

KING MACKEREL

Stock Status - *Concern* - Based on the 2008 stock assessment, the South Atlantic king mackerel stock is not overfished. It is uncertain whether overfishing is occurring; however, if it is, it is occurring at a low level.

Average Commercial Landings and Value - 2000-2009 – 968,809 lbs./\$1,624,601

2009 Commercial Landings and Value – 777,585 lbs./\$1,500,112 (quota managed)

Average Recreational Landings 2000-2009 -1,257,675 lbs., **2009** — 864,237 lbs.

Average Number of Award Citations (30 lbs./45 inches[^]) - 2000-2009 – 306, **2009** - 177

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 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, 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 2000-2009 – Unknown, **2009** - 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.

[^]Citation release length requirement reduced from 50 inches to 45 inches in 2008

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