the coral trout (*Plectropomus*) species, is their lunate tail form.

Lyretail trout
Variola albimarginata

Also known as: White-edged lyretail

Narrow white margin on deeply lunate tail.
Numerous small spots that can be blue,
violet and pink with yellowish pectoral fins.
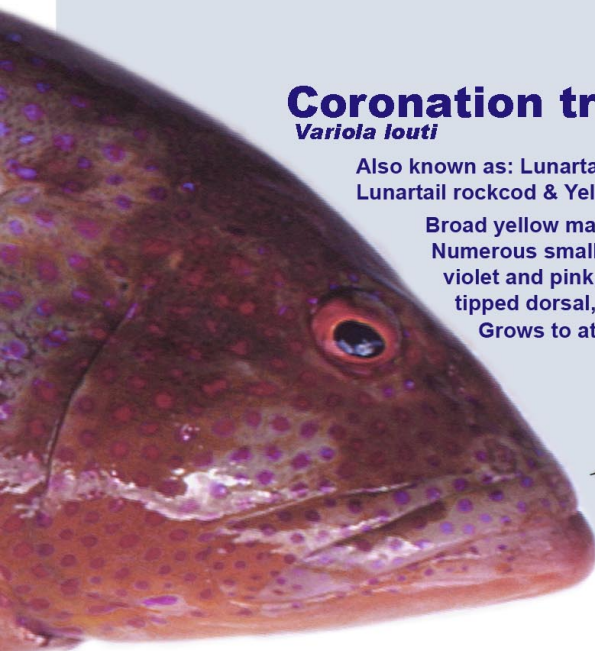Grows to at least 60cm and 5kg.

Coronation trout
Variola louti

**Also known as: Lunartail trout,
Lunartail rockcod & Yellow-edged lyretail**

Broad yellow margin on deeply lunate tail.
Numerous small spots that can be blue,
violet and pink, with most notable yellow
tipped dorsal, anal and pectoral fins
Grows to at least 70cm and 6kg.

Images provided by
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