

SPANISH MACKEREL

(06/02 ARCHIVE - NCDMF)

Stock Status--*Viable* -Based on the 1999 stock assessment, including data through the 1996/97 fishing year, spawning stock biomass is above target and fishing mortality is below target. Forward projections of stock abundance suggest that the 7.04 million pound TAC (total allowable catch) recommended in 1999 is still acceptable and is unlikely to lead to declines in stock abundance. However, such projections are based on assumptions of catch age composition and recruitment conditioned on the 1999 stock assessment and may not reflect changes in the fishery or stock which may have occurred over the last 5 years.

Average Commercial Landings and Value 1992-2001-- 557,454 lb., \$324,849

2001 Commercial Landings and Value-- 653,473 lb, \$524,111

Average Recreational Landings 1992-2001-- 566,928 lb **and 2001--** 489,789 lb

Average Number of Award Citations (6lb) 1992-2001-- 125 **and 2001--** 71

Status of Fisheries Management Plan-- Currently managed under Amendment 12 to the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council'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.

Research and Data Needs-- Bycatch mortality estimates in the directed shrimp fishery and fishery independent methods of monitoring stock size

Current Minimum Size Limit-- 12 inches (fork length)

Harvest Season-- 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 (fork length), 2 years old

Historical and Current Maximum Age-- 12 years old, 8 years old

Juvenile Abundance Indices Average 1972-2001 and 2001-- Unknown

Habits/Habitats-- Spanish mackerel are considered coastal pelagic, meaning they live in the open waters near the coast. They make north and south migrations depending on water temperature, with 68 degrees Fahrenheit 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](#)