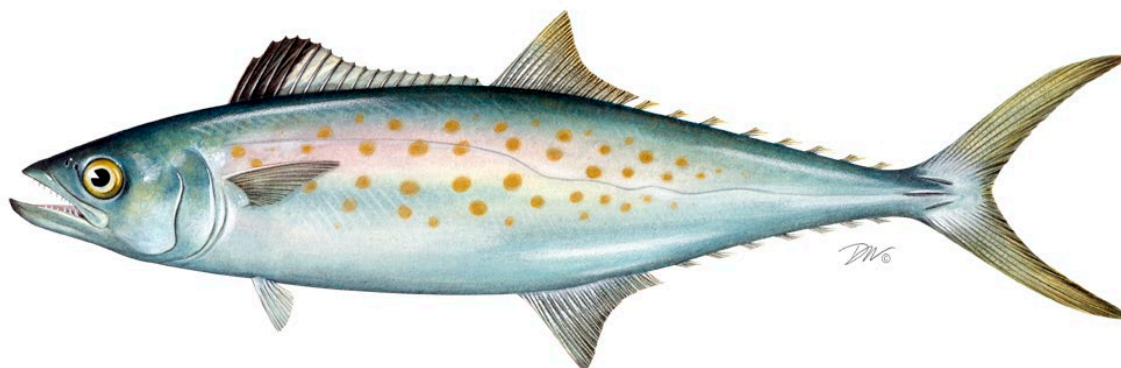


ATLANTIC STATES MARINE FISHERIES COMMISSION
REVIEW OF THE INTERSTATE FISHERY MANAGEMENT PLAN
FOR
SPANISH MACKEREL
(Scomberomorus maculatus)
2023 and 2024 FISHING YEARS



Approved by the Coastal Pelagics Management Board
February 2026



Sustainable and Cooperative Management of Atlantic Coastal Fisheries

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I. Status of the Plan

Date of FMP Approval: Original FMP – November 1990

Amendments: Omnibus Amendment to Spanish Mackerel, Spot, and Spotted Seatrout (Amendment 2) – August 2011

Addendum: Addendum I – August 2013

Management Area: The Atlantic coast distribution of the resource from Rhode Island through the east coast of Florida

Active Boards/Committees: Coastal Pelagics Management Board; Spanish Mackerel Plan Review Team; South Atlantic Species Advisory Panel

The Fishery Management Plan (FMP) for Coastal Migratory Pelagic Resources (1983 and subsequent amendments) and the [Interstate Fishery Management Plan for Spanish Mackerel](#) (1990) manage Atlantic group Spanish mackerel in federal and state Atlantic waters from Rhode Island through the east coast of Florida. All states in that range, excluding Pennsylvania, have a declared interest in the Interstate FMP for Spanish mackerel. The Coastal Pelagics Management Board serves to manage Spanish mackerel for the Commission. The Interstate FMP for Spanish mackerel is a flexible document intended to track the federal FMP; thus, the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council (SAFMC) has the lead on Atlantic group Spanish mackerel management.

[Amendment 1/Omnibus Amendment](#) to the Spanish mackerel FMP, as part of an Omnibus Amendment to the ISFMP Management Plans for Spanish Mackerel, Spot, and Spotted Seatrout, was approved in August 2011. The primary objective of this amendment was to bring the FMPs for all three species under the authority of ACFCMA to provide more efficient and effective management and changes to management for the future. In addition, the amendment made the Commission's Spanish mackerel FMP consistent with federal Spanish mackerel requirements determined by the SAFMC.

[Addendum I](#) was approved in August 2013 to allow for a two-year pilot program (2013 and 2014) that allowed states to reduce the minimum size limit of Spanish mackerel for the commercial pound net fishery to 11.5 inches from 12 inches for July through September. The measure was intended to reduce waste of these shorter fish, which are discarded dead in the summer months, by converting them to landed fish that will be counted against the quota.

The South Atlantic Board formally extended the provisions of Addendum I for the 2015 through 2018 fishing seasons. After 2018, North Carolina, the only state to implement the reduced minimum size limit, stopped requesting approval of the program due to no further request from pound net fishermen to continue the program, and due to recent closures in federal waters.

The goals of the ISFMP are 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. In accordance with the 2011 Omnibus Amendment, the updated FMP's objectives are to:

1. Manage the Spanish mackerel fishery by restricting fishing mortality to rates below the threshold fishing mortality rates to provide adequate spawning potential to sustain long-term abundance of the Spanish mackerel populations.
2. Manage the Spanish mackerel stock to maintain the spawning stock biomass above the target biomass levels.
3. Minimize endangered species bycatch in the Spanish mackerel fishery.
4. Provide a flexible management system that coordinates management activities between state and federal waters to promote complementary regulations throughout Spanish mackerel's range which minimizes regulatory delay while retaining substantial ASMFC, Council, and public input into management decisions; and which can adapt to changes in resource abundance, new scientific information and changes in fishing patterns among user groups or by area.
5. Develop research priorities that will further refine the Spanish mackerel management program to maximize the biological, social, and economic benefits derived from the Spanish mackerel population. See Table 1 for state Spanish mackerel regulations.

The SAFMC manages Atlantic group Spanish mackerel with guidance from its Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC). The SAFMC determines needed adjustments to regulatory measures, including allowable catch, bag limits, size limits, and trip limits. The SAFMC deliberations are assisted by a Mackerel Cobia Committee, and an Advisory Panel with South Atlantic and Mid-Atlantic industry representation. Since the Coastal Migratory Pelagic Resources FMP is a joint plan with the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council (GMFMC), any plan amendments to this FMP must be approved by both Councils. Actions that can be completed through the Coastal Migratory Pelagics FMP's framework procedure and only address Atlantic group Spanish mackerel, do not require approval from the GMFMC.

Several inconsistencies between the Interstate FMP and the federal FMP have been brought to the Board's attention (Appendix I). The Board intends to address these differences during the next management action.

II. Status of the Stocks

In 2012, Spanish mackerel was assessed and peer reviewed through the SouthEast Data, Assessment and Review (SEDAR). The results of the 2012 assessment (SEDAR 28) indicated that the stock was not overfished and was not experiencing overfishing. In 2022, an operational assessment (i.e., update to the last assessment) was completed through the SEDAR process with data through 2020. This most recent assessment (SEDAR 78) indicates the same stock status: the stock is not overfished and is not experiencing overfishing based on a three-year average of fishing mortality. However, in the terminal year of the assessment (2020), the model found the estimated fishing rate to be above the maximum fishing mortality threshold (Figure

1) indicating that if the 2020 overfishing rate continues, the stock may fall into an overfishing status. For spawning stock biomass, the assessment indicates spawning biomass has remained above SSBMSY throughout the time series (Figure 2).

III. Status of the Fishery

On July 1, 2018, the Marine Recreational Information Program recalibrated recreational harvest estimates from the Coastal Household Telephone Survey (CHTS) to the mail-based Fishing Effort Survey (FES). Estimates used in this report are now those of the FES. The federal FMP quotas are still based on previous CHTS estimates, but FES estimates will be incorporated into management through a future Plan Amendment to the Federal Coastal Migratory Pelagics FMP.

Spanish mackerel are an important recreational and commercial fishery in South Atlantic waters with variable landings in the Mid-Atlantic region (Tables 2-4). While the fishery is managed according to a March – February fishing year, landings summarized in this report are shown by calendar year, unless otherwise stated. Florida landings included in this report are for the Atlantic coast only.

Total landings of Spanish mackerel in were an estimated 8.0 million pounds in calendar year 2023 and 8.2 million pounds in 2024. In 2023, 36% of landings were from the commercial fishery and 64% from the recreational fishery. In 2024, 33% of landings were from the commercial fishery and 67% from the recreational fishery.

Only three states, Florida, North Carolina, and Virginia, have directed commercial fisheries for Spanish mackerel. Coastwide commercial landings have consistently been below 4 million pounds since 1995, coinciding with the net limitation amendment in Florida, except for 2010 (4.5 million pounds), 2011 (4.3 million pounds), and 2021 (4.8 million pounds). Gill nets were the dominant commercial gear in Florida prior to the ban, after which the use of cast nets increased.

Coastwide commercial landings peaked in 2021 at 4.8 million pounds followed by a decrease to 2.4 million pounds in 2022, 2.8 million pounds in 2023, and 2.7 million pounds in 2024 (Figure 3). From 2022-2024, Florida comprised 57% of coastwide landings on average each year, North Carolina 32% on average each year, and Virginia 9% on average each year. In the previous decade from 2012-2021, Florida comprised a higher proportion with 76% of coastwide landings on average each year, North Carolina 22% on average each year, and Virginia a lower 1% on average each year.

Notably, commercial landings in Virginia from 2019-2024 have been consistently higher than landings in the previous decade. Virginia noted one factor contributing to consistent commercial landings in recent years is its extended drift gill net program implemented in 2022. Experimental permits were issued from 2022-2024 allowing harvesters to fish up to 6,000 feet of continuous drift gillnet to determine whether this longer single net is more effective at catching Spanish mackerel than several separate shorter gillnets. A stipulation with this

experimental gear permit was allowing Virginia Marine Resources Commission observer staff on the boat to note bycatch and evaluate the effectiveness of the new gear. Virginia increased the number of permits each year and ultimately instituted a licensed fishery for this gear type in 2025. During the first year of the fully licensed fishery in 2025, fish availability in the Chesapeake Bay was limited due to high water temperatures and harvesters indicated significant effort was required to find and follow the fish in ocean waters (within state waters). Future landings from this fishery will depend on several factors including fish availability and market conditions.

For the recreational fishery, coastwide recreational landings peaked in 2021 at 8.8 million pounds (7.3 million fish) followed by a decrease to 4.0 million pounds (4.0 million fish) in 2022, 5.2 million pounds (4.3 million fish) in 2023, and 5.5 million pounds (4.2 million fish) in 2024 (Figure 3; Tables 3 and 4). Though lower than the 2021 peak, 2023-2024 landings were above the ten-year average landings.

The number of recreationally harvested fish appears to show a cyclical trend, with low harvest years interspersed with higher harvests (Figure 4). Florida and North Carolina have historically accounted for the majority of recreational landings in both number and weight. In 2024, Florida landed 30% of the coastwide recreational landings by weight, North Carolina landed 49%, South Carolina landed 9%, and Virginia landed 8%. On average each year in the past decade 2015-2024, Florida landed 40% of the coastwide total on average each year, North Carolina 36%, South Carolina 11%, and Virginia 8%.

The number of recreational releases of Spanish mackerel generally increased over time to a peak in 2021 of 5.8 million fish released, which aligns with the peak in landings. Similar to harvest, releases in 2022-2023 decreased to 4.3 million fish and 4.1 million fish, respectively. In 2024, releases further decreased to 2.8 million fish. Live releases comprised 49% of the total recreational catch in 2023 and 40% of total recreational catch in 2024, bracketing the 10-year average of 46%.

For recreational effort, MRIP estimates there were 3.0 million directed trips for Spanish mackerel (primary or secondary target) in 2023, consistent with the 5-year average. In 2024, directed trips decreased to 2.6 million trips.

North Carolina flagged the state's MRIP estimates for 2024. North Carolina's 2024 recreational landings estimate of 2.7 million pounds is 77% higher in pounds than the ten-year average (52% higher in number of fish). North Carolina's 2024 recreational releases estimate of 1.5 million fish is 30% higher than the ten-year average. North Carolina noted these estimates appear unusually high and warrant closer scrutiny. The state notes these figures diverge from anecdotal observations and may have been skewed by a limited number of intercepts with only 343 fish measured, which is significantly fewer than the 1,091 recorded the previous year and the 10-year average of 1,203 measurements. The PSEs for North Carolina's 2024 MRIP estimates are in the twenties. While PSEs in the twenties are generally acceptable across many species, Spanish mackerel typically show more precision with North Carolina PSEs typically in

the teens, making this deviation particularly noteworthy. For the previous decade of 2014-2023, PSEs for North Carolina's Spanish mackerel estimates were between 12-18 except for one year above 20.

Regarding the decrease in both commercial and recreational landings from the 2021 peak to lower levels in 2022-2024, driven largely by the Florida fisheries, Florida noted that areas off central east Florida are increasingly closed to vessels by the U.S. Coast Guard to create safety zones associated with space launches. This has prevented fishermen from accessing areas where they would traditionally fish for Spanish mackerel. The establishment of these temporary safety zones has contributed to a decline in Spanish mackerel landings and fishing effort. In addition to this issue, feedback from Florida stakeholders during the SAFMC Port Meetings conducted in 2024 noted concerns about shark depredation, water quality, weather conditions in federal waters, fish shifting northward, and changing effort dynamics (e.g., willingness to travel far distances to find fish) impacting Florida's Spanish mackerel fisheries.

IV. Status of Assessment Advice

In 2012, Spanish mackerel was assessed and peer reviewed through the SouthEast Data, Assessment and Review (SEDAR). The input data (through 2011) were applied to two assessment models, with the primary model being a statistical catch at age model called the Beaufort Assessment Model (BAM); while a secondary surplus-production model (ASPIC) provided a comparison of model results. The Review Panel concluded that the statistical catch at age model was the most appropriate model to characterize the stock status for management purposes. The most recent assessment, SEDAR 78, used the same model configuration with some updates, including an updated growth model, shortened time series to a new start date, and alternative pooling of commercial age compositions due to low sample sizes.

After SEDAR 78 was complete, it was reviewed by the SAFMC's Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC). The SSC noted some concerns about the assessment, including some missing age compositions, data gaps due to small sample sizes, uncertainty around the spike in 2020 recreational data, and need for updated natural mortality and steepness estimates. The SSC concluded that the SEDAR 78 base model is adequate for determining stock status but did not support the stock projections. The SSC noted the projections are not sufficiently robust and influenced greatly by uncertain data in terminal year (2020), and the indications of a declining stock are not consistent with observations or recent data.

The next Spanish mackerel assessment has been moved to occur sooner in the SEDAR schedule with expected completion in 2027. It is anticipated that the next assessment will use the revised MRIP FES time series.

V. Status of Research and Monitoring

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. 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. The South Atlantic component of the Southeast Area Monitoring and Assessment Program (SEAMAP) collects Spanish mackerel data in its Coastal Trawl Survey from Cape Hatteras to Cape Canaveral. Additionally, the Northeast Area Monitoring and Assessment Program (NEAMAP) began regular spring and fall surveys between Martha's Vineyard and Cape Hatteras in the fall of 2007.¹

While there are no fishery-dependent or fishery-independent monitoring requirements in the Interstate FMP, some states collect information on Spanish mackerel through various state fishery-dependent programs and fishery-independent surveys (briefly summarized below based on information provided in state compliance reports).

Florida: The Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission's Fish and Wildlife Research Institute (FWC-FWRI) conducts regular sampling in estuarine, bay, and coastal systems of Florida's Atlantic coast, including monthly sampling of young-of-year and post-young-of-year fish collected by center-bag-haul seines. The proportion of positive sets was used as a simple index of abundance of young-of-the-year (0 – 250 mm standard length) and post-young-of-the-year (>250 mm standard length). Very few Spanish Mackerel young-of-the-year were captured during 1997 – 2023 and therefore standardized catch rates could not be produced. An index on post young-of-the-year Spanish Mackerel, however, could be produced. This index has been variable throughout the timeseries with a recent decreasing trend from 2019 to 2022, although index values increased in 2024.

Florida also highlighted their fishery-dependent monitoring of Spanish mackerel through the Florida Marine Fisheries Information System ('Trip Ticket') program which collects trip-specific records.

Georgia: Some fishery-independent surveys are conducted in areas where Spanish mackerel could be encountered as bycatch, including the Ecological Monitoring Trawl Survey (EMTS) and the Marine Sportfish Population Health Survey (MSPHS). The EMTS monitors fish and invertebrates in Georgia estuaries and offshore states waters using a 40-foot flat otter trawl. Data collected include abundance, size composition, reproductive status, and temporal and spatial distributions of various marine species. In 2023, zero Spanish mackerel were captured. In 2024, the EMTS was not performed in the beginning of the year due to a catastrophic survey vessel mechanical issue. All values presented for 2024 are based on samples collected from April 2024 through December 2024. In 2024, 318 tows were conducted totaling 78.7 hours of tow time. A total of five Spanish Mackerel were captured with a mean fork length (FL) of 196.0 mm.

¹ Many states and regional surveys experienced an interruption in sampling efforts in both recreational and commercial fishery surveys during the 2020 calendar year.

The MSPHS samples three Georgia estuaries on a seasonal basis using gillnets and trammel nets. In 2023, one Spanish mackerel was captured via gill net. In 2024 for gillnets, 216 net sets were conducted, and six Spanish Mackerel were captured. Fish ranged from 131.0 mm FL to 399.0 mm FL with an average size of 313.7 mm FL. In 2024 for trammel nets, 150 net sets were conducted, and no Spanish Mackerel were captured.

Georgia also highlighted two fishery-dependent projects, the Marine Sportfish Carcass Recovery Project, and the Cooperative Angler Tagging Project, but neither encountered Spanish Mackerel during 2024.

South Carolina: SCDNR operates the Coastal Trawl Survey (CTS) for SEAMAP, sampling nearshore waters between Cape Hatteras, NC and Cape Canaveral, FL during spring, summer, and fall. Spanish Mackerel have been a priority species of the CTS since 1989 with abundance, biomass and length-frequency data recorded. Beginning in 2011, life history samples have been obtained from a subsample of the specimens caught, for aging and the assessment of sex and reproductive stage. The CTS primarily captures individuals that have not yet reached the legal-size limit. Consequently, these data have the potential to serve as a juvenile index for fisheries projections, even though variability tends to be high. Although nominal abundance remained below the Survey's time series mean, both nominal and zero-inflated negative binomial (ZINB) standardized abundance showed a distinct upturn in 2024, following at least two years of decline.

South Carolina also highlighted its state-specific mandatory trip reporting system (logbook program) for licensed charter boat operators. These data indicate that the number of charter trips targeting Spanish mackerel, which has generally been increasing, may have peaked in 2021 and has experienced slight decline the last two years. Also, as trips targeting Spanish Mackerel generally account for less than 10% of total trips, Spanish Mackerel do not appear to be the primary target of the charter fishery. Data for total estimated number of fish caught show substantial variability from year to year. Live releases account for an average of about 19% of all Spanish Mackerel caught over the last 20 years. Discards reported as dead, however, are a very small portion of total catch, accounting for only 1.2% on average over the last 20 years.

North Carolina: Spanish mackerel are caught in the NCDMF statewide Independent Gill Net Survey (Program 915) and Pamlico Sound Trawl Survey (Program 195). These surveys utilize a stratified random sampling scheme designed to characterize the size and age distribution for key estuarine species in Pamlico Sound, Pamlico, Pungo, Neuse, Cape Fear, and New rivers. The overall relative abundance of Spanish mackerel in these programs is extremely low and therefore lacks the desired precision and confidence needed for the data to be used for management and stock assessment purposes.

Virginia: Virginia does not conduct any targeted fishery independent monitoring for Spanish mackerel. However, the Virginia Institute of Marine Science has several surveys (NEAMAP,

CHESMAP, and Juvenile Fish and Crab Trawl Survey) that observe Spanish mackerel, but the occurrence is rare and total numbers relatively small.

The VMRC Biological Sampling Program collects biological data from Virginia's commercial fisheries. In 2023, staff sampled 1,059 Spanish mackerel for length, 1,058 for weight, determined sex of 350 fish, and collected otoliths of 276 fish. Lengths ranged from 13 through 29 inches total length, with an average of 18.1 inches total length. Even though the minimum size limit for Spanish mackerel is 14 inches total length, fish less than 14 inches were observed and accordingly collected by VMRC staff. Ages ranged from 0 to 8 years old, with an average of 1.92.

In 2024, staff sampled 1,391 Spanish mackerel for length, 1,389 for weight, determined sex of 370 fish, and collected otoliths of 296 fish. Lengths ranged from 13 through 31 inches total length, with an average of 18.6 inches total length. Even though the minimum size limit for Spanish mackerel is 14 inches total length, fish less than 14 inches were observed and accordingly collected by VMRC staff. Ages ranged from 0 to 8 years old, with an average of 1.90.

Virginia also highlighted the VMRC Marine Sportfish Collection Project established in 2007. The project allows anglers to donate carcasses by dropping them off in freezers at high-traffic recreational fishing areas. Fish are processed for length, age, and sex. In 2023, VMRC staff collected 7 Spanish mackerel carcasses, collecting length measurements on all 7 and ages on 4 carcasses. Lengths ranged from 12 through 22 inches total length, with an average of 16.9 inches total length. Ages ranged from 0 to 1, with an average of 0.25 years old.

In 2024, VMRC staff collected 7 Spanish mackerel carcasses, collecting length measurements on all 7 and ages on 5 carcasses. Lengths ranged from 15 through 24 inches total length, with an average of 19.1 inches total length. Ages ranged from 0 to 2, with an average of 1.4 years old.

Maryland: MDDNR does not have a specific monitoring program for Spanish mackerel; however, they typically are encountered in the onboard commercial pound net survey, which is conducted from late May through November. In 2023, 94 Spanish mackerel were measured from the onboard pound net survey with fork lengths ranging between 240 – 580 mm and a mean fork length of 399 mm. In 2024, 30 Spanish mackerel were measured from the onboard pound net survey with fork lengths ranging between 345 – 468 mm and a mean fork length of 400 mm.

The MDDNR Choptank River independent gill net survey also encountered Spanish mackerel in 2024. Two Spanish mackerel were encountered, with a fork length of 330 mm and 406 mm. Twenty-one have been caught in the annual survey, which began in 2013.

Delaware: Delaware conducts a 30-ft bottom trawl survey to monitor relative abundance of adult groundfish in the Delaware Bay. This survey has been conducted annually since 1990; prior surveys were conducted from 1966-1971 and 1979-1984. There were few occurrences of Spanish Mackerel over the time series with no fish collected in the 2023-2024 surveys.

Delaware also monitors juvenile fish abundance with its 16-ft bottom trawl survey, which has been conducted annually in the Delaware Bay since 1980. This survey was expanded in 1986 to include the Delaware's Inland Bays (Indian River and Rehoboth Bay) and further expanded in 1989 to include six stations in the Delaware River. There have been few occurrences of Spanish Mackerel in the juvenile survey over the time series. In 2023, 16 fish were collected with 15 of the those 16 fish samples caught in the month of August in the Delaware Inland Bays. No Spanish mackerel were collected in 2024.

Delaware also noted the commercial monthly logbook reports which have recorded confidential Spanish mackerel landings in Delaware in 2001, 2005, 2019, 2020, and 2024.

New Jersey: Fishery independent surveys in New Jersey rarely encounter Spanish Mackerel. The New Jersey Ocean Trawl Survey samples nearshore waters and only encountered more than a few fish in two years: 1989 with 321 fish and 2023 with 55 fish. The Delaware River Seine Survey targets striped bass young-of-year and occasionally encounters Spanish mackerels with a few individuals encountered from 2021-2023. The Delaware Bay Trawl Survey targets juvenile fish and encountered a few Spanish mackerel in 1992 and 2021. The Raritan-Sandy Hook Complex Inventory Survey is a multi-gear survey which started in 2022 sampling from March-October and encountered one Spanish mackerel in the gillnet in 2023.

Rhode Island: One Spanish mackerel were intercepted during trawl survey work in 2024 while none were intercepted by 2023 or 2024 seine surveys conducted by the RIDEM Division of Marine Fisheries and partners in state waters.

VI. Status of Management Measures

Omnibus Amendment (Interstate FMP)

In August 2011, the Management Board approved an amendment to the Spanish Mackerel FMP to address three issues: compliance measures, consistency with federal management in the exclusive economic zone, and alignment with Commission standards. Through the Omnibus Amendment, the following fisheries management measures are required for states within the management unit range:

Recreational Fishery

- 12" Fork Length (FL) or 14" Total Length (TL) minimum size limit
- 15 fish creel limit
- Must be landed with head and fins intact
- Calendar year season
- Prohibited gear: Drift gill nets prohibited south of Cape Lookout, NC
- Decrease in the recreational quota the following year via reduced bag limits if the Total Annual Catch Limit (ACL) is exceeded and stock is overfished.

Commercial Fishery

- Prohibited: purse seines; drift gill nets south of Cape Lookout, NC

- 12" FL or 14" TL minimum size limit
- March 1 – end of February season
- Trip limits (per vessel, per day)
 NY-GA: 3500 lbs.
 FL: 3500 lbs., 3/1-11/30;
 3500 lbs. Mon-Fri & 1500 lbs. Sat-Sun, 12/1 until 75% adjusted quota taken;
 1500 lbs., when 75% adjusted quota taken until 100% adjusted quotas taken;
 500 lbs. after 100% of adjusted quotas taken (the adjusted quota compensates for estimated catches of 500 lbs. per vessel per day to the end of the season)
- Commercial quotas decreased the following year if Total ACL is exceeded and stock is overfished

Differences between the Interstate and Federal FMPs are described in Appendix I. The differences are the commercial management zones, commercial trip limits and closures, allowable gears, recreational season, and recreational accountability measures. The Board intends to address differences between the FMPs in the next management action.

Changes to the federal FMP since 2011 are described in Appendix II.

Update from the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council (SAFMC)

The SAFMC conducted a series of in-person and virtual port meetings for the king and Spanish mackerel fisheries from April 2024 through January 2025. The [final report](#) was presented to the SAFMC in March 2025. In June 2025, the SAFMC considered how to respond to recommendations made during port meetings as well as the most recent Atlantic Spanish mackerel stock assessment (SEDAR 78). The SAFMC decided to postpone work on addressing catch level recommendations from SEDAR 78 until the revised MRIP FES time series is available. The Council also requested staff work with the SEFSC to see if the next Atlantic Spanish mackerel stock assessment can occur sooner in the SEDAR schedule. As a result, the SEDAR schedule was modified to accommodate an Atlantic Spanish mackerel stock assessment in early 2027 incorporating the revised MRIP time series.

Additionally, the Council noted that NCDMF and FFWC will continue to communicate and coordinate on the potential for commercial quota transfers for Atlantic Spanish mackerel between the Northern and Southern Zones.

VII. Implementation of FMP Compliance Requirements for 2023 and 2024

All states must implement the requirements specified in section 5 of the Omnibus Amendment. Based on annual state compliance reports, the PRT determined that all states in 2023 and 2024 implemented a management program consistent with the provisions of the Interstate FMP except for one inconsistency that has since been addressed:

- The Potomac River Fisheries Commission (PRFC) had not implemented the required daily commercial trip limit of 3,500 pounds. After notification in summer 2025, PRFC addressed this at its next quarterly meeting and implemented the trip limit effective September 22, 2025.

De Minimis Requests

A state qualifies for *de minimis* status if its previous three-year average combined commercial and recreational landings is less than 1% of the previous three-year average coastwide combined commercial and recreational landings. Those states that qualify for *de minimis* are not required to implement any monitoring requirements (note: there are no monitoring requirements for Spanish mackerel in the FMP). The states of Rhode Island, New Jersey, Delaware, and Georgia request *de minimis* status. All four states meet the requirements for *de minimis*.

Regulation Changes

Some states voluntarily reduced commercial trip limits in state waters via proclamation or public notice when federal waters closed for the Northern Commercial Zone in 2023 and 2024 (Table 1).

VIII. Recommendations of the Plan Review Team

The PRT has the following recommendations:

- Better understand the dynamics across regions to inform future management. The Board may need to consider extending management measures further into the New England region (as far north as Massachusetts) if consistent catches and anecdotal sightings of Spanish mackerel continue to increase in frequency. Stock structure should also be investigated to determine whether more northerly fish are of the same stock as fish further south, and consider the impact of the potential regions in future stock assessments. The PRT recommends compiling information on current/past tagging and genetic studies for Spanish mackerel to inform this topic.
- Better understand the life history components for Spanish mackerel, particularly from fishery independent surveys. Length, sex, age, and CPUE data are needed for improved stock assessment accuracy as well as evaluation of weight and especially length at age of Spanish mackerel. Virginia and South Carolina noted their Spanish mackerel data (thousands of age and length samples) as available data sources.
- Investigate discard mortality in both the commercial and recreational fisheries. Specific information should include an estimate of total amount caught and distribution of catch by area, season, and type of gear. Virginia has noted its state observers are monitoring the new commercial gill net permits and noted few discards in those nets.
- Better understand how environmental drivers are affecting the distribution of Spanish mackerel (both inshore vs. offshore and north vs. south). The takeaway from recent [SAFMC port meetings](#) was that the fishery is reliable in North Carolina and the Mid-Atlantic, but farther south, especially Florida, where and when the Spanish mackerel are showing up has changed substantially in recent years.

- Better understand how social and economic drivers as well as regulatory systems are affecting overall effort and participation in the commercial and recreational Spanish mackerel fisheries.
- Continue coordination between ASMFC and the SAFMC on future management action to address differences between the Interstate and Federal FMPs (see Appendix I). These differences will be particularly important to address when catch levels are updated in the next federal management action.

For reference, the PRT reminds the Board that the Spanish Mackerel Technical Committee compiled a [white paper in 2024](#) summarizing general characteristics and state/regional differences in Spanish mackerel fisheries. Additionally, research recommendations from the most recent stock assessment may be found [here \(pdf 84-85\)](#).

IX. References

SEDAR (SouthEast Data, Assessment, and Review). 2012. SEDAR 28- South Atlantic Spanish Mackerel Stock Assessment Report. SEDAR, North Charleston SC. 438 pp. available online at: <https://sedarweb.org/assessments/sedar-28/>

SEDAR. 2022. SEDAR 78 South Atlantic Spanish Mackerel Stock Assessment Report. SEDAR, North Charleston SC. 177 pp. available online at: <https://sedarweb.org/assessments/sedar-78/>

X. Figures

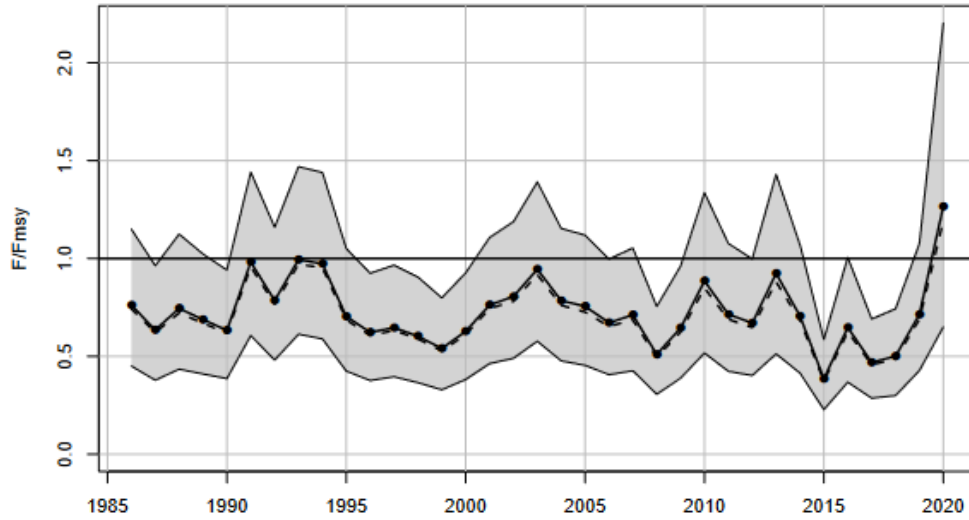


Figure 1. Estimated time series of Atlantic group Spanish mackerel fishing mortality rate (F) relative to F_{MSY} benchmark. Solid line indicates estimates from base run of the Beaufort Assessment Model; dashed lines indicate the median of the Monte Carlo Bootstrap analysis trials; grey error bands indicate 5th and 95th percentiles of the Monte Carlo Bootstrap analysis trials (SEDAR, 2022).

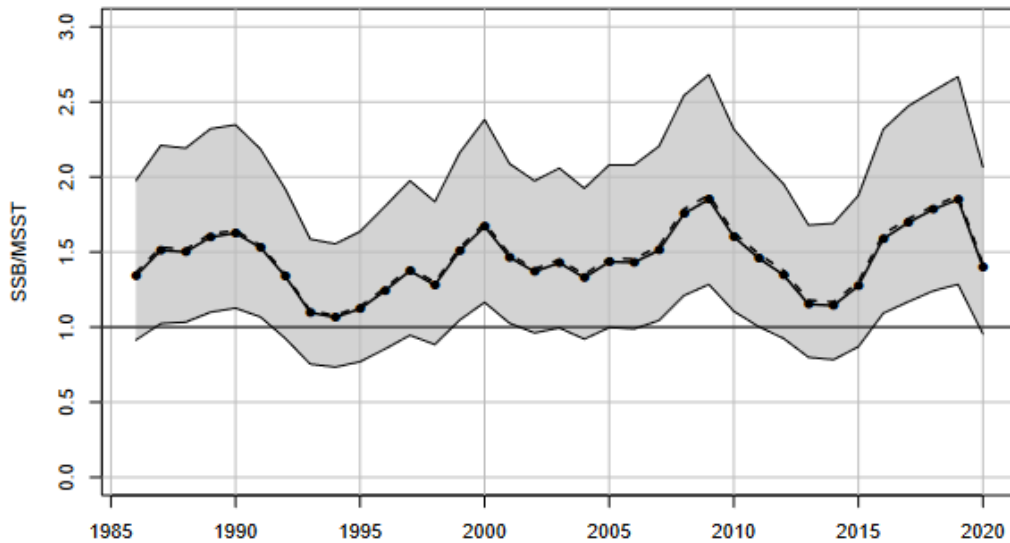


Figure 2. Estimated time series of Atlantic group Spanish mackerel spawning stock biomass (SSB) relative to MSY benchmark. Solid line indicates estimates from base run of the Beaufort Assessment Model; dashed lines indicate the median of the Monte Carlo Bootstrap analysis trials; grey error bands indicate 5th and 95th percentiles of the Monte Carlo Bootstrap analysis trials (SEDAR, 2022).

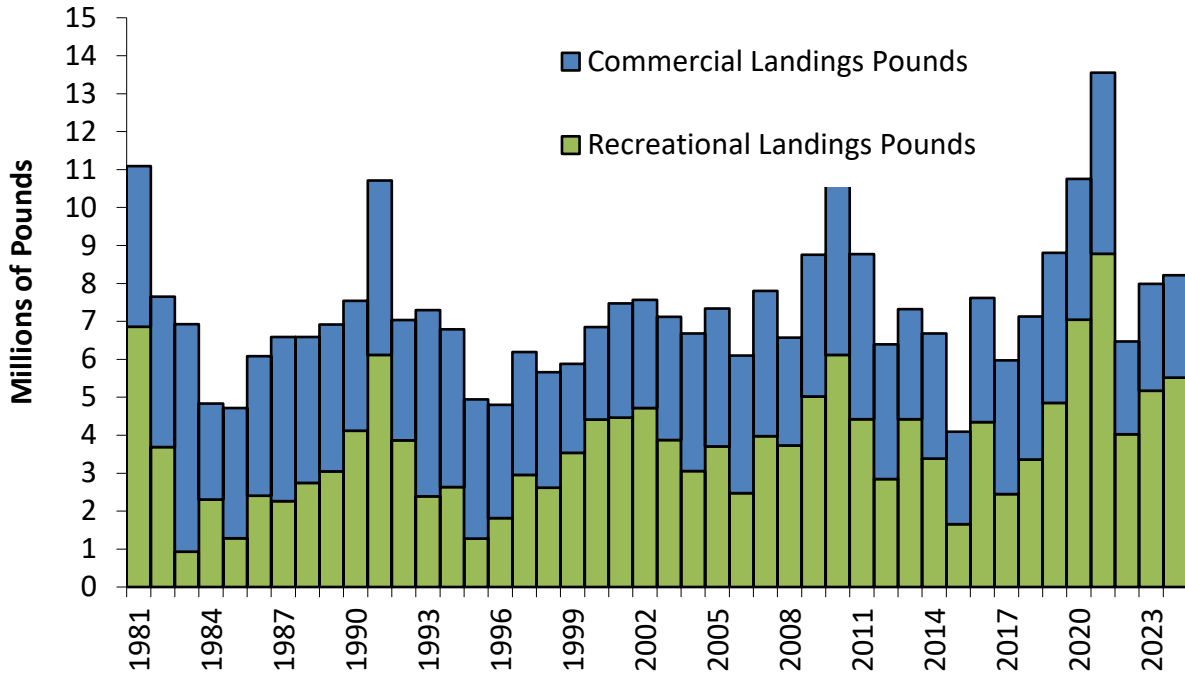


Figure 3. Commercial and recreational harvest (FES) (pounds) of Spanish mackerel, 1981-2024. Source: State compliance reports, ACCSP, MRIP query January 2026.

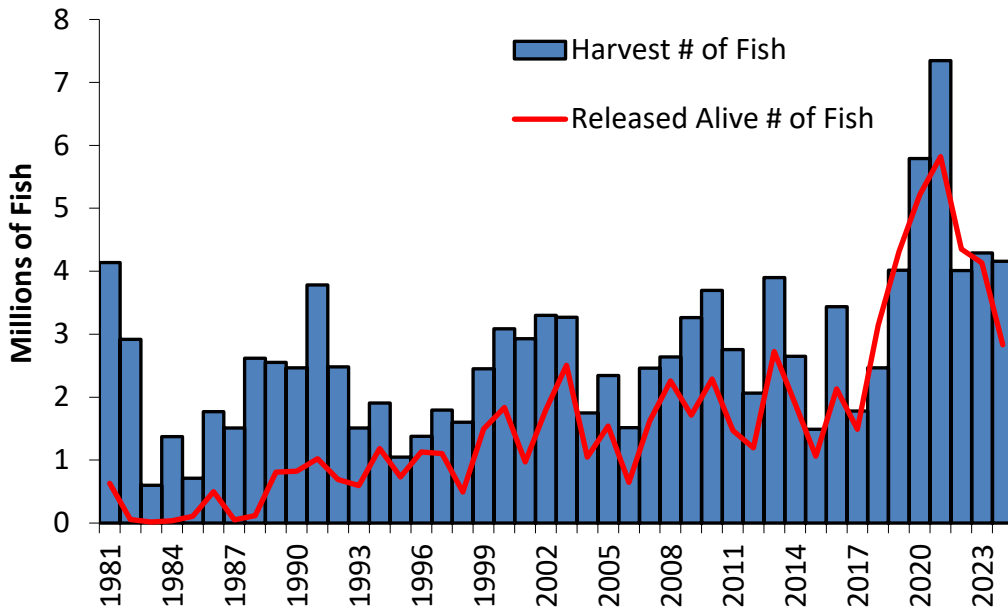


Figure 4. Recreational harvest and releases (numbers of fish) of Spanish mackerel, 1981-2024. Source: MRIP query January 2026.

XI. Tables

Table 1. Summary of state regulations for Spanish mackerel in 2023 and 2024.

Notes: A commercial license is required to sell Spanish mackerel in all states; other general gear restrictions apply to the harvest of Spanish mackerel. Purse seines, and drift gill nets south of Cape Lookout, NC are prohibited.

State	Recreational	Commercial
RI	14" TL, 15 fish	14" TL. 3,500 lb. trip limit.
NY	14" TL, 15 fish	14" TL. 3,500 lb. trip limit.
NJ	14" TL, 10 fish	14" TL. 3,500 lb. trip limit.
DE	14" TL, 15 fish	14" TL. 3,500 lb. trip limit.
MD	14" TL, 15 fish	14" TL. 3,500 lb. trip limit. Public notice 9/25/2023 and 8/2024: 500-lb trip limit when harvest in federal waters closed.
PRFC	14" TL, 15 fish	14" TL. 3,500 lb. trip limit as of 9/22/2025. Closure if/when both MD and VA fisheries close.
VA	14" TL, 15 fish	12" or 14" TL. 3,500 lb. trip limit. 500 lb. trip limit if/when harvest in federal waters closed.
NC	12" FL, 15 fish	12" FL; 3,500 lb. trip limit for combined Spanish and king mackerel landings. Proclamation issued 9/25/2023 and 7/28/2024: 500-lb trip limit when harvest in federal waters closed.
SC	12" FL, 15 fish	12" FL. 3500 lbs. until 75% of adjusted Atlantic Southern Zone quota taken, then 1500 lbs. until 100% of adjusted quota is taken, then 500 lbs. until the end of year or commercial quota is met. If quota is met, then commercial sector is closed to harvest. Requires open access permit for Spanish mackerel.
GA	12" FL, 15 fish	12" FL. 3500 lbs. until 75% of adjusted Atlantic Southern Zone quota taken, then 1500 lbs. until 100% of adjusted quota is taken, then 500 lbs. until the end of year or commercial quota is met. If quota is met, then commercial sector is closed to harvest.
FL	12" FL, 15 fish. Cast nets less than 14' and beach or haul seines within 2" stretched mesh allowed	12" FL or 14" TL. Trip limits: April 1 until Nov. 30 – 3500 lb.; Dec. 1 until 75% of adjusted quota reached – 3500 lb. Monday – Friday & 1500 lb. Saturday – Sunday; >75% adjusted quota until quota filled – 1500 lb.; > 100% of adjusted quota – 500 lb. Restricted Species Endorsement Required Allowed gear: beach or haul seine, cast net, hook and line, or spearing.

Table 2. Commercial landings (pounds, calendar year) of Spanish mackerel by state, 2015-2024. (Source: Annual state compliance reports for 2024; ACCSP for 2023 and earlier. Confidential values are shown as “C”. Coastwide totals and 'Other' totals adhere to the ACCSP rule of 3, i.e., totals are reflective of the true total if 0 or at least 3 states’ data are confidential in a given year. Otherwise, they are sums of non-confidential data.)

Year	Other*	RI	NY	NJ	DE	MD	PRFC
2015		C	1,357	2,746		2,222	
2016		C	813	1,997	C	16,205	548
2017	C	652	1,053	462		815	4,704
2018	C	951	1,283	950		3,071	420
2019	C	1,484	5,683	2,010	C	12,545	45,385
2020	C	602	3,023	C	C	6,728	10,092
2021	C	284	6,217	C	C	5,192	20,076
2022	C	C	6,182	1,903		6,368	11,066
2023	C		3,728	807	C	4,540	8,520
2024	C		2,583	C	C	3,213	1,455
Year	VA	NC	SC	GA	FL [^]	Total	
2015	14,493	561,714	C		1,857,556	2,440,094	
2016	32,779	601,623	C		2,619,848	3,273,989	
2017	21,605	816,089	C		2,674,025	3,519,405	
2018	23,212	796,890	C		2,943,419	3,770,196	
2019	149,705	722,398	C	C	3,012,007	3,951,390	
2020	63,697	1,033,526	C	C	2,588,404	3,707,975	
2021	143,377	1,155,289	C		3,431,262	4,767,393	
2022	221,269	926,035	C	C	1,275,808	2,448,800	
2023	191,489	805,032			1,805,158	2,819,274	
2024	342,106	841,478	C		1,502,751	2,697,871	

*Other: states that do not have a declared interest in Spanish mackerel and do not sit on the Coastal Pelagics Board

[^]Atlantic coast landings only for Florida

Table 3. Recreational harvest (**numbers**, calendar year) of Spanish mackerel by state, 2015-2024. State values shown are the current estimates using information from the mail-based Fishing Effort Survey (FES). (Source: personal communication with NOAA Fisheries, Fisheries Statistics Division. January 2026).

Note: Past FMP Reviews showed state-by-state estimates from the CHTS and cannot be directly compared to the state-by-state totals below.

Year	Other*	RI	NY	NJ	DE	MD	VA
2015						15,837	14,950
2016					9	18,559	554,813
2017				8,107	28	9,687	20,000
2018				6,753	797	19,146	132,390
2019	335		21,031	8,787	1,396	109,007	587,683
2020	6,254	3,016	6,096	3,985	92	151,412	374,892
2021	622		3,143	34,323	129	152,829	344,235
2022		414	1,435	11,865	16,213	70,582	380,446
2023			3,573	45,690	18,420	63,833	498,878
2024	616		13,743	23,137	2,215	71,556	328,693
Year	NC	SC	GA	FL [^]	Total		
2015	835,011	389,923	6,201	229,669	1,491,591		
2016	918,352	306,235	22,637	1,618,529	3,439,134		
2017	995,706	45,644	48,633	650,916	1,778,721		
2018	1,012,889	289,250	49,764	956,741	2,468,046		
2019	1,478,890	1,046,972	138,756	623,415	4,016,272		
2020	1,286,131	861,349	72,308	3,025,466	5,791,001		
2021	1,312,929	752,570	24,666	4,718,809	7,344,255		
2022	1,898,755	1,060,999	12,583	555,443	4,008,735		
2023	1,204,175	944,745	118,092	1,394,829	4,292,235		
2024	1,954,067	582,137	16,476	1,167,061	4,159,701		

*Other: states that do not have a declared interest in Spanish mackerel and do not sit on the Coastal Pelagics Board

[^]Atlantic coast landings only for Florida

Table 4. Recreational harvest (**pounds**, calendar year) of Spanish mackerel by state, 2015-2024. State values shown are the current estimates using information from the mail-based Fishing Effort Survey (FES). (Source: personal communication with NOAA Fisheries, Fisheries Statistics Division. January 2026).

Note: Past FMP Reviews showed state-by-state estimates from the CHTS and cannot be directly compared to the state-by-state totals below.

Year	Other*	RI	NY	NJ	DE	MD	VA
2015						40,290	13,777
2016					8	30,212	620,147
2017				9,405	43	20,646	30,590
2018				5,702	1,138	41,476	207,551
2019	591		30,177	17,558	1,300	181,994	718,353
2020	10,821	3,991	11,756	4,123	95	223,090	441,654
2021	1,041		3,227	38,116	160	251,273	399,106
2022		782	1,978	17,193	19,301	150,029	489,083
2023			2,985	56,701	23,909	83,661	497,525
2024	1,494		30,939	30,666	3,052	110,105	424,559
Year	NC	SC	GA	FL [^]	FES Total		
2015	981,867	253,620	22,185	342,598	1,654,337		
2016	907,400	192,865	39,915	2,552,216	4,342,763		
2017	1,094,778	75,779	72,064	1,146,112	2,449,417		
2018	1,156,702	513,271	74,910	1,354,426	3,357,009		
2019	1,694,247	847,163	348,469	1,011,804	4,851,656		
2020	1,843,314	556,882	232,439	3,714,856	7,043,021		
2021	1,894,535	503,374	46,879	5,645,741	8,783,452		
2022	1,841,527	773,139	39,885	689,100	4,022,017		
2023	1,216,236	857,266	148,235	2,283,714	5,170,232		
2024	2,710,335	523,163	29,282	1,649,858	5,513,453		

*Other: states that do not have a declared interest in Spanish mackerel and do not sit on the Coastal Pelagics Board

[^]Atlantic coast landings only for Florida

Table 5. Recreational releases (**numbers**, calendar year) of Spanish mackerel by state, 2015-2024. State values shown are the current estimates using information from the mail-based Fishing Effort Survey (FES). (Source: personal communication with NOAA Fisheries, Fisheries Statistics Division. January 2026).

Note: Past FMP Reviews showed state-by-state estimates from the CHTS and cannot be directly compared to the state-by-state totals below.

Year	Other*	RI	NY	NJ	DE	MD	VA
2015						355	4,945
2016					1,038		111,284
2017				14,050		3,747	14,829
2018			11,859	14,372	2	2,166	168,549
2019	4,731		49,390	60,003	2,334	62,881	536,244
2020	40,572		5,395	79,458	1,367	63,467	278,173
2021	3,137	450	2,155	13,309	206	87,479	178,237
2022	1,259	503	1,458	18,224		2,894	188,201
2023	3,644	2,000	11,370	52,803	351	30,105	297,903
2024		1,116	4,337	3,992	2,215	241	140,108
Year	NC	SC	GA	FL[^]	FES Total		
2015	514,714	321,930	4,185	219,190	1,065,319		
2016	546,950	333,635	137	1,136,663	2,130,960		
2017	688,062	300,244	17,408	453,911	1,492,251		
2018	1,019,418	322,330	18,149	1,584,579	3,141,424		
2019	1,340,366	1,588,754	14,943	652,727	4,312,373		
2020	1,267,210	1,060,185	15,301	2,403,133	5,214,261		
2021	1,294,525	647,701	13,733	3,579,828	5,820,760		
2022	2,268,283	1,401,659	38,885	432,592	4,353,958		
2023	1,293,628	1,487,206	61,330	890,686	4,131,026		
2024	1,528,319	786,645	18,010	345,641	2,830,624		

*Other: states that do not have a declared interest in Spanish mackerel and do not sit on the Coastal Pelagics Board

[^]Atlantic coast landings only for Florida

Appendix I. Differences Between the Interstate FMP and Federal FMP for Spanish Mackerel

In February 2020, the former South Atlantic Management Board, which is now split into the Coastal Pelagics Management Board and Sciaenids Management Board, discussed differences between the Interstate Fishery Management Plan (FMP) for Spanish mackerel and the federal Coastal Migratory Pelagics FMP for Spanish mackerel. The last update to the Interstate FMP was the Omnibus Amendment for Spanish Mackerel, Spot, and Spotted Sea Trout (2011) and its Addendum I for Spanish Mackerel (2013).

Differences between the Interstate and Federal FMPs exist in terms of commercial management zones, commercial trip limits and closures, allowable gears, recreational season, and recreational accountability measures. Board action to consider addressing these differences was postponed until completion of the 2022 stock assessment. The differences between the Interstate and Federal FMPs are outlined below.

Definition of Commercial Management Zones

The Interstate FMP defines the Northern Zone as New York through Georgia, and the Southern Zone as the east coast of Florida. The Federal FMP defines the Northern Zone as New York through North Carolina, and the Southern Zone as South Carolina through Florida (through the Miami-Dade/Monroe County line). For the Interstate FMP, Rhode Island joined the interstate management unit in 2021.

Commercial Trip Limits and Closures

For their respective Northern Zones, both the Interstate and Federal FMPs set a 3,500-pound commercial trip limit. For the interstate Southern Zone, the trip limit starts at 3,500 pounds and is reduced throughout the season depending on the date and how much of the quota is met. For the federal Southern Zone, the trip limit also starts at 3,500 pounds and is reduced depending on how much of the quota is met.

In federal waters, each management zone closes when that federal zone's total quota is met. Under the Interstate FMP, states are not required to close state waters when federal waters close. In recent years, Maryland, Virginia, and North Carolina have implemented a reduced 500-pound trip limit in state waters when the Northern Zone federal waters closed.

The commercial trip limits and management zones are summarized in the following table.

Commercial Management Zones and Trip Limits	
<p>Interstate FMP</p> <p><u>Northern Zone</u> New York to Georgia (RI joined in 2021)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – 3,500-pound trip limit – Not required to close when federal waters close. <p><i>Note: In recent years, Maryland, Virginia, and North Carolina have implemented a 500-lb trip limit in state waters when the Northern Zone federal waters closed.</i></p> <p><u>Southern Zone</u> Florida (east coast)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – 3,500-pound trip limit: 3/1-11/30; – 3,500 limit Mon-Fri & 1,500 limit Sat-Sun: 12/1 until 75% adjusted quota taken; – 1,500 limit until 100% adjusted quota taken; – 500 limit after 100% adj. quota taken; – Not required to close when federal waters close. 	<p>Federal FMP</p> <p><u>Northern Zone</u> New York to North Carolina</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – 3,500-pound trip limit – Closed when Northern Zone total quota is met. <p><u>Southern Zone</u> South Carolina to Florida (east coast)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – 3,500-pound trip limit until 75% of the Southern Zone adjusted quota is met; – 1,500 limit until 100% of the Southern Zone adjusted quota is met; – 500 limit after 100% of the Southern Zone adjusted quota is met; – Closed when the Southern Zone total quota met.

Allowable Gears

The Interstate FMP lists prohibited gears for each sector. For the commercial sector, purse seines, and drift gill nets south of Cape Lookout, NC are prohibited. For the recreational sector, drift gill nets south of Cape Lookout, NC are prohibited. The Federal FMP lists allowable gears: only automatic reel, bandit gear, handline, rod and reel, cast net, run-around gillnet, and stab net allowed.

Recreational Season

The Interstate FMP specifies a calendar year recreational season, while the Federal FMP’s recreational fishing year is March 1 through the end of February.

Recreational Accountability Measures

Under the Interstate FMP, if the total annual catch limit (ACL) is exceeded and the stock is overfished, the recreational quotas are decreased via reduced bag limits the following year. Under the Federal FMP, if the total ACL is exceeded, bag limits are reduced the following year to achieve the annual catch target (ACT) but not to exceed the ACL. If the stock is overfished and the ACL is exceeded, there is a payback, reducing the ACT by the overage amount the following year.

Appendix II. Changes to the Spanish Mackerel Federal FMP Since 2011

Amendment 18 (Federal)

In August 2011, the Gulf of Mexico and South Atlantic, Fishery Management Councils approved Amendment 18 to the joint FMP for Coastal Migratory Pelagics. The primary action under consideration established Annual Catch Limits (ACLs) and Accountability Measures (AMs) for cobia, king mackerel, and Spanish mackerel. The amendment designates ACLs and Annual Catch Targets (ACTs) for each of the two migratory groups of Spanish mackerel (Atlantic and Gulf). For the Atlantic migratory group, the commercial sector ACL is set equivalent to the commercial sector quota of 3.13 million pounds. The AM for the commercial sector is that the commercial sector will close when the commercial quota is reached or projected to be reached. In addition, current trip limit adjustments will remain in place. When the commercial sector closes, harvest and possession of Spanish mackerel would be prohibited for persons aboard a vessel for which a commercial permit for Spanish mackerel has been issued.

For the recreational sector, the ACT is set at 2.32 million pounds, while the ACL is set at 2.56 million pounds. Regarding the AM, if the stock ACL is exceeded in any year, the bag limit will be reduced the next fishing year by the amount necessary to ensure recreational landings achieve the recreational ACT, but do not exceed the recreational ACL in the following fishing year. A payback will be assessed if the Atlantic migratory group Spanish mackerel is determined to be overfished and the stock ACL is exceeded. The payback will include a reduction in the sector ACT for the following year by the amount of the overage by that sector in the prior fishing year.

Amendment 20A (Federal)

Effective July 2014, this Amendment addresses the sale of bag limit caught Spanish mackerel. The amendment arose from concerns that sales of fish caught under the recreational bag limit are counted toward commercial quotas, and thus contribute to the early closure of the commercial sector. In addition, potential double counting of these fish could be causing erroneous landings estimates. In response, the Amendment prohibits bag limit sales with the exception of recreationally caught fish from state permitted tournaments in the South Atlantic region. This amendment also included an action to remove income requirements for federal CMP permits.

South Atlantic CMP Framework Action (Federal)

Effective December 2014, this action allows Spanish mackerel, harvested with gillnet gear in the South Atlantic EEZ off Florida (north of the Miami-Dade/Monroe County line) that is in excess of the trip limit, to be transferred to another federally permitted vessel that has not yet harvested the trip limit. The Framework stipulates that the transfer can only occur if: 1) allowable gillnet gear was used to harvest Spanish mackerel; 2) the transfer takes place in federal waters between vessels with valid commercial permits; 3) the receiving vessel does not have more than 3 gillnets aboard after the transfer; 4) all fish remain entangled in the meshes of the net until the transfer; 5) the quantity of the fish transferred does not exceed the daily trip limit; and 6) there is only one transfer per vessel per day.

CMP Framework Amendment 1 (Federal)

This Framework Amendment, effective December 2014, increases the Atlantic Spanish mackerel ACL to 6.063 million pounds. The modification to the ACL followed the 2013 stock assessment which concluded that the stock is not overfished and overfishing is not occurring. The Amendment divides the ACL between the commercial sector (3.33 million pounds) and the recreational sector (2.727 million pounds).

Amendment 20B (Federal)

Effective March 2015, this Amendment separates commercial quotas of Atlantic Spanish mackerel between a Northern zone (north of NC/SC line) and a Southern zone (South of NC/SC line). The Amendment arose from concerns that the commercial quota could be filled by fishermen in one state before fish are available to fishermen in another state. In order to prevent this from happening, a zone is closed when its respective quota is met. Quota for each zone was based on landings from 2002/2003-2011/2012.

CMP Framework Amendment 2 (Federal)

Implemented July 2015, this Amendment modifies the commercial trip limit system in the Southern zone. The rule establishes a trip limit of 3,500 pounds for Spanish mackerel in Federal waters offshore of South Carolina, Georgia, and Florida. When 75% of the adjusted southern zone commercial quota is caught, the commercial trip limit is reduced to 1,500 lbs. When 100% of the adjusted southern zone commercial quota is met, the commercial trip limit is further reduced to 500 lbs. This limit remains until the end of the year or the total Southern zone commercial quota is met.

CMP Framework Amendment 5 (Federal)

Implemented August 2017, this Framework Amendment allows commercially permitted vessels to operate as private recreational vessels when the commercial season is closed for Spanish or king mackerel.

Amendment 34 (Federal)

Implemented in 2023, Amendment 34 allows cut-off (damaged by natural predation) Atlantic Spanish mackerel caught under the recreational bag limit, which comply with the minimum size limits, to be possessed, and offloaded ashore.

Framework Amendment 13 (Federal) – *Development of this action is currently paused.*

Initiated in 2023, Framework Amendment 13 responds to the latest stock assessment (SEDAR 78) and was intended to update catch levels based on the SSC recommendations and address recreational accountability measures. This action would provide recreational catch levels in MRIP FES units. In December 2023, this action was paused until the completion of the 2024 port meetings.