

SPANISH MACKEREL

(06/05 ARCHIVE - NCDMF)

Stock Status -Viable- Based on the most recent stock assessment, the spawning stock biomass is above target and fishing mortality is below target. The South Atlantic Spanish mackerel stock is considered healthy and not overfished.

Average Commercial Landings and Value 1995-2004 - 532,644 lbs./\$400,839

2004 Commercial Landings and Value - 456,238 lbs./\$526,011

Average Recreational Landings 1995-2004 - 495,781 lbs., **2004** - 574,270 lbs.

Average Number of Award Citations (6 lb.) 1995-2004 – 112, **2004** - 117

Status of Fisheries Management Plan - In North Carolina, Spanish mackerel is currently included in the Interjurisdictional Fisheries Management Plan, which defers to ASMFC/SAFMC FMP compliance requirements. Currently managed under Amendment 12 to the SAFMC's Coastal Pelagic Fishery Management Plan. Management measures include commercial and recreational TAC's, minimum size limits, commercial trip limits (3,500 lb/trip), recreational bag limits (15 fish/person/day) and gear restrictions. 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 juvenile abundance indices

Current Minimum Size Limit (2005)- 12 inches FL

Harvest Season (2005)- Open year round, based on an April 1 to March 31 fishing year - Commercial and recreational fisheries can close when the TAC is reached.

Size and Age at Maturity - 12 inches FL/2 years

Historical and Current Maximum Age - 12 years/8 years

Juvenile Abundance Indices Average 1972-2004 and 2004 - Unknown

Habits/Habitats - Spanish mackerel are coastal pelagic, meaning they live in the open waters near the coast. They make north and south migrations depending on water temperature, with 68° F being a preferred minimum. In North Carolina's waters, Spanish mackerel can be found from April to November. They migrate south to the Florida coast in the late fall. In the summer months, they may be found as far inland as the sounds and coastal river mouths. Spanish mackerel spawn from May to September.

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