KING MACKEREL  
(06/08 NCDMF)

**Stock Status - Viable** - Based on the 2003 stock assessment update the spawning stock biomass is above target and fishing mortality is below target. The south Atlantic king mackerel stock is considered healthy and not overfished. Concern over estimates of Atlantic and Gulf stock mixing rates in south Florida and the addition of up to date aging data has delayed approval of the most recent stock assessment. A new stock assessment should be completed in 2008.

**Average Commercial Landings and Value 1998-2007** - 1,009,969 lbs./$ 1,655,96

**2007 Commercial Landings and Value** - 1,059,107lbs. /$ 1,967,079 (quota managed)


**Average Number of Award Citations (30 lbs.) 1998-2007** – 344, **2007** - 253

**Status of Fisheries Management Plan (FMP)** – In North Carolina, king mackerel are currently included in the Interjurisdictional FMP, which defers to the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council (SAFMC) compliance requirements. Currently managed under Amendment 15 to the SAFMC Coastal Pelagic FMP. Management measures include commercial and recreational quotas, minimum size limits, commercial trip limits (3,500 lbs./trip), recreational bag limits, gear restrictions, and commercial permit moratorium. Charterboat/headboat operators must possess a charter/headboat vessel permit for Coastal Migratory Pelagics and must comply with recreational bag limits.

**Research and Data Needs** - bycatch mortality estimates in the directed shrimp fishery, fishery independent methods of monitoring stock size, and estimates of Atlantic and Gulf stock mixing rates in south Florida

**Current Regulations** - 24 inches fork length (FL), 3 fish/day for recreational anglers

**Harvest Season** - open year round, based on an April 1 to March 31 fishing year - Commercial and recreational fisheries can close when the total allowable catch (TAC) is reached

**Size and Age at Maturity** - 28 inches FL, 2-3 years

**Historical and Current Maximum Age** - 26 years/23 years

**Juvenile Abundance Index 1998-2007** – Unknown, **2007** - Unknown

**Habits and Habitats** - King mackerel are considered coastal pelagic, meaning they live in the open waters near the coast. They make inshore and offshore migrations triggered by water temperature and prey availability. In the winter and early spring, king mackerel congregate just inside the Gulf Stream along the edge of the continental shelf. During the summer and fall, they move inshore along the beaches and near the mouths of inlets and coastal rivers. They prefer water temperatures between 68 and 78° F.

For more information, see [DMF Species Leads page](#)