

SPANISH MACKEREL

Stock Status - *Viable* - Based on the 2008 stock assessment, the Spanish mackerel stock in the South Atlantic is not undergoing overfishing; however, the stock assessment model and underlying data are insufficient to make a determination on whether or not the stock is overfished.

Average Commercial Landings and Value - 2000-2009 – 570,676 lbs./\$599,689

2009 Commercial Landings and Value – 961,811 lbs./\$929,748 (quota managed)

Average Recreational Landings - 2000-2009 – 587,259 lbs., **2009** – 892,641 lbs.

Average Number of Award Citations (6 lbs.) - 2000-2009 – 104, **2009** – 75

Status of Fisheries Management Plan (FMP) – In North Carolina, Spanish mackerel are currently included in the Interjurisdictional FMP, which defers to the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council (SAFMC) compliance requirements and is 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, 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 - 12 inches fork length (FL), 15 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 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 - 2000-2009 – unknown, **2009** - unknown

Habits and 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.

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