

## INTERSTATE FISHERIES MANAGEMENT PROGRAM OVERVIEW

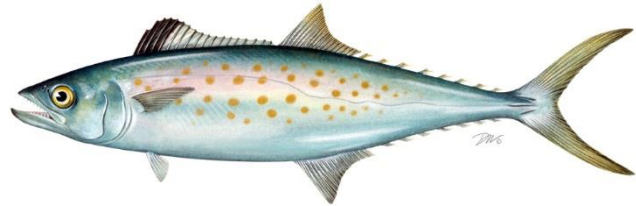
# Spanish Mackerel

### Species Range

Florida Keys through New York, and occasionally as far north as New England

### Management Unit

Rhode Island – Florida



### Stock Status

Overfishing is not occurring and the stock is not overfished.

### *Reference Points*

- Maximum Fishing Mortality Threshold (MFMT or  $F_{MSY}$ ) = 0.516
  - Current (2020)  $F_{2018-2020}$  = 0.397
- Spawning Stock Biomass at Maximum Sustainable Yield ( $SSB_{MSY}$ ) = 14.1 million lbs
  - Current Spawning Stock Biomass (2011) = 14.8 million lbs
  - Minimum Stock Size Threshold (MSST) = 10.6 million lbs

### ***Most Recent Assessment***

[2022 South Atlantic Spanish Mackerel Stock Assessment](#) (SEDAR 78)

### ***Major Findings***

The most recent stock assessment was completed in 2022 through the SouthEast Data, Assessment, and Review (SEDAR 78). The primary model used in the assessment was a statistical catch-age model, the Beaufort Assessment Model (BAM) with input data through 2020. The results of the assessment indicate that Spanish mackerel is not overfished and overfishing is not occurring. However, in the terminal year of the assessment (2020), the model found the estimated fishing rate to be above the maximum fishing mortality threshold (MFMT) indicating that if the 2020 overfishing rate continues, the stock may fall into an overfishing status. The model estimates showed the current stock biomass to be above (1.40) the minimum stock size threshold (MSST). The current spawning stock biomass (2020) was estimated to be 14.8 million lbs. The current level of fishing (exploitation rate) was estimated to be below  $F_{MSY}$  ( $F_{2018-2020}/F_{MSY} = 0.77$ ). Fishing mortality rate estimates over time showed mortality rates peaked in the late 1970s and remained at high rates until the early 1990s, with mortality rates dropping substantially in the mid-1990s, likely due to the Florida net ban. Estimated biomass over time has shown an opposite trend, with estimates bottoming out in the early to mid-1980s, with significant increases from the early 1990s onward. Since the terminal year of the previous stock assessment assessment (2011), the stock has fluctuated near the MSY reference point.

### **Involved States and Jurisdictions**

RI, NY, NJ, DE, MD, PRFC, VA, NC, SC, GA, FL, NMFS, SAFMC

### **Active Boards/Committees:**

Coastal Pelagics Management Board, Spanish Mackerel Technical Committee, Spanish Mackerel Plan Review Team, South Atlantic Species Advisory Panel

### **Chairs**

Board, Chair – Joe Cimino (11/2021); Vice-Chair – Spud Woodward  
Advisory Panel, Chair – Craig Freeman (10/2019)

### **Staff Lead**

Chelsea Tuohy, [ctuohy@asmfc.org](mailto:ctuohy@asmfc.org)

### **Management Plan History**

#### **[Fishery Management Plan for Spanish Mackerel \(November 1990\)](#)**

The Interstate Fishery Management Plan for Spanish Mackerel is adopted. The FMP recommends that the states adopt comparable measures to those existing in federal waters, meaning a fishing year, a management area from New York to the Dade/Monroe county line in south Florida, a minimum size limit, commercial and recreational quotas, recreational creel limits, commercial trip limits and gear restrictions.

No amendments or addenda to the FMP have been implemented; however, because the FMP tracks federal management, several regulations have been modified as the Council has amended its FMP for Coastal Migratory Pelagic Resources. For example, quotas have changed due to technical group recommendations, the fishing season has been altered to start one month earlier, commercial trip limits in Florida have been modified to vary as the month and remaining quota amount changes, and recreational bag limits have been increased.

#### **[Omnibus Amendment to the Interstate Fishery Management Plans for Spanish Mackerel, Spot, and Spotted Seatrout \(August 2011\)](#)**

The Omnibus Amendment updates the Spanish Mackerel FMP with the requirements of the Atlantic Coastal Fisheries Cooperative Management Act of 1993 and the Interstate Fishery Management Program Charter, initially passed in 1995. The amendment adds *de minimis* criteria, compliance reporting, and adaptive management measures. The Amendment also updates the plan with current federal requirements and provides a review mechanism for future changes to the federal FMP.

#### **[Technical Addendum 1a to the Spanish Mackerel Amendment 1 \(Omnibus Amendment\)](#)** (February 2012)

The technical addendum corrected a mistake in the value for the commercial trip limit for Spanish mackerel in Florida, once 75% of the adjusted quota has been taken.

### [Addendum I to the Omnibus Amendment \(August 2013\)](#)

The Addendum established a season exemption in the commercial pound net fishery during the months of July through September that reduced the current minimum size limit of 12-inch fork length to 11.5 inch fork length. This size limit change only applied to the commercial pound net fishery during the specified time. The intent of the management measure exemption was to reduce and/or eliminate seasonal regulatory discards. This addendum originally only applied to the 2013 and 2014 fishing years; the Board extended these measures through the 2018 fishing year. North Carolina was the only state to implement Addendum I from 2013 through 2018.

### **Pending Management Action**

None

### **Annual Events**

- Spanish mackerel compliance reports are due October 1<sup>st</sup> with a reminder distributed 90 days prior.
- The Plan Review Team produces an annual Spanish Mackerel FMP Review.
- The Advisory Panel receives an update after each Board meeting.