

KING MACKEREL

(06/04 ARCHIVE - NCDMF)

Stock Status--*Viable* - Based on the 2003 stock assessment the spawning stock biomass is above target and fishing mortality is below target. The South Atlantic king mackerel stock is considered healthy and not overfished. Concern over estimates of Atlantic and Gulf stock mixing rates in south Florida and addition of up to date aging data has delayed the 2004 stock assessment.

Average Commercial Landings and Value 1994-2003—987,127 lb, \$1,535,360

2003 Commercial Landings and Value—764,833 lb, \$1,214,208

Average Recreational Landings 1994-2003--1,173,989 lb **and 2003**—933,974 lb

Average Number of Award Citations (30lb) 1994-2003-- 412 **and 2003**-- 174

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 (3 fish/person/day), gear restrictions, and commercial limited entry.

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 Minimum Size Limit-- 24 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-- 28 inches (fork length), 2-3 years old

Historical and Current Maximum Age-- 26 years old, 24 years old

Juvenile Abundance Indices Average 1972-2003 and 2003-- Unknown

Habits/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 degrees Fahrenheit.

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