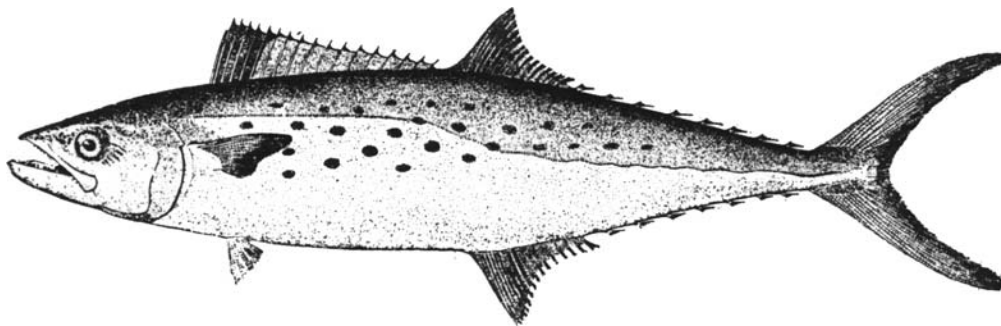


**2003 REVIEW OF THE FISHERY MANAGEMENT PLAN
FOR SPANISH MACKEREL
(*Scomberomorus maculatus*)**



Prepared by

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**2003 REVIEW OF THE ASMFC FISHERY MANAGEMENT PLAN
FOR SPANISH MACKEREL
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I. Status of the Plan

The federal *Fishery Management Plan for the Coastal Migratory Pelagic Resources* (1983 and subsequent amendments) and the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission's *Fishery Management Plan (FMP) for Spanish Mackerel* (1990) manage Atlantic group Spanish mackerel in the state and federal Atlantic waters south of the New York/Connecticut border through the east coast of Florida. The states of Florida through New York, excluding Pennsylvania, have a declared interest in the Commission's FMP for Spanish Mackerel. The goal of the Commission's Spanish Mackerel FMP is to complement federal management in state waters, to conserve the Atlantic Group Spanish mackerel resource throughout its range, and to achieve compatible management among the states that harvest Spanish mackerel. The Commission FMP objectives are to: (1) allow recovery of overfished populations and stabilize the stock at a level to produce maximum sustainable yield (MSY); (2) achieve compatible management throughout the range; (3) provide a flexible management system responsive to changes in the fishery and/or information; (4) promote cooperative interstate research and comprehensive monitoring activities and establish mandatory, timely reporting for quota monitoring; (5) minimize disruption of traditional fisheries and markets; and (6) minimize waste in the fishery.

Atlantic Group Spanish mackerel are managed on the basis of the annual recommendations of the joint Gulf of Mexico and South Atlantic Fishery Management Councils-appointed Mackerel Stock Assessment Panel (MSAP), a technical group which reviews the stock assessments and makes annual determinations of Acceptable Biological Catch (ABC). The South Atlantic Fishery Management Council (SAFMC) determines needed annual adjustments to regulatory measures such as Total Allowable Catch (TAC), bag limits, size limits, and trip limits. The SAFMC's Mackerel Committee includes representatives from the Mid-Atlantic Council and a fishermen Advisory Panel incorporating South Atlantic and Mid-Atlantic representation in their deliberations. A Plan Review Team (PRT) comprised of Council, Commission, and State representatives annually reviews the status of implementation of the interstate FMP and reports to the Commission's South Atlantic State/Federal Fisheries Management Board. The South Atlantic Board serves as the Commission's Spanish Mackerel Management Board and reports to the Commission's Interstate Fishery Management Plan (ISFMP) Policy Board. The interstate FMP is intended to be a flexible plan that tracks the federal FMP; thus, the SAFMC has the lead on Atlantic Group Spanish mackerel management.

The consensus of the Spanish Mackerel PRT is that the goal of the Commission FMP and its management objectives continue to be valid. The South Atlantic and most Mid-Atlantic states have completely implemented the current requirements of the interstate Spanish mackerel plan.

II. Status of the Stocks

The Mackerel Stock Assessment Panel (MSAP) conducted a full stock assessment for Atlantic Group Spanish mackerel in 2003 which included data through the 2001/2002 fishing year; projected landings through 2002/2003 also were included. Estimated fishing mortality for Atlantic group Spanish mackerel has been below F_{MSY} and F_{OY} since 1995. Estimated stock abundance has increased steadily since 1995 and is now at a high for the analysis period. Stock Biomass has increased from about 19 million to 24 million fish. Probabilities that the stock is overfished are less than 1% and that overfishing has occurred in the most recent fishing year are 3%; therefore the MSAP concluded that Atlantic group Spanish mackerel are not overfished and overfishing did not occur in 2002/2003. Although all measures of stock status are well within desirable ranges, the median estimate of MSY dropped from 6.4 million pounds in the 1998 assessment (last full assessment) to 5.2 million pounds in the current assessment. Much of the decline is believed to be due to the lower estimates of recruitment between the 2003 and the 1998 assessments. The MSAP recommended ABC as the median estimate of catch at F 40% SPR, which is 6.7 million pounds (20th–80th percentile range = 5.2-8.4 million pounds).

The Council staff presented the 2003 MSAP stock assessment and a variety of management options to the South Atlantic Council. The council voted to defer framework action on Spanish Mackerel until after the stock assessment next year. Therefore the existing regulation of a TAC of 7.04 million pounds will remain in effect for the 2003/2004 fishing year. The estimate of landings for the 2000/2001 fishing year was 5.08 million pounds, well below the TAC of 7.04 million pounds. If the fishery developed greater capacity and TAC was realized at a level of 7.04 million pounds for several years, fishing mortality rates would increase and eventually may exceed F 30% SPR. Consequently, fishing at this level over time would eventually reduce spawning stock biomass to a level below that which is capable of producing MSY on a continuing basis).

The PRT believes harvest reductions are due to management measures in state and federal waters as well as the recreational fishery targeting other species. The low level of harvest in relation to the stock size is encouraging for stock rebuilding, which is reflected in the increase in transitional SPR. Cooperative State/Federal management has achieved a successful stock recovery.

III. Status of the Fishery

Spanish mackerel remains an important recreational and commercial fishery in South Atlantic waters and is gaining importance in the Mid-Atlantic states. Trip limits implemented in state and federal waters off Florida continue to prevent premature closure of the commercial fishery before the end of the fishing year.

The July 1, 1995 net ban affected commercial landings in Florida, and changed the characteristics of the fishery. The MSAP reported commercial landings of 2 million pounds in Fishing Year (FY) 1995/96, significantly under the 5.2 million pounds for FY 94/95. Landings

for FY 96/97 through FY 98/99 increased to about 3 million pounds each. In FY 99/00 and 00/01 the landings decreased again to 2.3 and 2.8 million pounds respectively. In FY 01/02 the landings were 3.1 million pounds. Prosecuted predominantly in state waters from Virginia to Florida, the majority of the commercial fishery for Spanish mackerel occurs in Florida and North Carolina (Table 1). Less than 2% of the total commercial landings occurred north of Virginia.

The stock's continued resurgence into its historical northern range is evidenced by the increased harvest by recreational anglers in states north of Virginia (Table 2). The number of Spanish mackerel harvested by the recreational fishery increased in recent years after reaching a low in 1998. The 2002 recreational harvest in numbers of fish and pounds was similar to the two previous years. North Carolina and Florida continue to account for the majority of recreational landings in both number and weight (Tables 2 & 3).

IV. Status of Assessment Advice

The Mackerel Stock Assessment Panel conducted a quantitative stock assessment in May 2003. The status of the Atlantic Spanish mackerel stock was evaluated using an age-based sequential virtual population analysis (VPA). The South Atlantic Fishery Management Council, inclusive of members of the South Atlantic Board, internally reviewed and endorsed the assessment. The SAFMC review process is accomplished by the Scientific and Statistical Committee and the Mackerel Advisory Panel.

V. Status of Research and Monitoring

In addition to conducting bi-annual stock assessments for Spanish mackerel, the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) Southeast Fisheries Science Center (SEFSC) continues to monitor length and weight at age and size frequencies; fishing mortality and migration; collect age data and catch per unit effort by area, season, fishery, and gear; monitor shrimp trawl bycatch; investigate methods to predict year class strength, calculate estimates of recruitment; and develop conservation gear to reduce bycatch. The NMFS is also collecting discard data through a bycatch logbook in the mackerel and snapper grouper fisheries. The Gulf and South Atlantic Fisheries Development Foundation and several states (North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, and Florida) have evaluated finfish bycatch in the southeastern shrimp trawl fishery, including bycatch of Spanish mackerel.

Abundance trends continue to be monitored primarily through fishery-dependent sources. The states and the SEFSC, through the cooperative commercial statistics collection program and the Marine Recreational Fishery Statistics Survey (MRFSS), monitor catch data. The commercial catch is monitored most intensively in the winter and early spring by the state of Florida and the NMFS as the commercial quota is approached.

VI. Status of Management Measures

In June of this year, the SAFMC voted to defer action until after the next stock assessment is completed, therefore the existing regulations will stay in place. The Total Allowable Catch (TAC) for is FY 2002-03 of 7.04 million pounds. The TAC is allocated on a 55:45 basis between the commercial fishery (3.87 million lbs) and the recreational fishery (3.17 million lbs). Trip limits for the commercial fishery in federal waters remain unchanged for vessels from Georgia through New York, with a year-round 3,500-pound daily possession/landing limit. The January 2000 Framework modified the trip limits for the Southern Zone (south of the Florida/Georgia border) based on the amount of commercial quota which is available on December 1 of each year. From December 1 until 75% of the adjusted allocation is taken, no trip limits are in place on Monday through Friday, but are limited to 1,500 pounds on Saturday and Sunday. Once 75% of the adjusted allocation is taken vessels are limited to 1,500 pounds per day for all days. When 100% of the adjusted allocation is taken, vessels are limited to 500 pounds per day until the end of the season (March 31). The adjusted allocation compensates for the estimated catch of 500 pounds per vessel per day to the end of the season. The timing of the fishing year is such that it is unlikely the commercial quota will affect any of the mid-Atlantic states.

The commercial fishery coastwide has been predominately in state waters; however, the Florida net ban, which became effective on July 1, 1995 shifted the bulk of the commercial harvest off Florida into federal waters. States are beginning to implement effort control; North Carolina implemented a two-year moratorium on issuance of new commercial licenses, 1997-99. Starting in July 1999, North Carolina capped the number and has strict income-related eligibility requirements for new licenses. Maryland capped its commercial licenses at the existing number for a five-year period in 1997. Virginia delayed entry for two-years into its gill net fishery. New York has a restrictive period for commercial licensing of non-residents and income-related eligibility requirements associated with certain fisheries.

VII. Implementation of FMP Compliance Requirements as of October 1, 2003.

Since adoption of the interstate Spanish Mackerel FMP in 1990, southern and mid-Atlantic states have responded to the plan's recommendations through implementation of bag limits, size limits, commercial trip limits, and/or provisions for seasonal closures (Table 4) to complement the Council's measures for federal waters. In February, 1994 the South Atlantic State/Federal Fishery Management Board determined the following measures of the Commission's Spanish Mackerel FMP to be mandatory for compliance with the interstate plan: quota closures, 10 fish bag limit, 12-inch fork length minimum size, 3.5-inch minimum stretch mesh size for the directed gill net fishery, and commercial trip limits or landing restrictions (3,500 lb/trip from Georgia through New York; incremental trip limits in Florida). The date for compliance was March 20, 1995. All nine states with a declared interest have achieved full regulatory compliance with the interstate plan. The recovery of the Spanish mackerel fishery throughout its historical range continues to benefit from management measures in state (Florida in particular) and federal waters. The bag limit was increased to 15 fish through a regulatory adjustment on August 2, 2000.

VIII. Recommendations

Management and Regulatory Recommendations

1. In order to prevent disruption of traditional fisheries and avoid user conflicts, it is recommended that states with commercial Spanish mackerel fisheries north of Florida maintain the trip limits as specified in the Council FMP.
2. States should be considered *de minimis* with regard to trip and landing limits (Council FMP measure 8.6.8) if their landings are less than five percent (5%) of the target commercial quota. If a state's landings are five percent or greater of the target commercial quota, the state should implement the required trip or landing limits in the next fishing year. Any state with *de minimis* status should provide monitoring reports for their commercial fishery on a timely enough basis to prevent quota overages.

Amendments

In light of the mandatory nature of state regulatory requirements implied as a result of federal action, it is preferable that the Commission have a mechanism to independently affirm those measures. This can be accomplished through:

- an amendment to the ASMFC plan to incorporate a framework mechanism for tracking the federal FMPs adjustments to TACs, bag limits, size limits, trip limits, and other regulatory measures; or
- a joint federal/interstate FMP for Spanish mackerel; or
- by a state law that automatically tracks federal regulations.

Given limited resources, the latter is probably the most efficient mechanism to accomplish complementary state/federal management of Spanish mackerel, with the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council remaining as the lead agency. However, a joint plan is not feasible until the SAFMC has a separate FMP for coastal migratory pelagics, which is being discussed for Amendment 15 to the federal plan. Until an amendment or joint plan is feasible, southern and mid-Atlantic states should remain actively involved in the joint councils' regulatory process for Atlantic Group Spanish mackerel.

The federal and interstate FMPs should clarify what constitutes a directed fishery.

Prioritized Research and Monitoring Recommendations

High Priority

- Length, sex, age, and CPUE data are needed for improved stock assessment accuracy. Simulations on CPUE trends should be explored and impacts on VPA and assessment

results determined. Data collection is needed for all states, particularly those north of North Carolina.

- Evaluation of weight and especially length at age of Spanish mackerel.
- Development of fishery-independent methods to monitor stock size of Atlantic Spanish mackerel (consider aerial surveys used in south Florida waters).
- More timely reporting of mid-Atlantic catches for quota monitoring.
- Provide better estimates of recruitment, natural mortality rates, fishing mortality rates, and standing stock. Specific information should include an estimate of total amount caught and distribution of catch by area, season, and type of gear.
- Develop methodology for predicting year class strength and determination of the relationship between larval abundance and subsequent year class strength.

Medium Priority

- Yield per recruit analyses should be conducted relative to alternative selective fishing patterns.
- Determine the bycatch of Spanish mackerel in the directed shrimp fishery in Atlantic Coastal waters (partially met: Branstetter 1997; Ottley et al. 1998; Gaddis et al. 2001).
- Evaluate potential bias of the lack of appropriate stratification of the data used to generate age-length keys for Atlantic and Gulf Spanish mackerel.
- Evaluate CPUE indices related to standardization methods and management history, with emphasis on greater temporal and spatial resolution in estimates of CPUE.
- Consideration of MRFSS add-ons or other mechanisms for collection of socioeconomic data for recreational and commercial fisheries.
- Determine normal Spanish mackerel migration routes and changes therein, as well as the climatic or other factors responsible for changes in the environmental and habitat conditions which may affect the habitat and availability of stocks.
- Determine the relationship, if any, between migration of prey species (i.e., engraulids, clupeids, carangids), and migration patterns of the Spanish mackerel stock.

Low Priority

- Final identification of Spanish mackerel stocks through multiple research techniques.
- Complete research on the application of assessment and management models relative to dynamic species such as Spanish mackerel.
- Delineation of spawning areas and areas of larval abundance through temporal and spatial sampling.

List of References

- Branstetter, S. 1997. Final implementation of high-priority objectives of a bycatch reduction research program for the Gulf of Mexico and South Atlantic shrimp fishery. NMFS 93-SER-059.
- Gaddis, G., D. Haymans, J.L. Music, Jr., and J. Page. 2001. Interstate fisheries management planning and implementation. Final Report. Award No. NA86FG0116. USDOC/NOAA/NMFS. Atlantic Coastal Fisheries Management Act (P.L. 103-206).
- Ottley, A., C.N. Belcher, B. Good, J.L. Music, Jr., and C. Evans. 1998. Interstate fisheries management planning and implementation. Final Report. Award No. NA57FG0170. USDOC/NOAA/NMFS. Atlantic Coastal Fisheries Management Act (P.L. 103-206).

Table 1. Commercial landings by calendar year (in pounds) of Spanish mackerel along the Atlantic coast, 1960-2002 (source: pers. comm. NMFS, Fish. Stats. & Econ. Div.).

Year	ME	MA	RI	NY	NJ	MD	VA	NC	SC	GA	FLEC	Total
1960							19,900	118,500	6,100		2,282,300	2,426,800
1961			400			200	122,600	133,600	4,000		3,158,300	3,419,100
1962							14,600	83,200	13,300	300	2,578,300	2,689,700
1963							79,300	135,300	8,300	900	2,123,400	2,347,200
1964					100		33,100	78,300	2,500		2,002,200	2,116,200
1965			300			1,000	73,300	117,200	13,300	600	2,900,900	3,106,600
1966					100	400	141,900	78,500	1,300	1,300	2,181,300	2,404,800
1967					200	3,600	26,300	72,700	2,500	2,000	1,801,500	1,908,800
1968					100	1,700	58,500	68,900	8,200	600	4,406,500	4,544,500
1969		100				1,200	123,000	88,600	3,800		2,358,800	2,575,500
1970			200		200	1,100	200,100	63,300	1,800	400	3,574,400	3,841,500
1971			100		100	900	51,000	95,200	4,000	300	2,581,800	2,733,400
1972					100	400	22,700	96,300	5,200	4,700	3,369,000	3,498,400
1973					100	200	50,000	64,200	4,100	4,900	3,203,000	3,326,500
1974					1,700	100	24,000	73,300	2,000	500	2,346,100	2,447,700
1975			900	400	4,500	400	61,600	48,900	9,800	5,800	5,144,800	5,277,100
1976				600	1,400	400	79,600	30,500	3,600	3,000	9,588,600	9,707,700
1977					400		21,100	46,100	100	1,800	10,987,300	11,056,800
1978					100	100	1,600	39,851	608	211	5,510,538	5,553,008
1979							700	12,721	150	2,201	4,885,628	4,901,400
1980				100	600		8,300	75,306	6,769	1,491	9,811,053	9,903,619
1981				500	500		3,500	51,639		518	4,174,432	4,231,089
1982				1,000	200		12,700	189,217	1,081	745	3,758,603	3,963,546
1983		2,600	2,600	600	100		3,500	41,336	706		5,947,102	5,998,544
1984				300	100		10,000	127,467	1,321		2,397,373	2,536,561
1985				100			15,300	173,186	847		3,244,980	3,434,413
1986		600		3,200	1,500		168,400	232,197	6,375	1,335	4,003,738	4,417,388
1987	3,300	16,000	4,900	16,600	24,000	4,800	251,200	504,063	961	255	3,497,135	4,323,508
1988			3,400	19,200	16,900	4,300	291,600	438,222	1,029	726	3,071,687	3,847,797
1989		12,400	8,900	17,700	24,100	10,400	354,400	589,383	1,605		2,853,177	3,873,290
1990		6,585	5,530	24,329	28,336	43,411	491,651	838,914	384	491	1,979,081	3,420,126
1991		19,698	9,530	149,321	77,151	62,688	447,127	858,808	444	197	2,986,871	4,612,258
1992		608	2,277	31,873	51,751	37,930	271,313	738,362	1,952	71	2,022,961	3,159,098
1993		5	2,843	42,063	23,036	9,445	335,688	589,868	480	95	3,891,979	4,895,502
1994		3,273	893	124,733	19,915	3,363	376,818	531,355	362		3,099,780	4,160,492
1995			12,419	9,136	2,153	3,089	168,732	402,197			3,064,926	3,662,654
1996			2,523	17,980	40,821		283,750	401,546			2,244,667	2,991,287
1997		15	86	31,107	12,122	3,033	164,639	766,901			2,269,289	3,247,192
1998		71	109	37,238	13,242	13,204	121,109	372,440			2,498,400	3,055,813
1999		2,407	276	47,831	17,144	21,604	251,626	459,120			1,529,939	2,329,947
2000			188	35,825	11,757	26,607	168,679	659,431			1,667,581	2,570,068
2001		3,634	20,052	13,851	9,401	18,899	178,610	653,491			2,115,782	3,013,724
2002			65	18,741	11,196	20,725	102,417	698,172			1,993,169	2,844,485
Total	3,300	67,996	78,491	644,328	395,125	295,198	5,685,959	11,937,793	118,974	35,436	151,108,371	170,375,109

Table 2. Recreational harvest (numbers of A + B1 fish) of Spanish mackerel by state, 1981-2002 (source: pers. comm. NMFS, Fish. Stats. & Econ. Div.).

Year	MA	RI	CT	NY	NJ	DE	MD	VA	NC	SC	GA	FLEC	Total
1981	4,277								231,744	25,058	1,786	485,395	748,260
1982									694,420	21,092	408	173,649	889,569
1983									6,156	3,279	2,109	117,532	129,076
1984									618,313	79,855	3,718	248,048	949,934
1985									344,965	36,606	4,809	84,226	470,606
1986					1,479		457	6,942	431,021	147,358	25,257	195,385	807,899
1987				1,417			8,036	1,520	815,920	65,846	20,925	118,184	1,031,848
1988								101,691	1,312,070	82,136	4,403	233,582	1,733,882
1989		320		1,010	22,067			73,236	679,360	121,115	7,444	213,665	1,118,217
1990		403		1,726	2,495	319	1,355	63,821	821,334	81,375	31,567	225,263	1,229,658
1991	7,071	78	4,173	7,608	25,071	2,054	41,250	68,102	676,717	132,198	2,391	517,290	1,484,003
1992	0			1,325	10,549	210	4,847	71,265	701,974	62,546	25,736	370,809	1,249,261
1993	188			2,681	3,457		43,050	73,832	451,523	92,621	12,979	219,458	899,789
1994				0	7,910		43,710	145,872	535,949	113,991	15,235	252,668	1,115,335
1995				0	0		26,216	86,899	285,882	34,355	16,726	226,334	676,412
1996					1,172			69,399	355,036	134,282	16,948	245,085	821,922
1997						0		68,517	585,765	101,067	28,396	246,885	1,030,630
1998					4,046	186	3,633	33,140	239,052	65,584	28,002	244,235	617,878
1999		438		0	1,335	226	1,220	75,972	476,019	27,477	9,007	327,621	919,315
2000	1,528			4,453	923	0	15,219	71,249	671,353	28,283	20,545	547,315	1,360,868
2001	2,561			802	0	0	8,025	29,590	400,706	43,501	11,013	774,065	1,270,263
2002							0	17,433	401,982	24,235	1,927	926,600	1,372,177
Total	15,625	1,239	4,173	21,022	80,504	2,995	197,018	1,058,480	11,737,261	1,523,860	291,331	6,993,294	21,926,802

Table 3. Recreational harvest (pounds of A + B1 fish) of Spanish mackerel along the Atlantic coast, 1981-2002 (source: pers. comm. NMFS, Fish. Stats. & Econ. Div.).

Year	MA	RI	CT	NY	NJ	DE	MD	VA	NC	SC	GA	FLEC	Total
1981	0								423,801	53,292	4,306	808,808	1,290,207
1982									928,201	29,546	483	251,115	1,209,345
1983									14,725	8,274	4,198	199,331	226,528
1984									848,537	116,083	5,540	427,501	1,397,661
1985									507,545	34,445	3,547	152,113	697,650
1986					2,500		1,008	9,709	639,105	256,157	47,941	251,673	1,208,093
1987				2,890			14,345	2,011	1,296,732	117,053	40,681	230,725	1,704,437
1988								160,407	2,136,806	140,896	5,141	656,047	3,099,297
1989		847		3,560	35,415			81,107	877,911	197,982	6,162	303,485	1,506,469
1990		0		2,332	3,320	470	1,790	86,932	1,084,167	153,932	45,748	346,585	1,725,276
1991	26,327	251	16,958	19,612	36,096	3,062	57,249	72,708	1,056,524	291,717	3,717	887,777	2,471,998
1992	0			3,880	16,526	302	9,634	76,411	947,065	145,451	79,818	669,160	1,948,247
1993	580			7,590	5,280		68,757	93,272	664,815	135,287	22,209	439,555	1,437,345
1994				0	8,613		44,969	160,610	588,035	152,836	66,949	350,679	1,372,691
1995				0	0		34,705	110,433	329,466	40,995	12,072	302,632	830,303
1996					0			80,505	385,922	184,655	31,856	413,687	1,096,625
1997						0		22,233	862,497	143,297	37,877	400,148	1,466,052
1998					9,189	379	5,725	57,467	305,630	106,209	112,562	408,872	1,006,033
1999		1,303		0	2,207	240	1,715	79,601	469,258	44,917	10,031	578,123	1,187,395
2000	5,053			10,798	1,118	0	20,642	83,296	671,616	30,543	47,137	946,395	1,816,598
2001	10,351			1,168	0	0	14,526	42,046	499,829	46,945	23,056	1,232,506	1,870,427
2002							0	12,163	475,742	47,057	4,795	1,475,232	2,014,989
Total	42,311	2,401	16,958	51,830	120,264	4,453	275,065	1,230,911	16,013,929	2,477,569	615,826	11,732,149	32,583,666

Table 4. Summary of current (October 2002) State Regulations for Spanish Mackerel.

State	Recreational	Commercial	Notes
NY	14"; 15 fish	14"	3,500 lb. commercial possession limit/vessel
NJ	14"; 10 fish	14" TL	
DE	14" TL; 10 fish	no fishery	
MD	14"; 15 fish	14"	Declaration allowing regulation through framework; gill net mesh sizes for Chesapeake Bay
PRFC	14"; 15 fish	14"	
VA	14" TL; 15 fish	14" TL	Size limit exemption for pound net fishery; closure when quota reached; 3,500 lb. trip limit
NC	12" FL; 15 fish	12" FL	3,500 lb. commercial trip limit (Spanish and king mackerel combined); finfish excluder devices required in shrimp trawls. Purse gill net prohibition.
SC	12" FL; 15 fish	12" FL	Federal commercial harvest restrictions apply; federal permit required to exceed bag limit; state license required to land/sell.
GA	12" FL; 15 fish	12" FL	Commercial landings from state waters limited to bag limits; gillnets/longline gear prohibited in state waters; state waters closed December 1 - March 15 for harvest of Spanish mackerel; commercial landings (3,500 lb. trip limit) from EEZ by federally permitted vessels allowed throughout year as long as the federal quota remains open.
FL	12" FL; 15 fish	12" FL	3½ " minimum mesh size, 600 yd. maximum length net; Commercial daily trip limits: 1,500 lb. April 1 - November 30; December 1 until 75% of adjusted quota reached - unlimited harvest Mon-Fri, 1,500 lb. per vessel/day Sat-Sun; >75% adjusted quota until quota filled - 1,500 lb. per vessel/day; > 100% of adjusted quota - 500 lb. per vessel/day.

Table 5. Numbers of recreational releases (B2 fish) of Spanish mackerel by state, 1981-2002 (source: pers. comm. NMFS, Fish. Stats. and Econ. Div.). (Releases have also been recorded for MA: 1991-859, 1992-586, 1993-584, and 2000-642; these are included in the total)

Year	NY	NJ	DE	MD	VA	NC	SC	GA	FLEC	Total
1981						5,616	0	0	56,374	61,990
1982						0	0	0	6,613	6,613
1983						0	0	515	4,929	5,444
1984						2,931	1,300	0	21,797	26,028
1985						27,753	3,862	0	23,316	54,931
1986		0		0	74	280,252	7,879	605	20,469	309,279
1987	0			0	13,947	28,136	5,506	2,916	7,197	57,702
1988					0	17,413	27,019	2,456	18,334	65,222
1989	0	0			10,286	64,749	73,983	391	83,682	233,091
1990	257	0	0	0	21,094	76,940	26,929	0	35,520	160,740
1991	0	2,674	1,092	1,747	28,777	133,601	19,331	57	190,602	378,740
1992	0	0	0	0	18,072	180,235	15,515	3,859	113,062	331,329
1993	0	1,160		2,684	70,081	81,927	15,966	0	74,052	246,454
1994	1,059	50,743		0	91,832	241,082	207,055	0	136,041	727,812
1995	7,297	1,269		1,562	24,467	145,845	14,159	2,594	129,469	326,662
1996		0			28,951	103,067	83,543	139	167,411	383,111
1997			338		22,658	140,704	62,356	0	168,815	394,871
1998		0	0	1,075	49,429	80,700	32,087	7,351	87,804	258,446
1999	1,415	2,670	0	0	36,276	205,870	46,400	495	185,106	478,232
2000	0	0	608	1,656	82,227	300,384	47,273	16,479	353,042	802,336
2001	1,657	4,907	825	7,265	30,158	160,591	9,711	3,188	285,738	506,311
2002				4,449	9,923	196,967	9,206	8,641	554,743	783,929
Total	11,685	63,423	2,863	20,438	538,252	2,474,763	709,080	49,686	2,724,116	6,599,273