SPANISH 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 Spanish mackerel stock is considered healthy and not overfished.

Average Commercial Landings and Value 1994-2003—540,154 lb., $372,936

2003 Commercial Landings and Value—456,782 lb, $418,063

Average Recreational Landings 1994-2003—497,157 lb **and 2003—**438,032 lb

Average Number of Award Citations (6lb) 1994-2003-- 118 **and 2003--** 109

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, fishery independent methods of monitoring stock size, and juvenile abundance indices

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

Harvest Season-- Open year round, based on an April 1 to March 31fishing 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, 9 years old

Juvenile Abundance Indices Average 1972-2003 and 2003-- 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