

SPANISH MACKEREL

(06/06 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 1996-2005 - 536,924 lbs./ \$437,793

2005 Commercial Landings and Value - 444,975 lbs./ \$585,525 (quota managed)

Average Recreational Landings 1996-2005 - 502,429 lbs., **2005** - 342,392 lbs.

Average Number of Award Citations (6 lbs.) 1996-2005 – 114, **2005** - 107

Status of Fisheries Management Plan (FMP) - Currently managed under Amendment 12 to the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council's (SAFMC) Coastal Pelagic Fishery Management Plan. Management measures include commercial and recreational quotas, minimum size limits, commercial trip limits (3,500 lbs./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 Regulations (2006)- 12 inches fork length (FL)

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

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

Historical and Current Maximum Age - 12 years/8 years

Juvenile Abundance Index 1996-2005 – Unknown, **2005** - 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° 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](#)