Spanish Mackerel
(*Scomberomorus commerson*)

**Exploitation Status**

**FULLY FISHED**

Majority of the commercial harvest occurs in Queensland waters and status from the Queensland assessment has been adopted.

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<th>Scientific Name</th>
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<td><em>Scomberomorus commerson</em></td>
<td>Spanish mackerel</td>
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### Background

Spanish mackerel are distributed in the waters of the Indo-Pacific from the Red Sea and South Africa to southeast Asia, north to China and Japan, and south to Australia. They are also found in the eastern Mediterranean Sea. In Australian waters, they are distributed from Geographe Bay in WA around northern and eastern Australia to St Helens in Tasmania. Within this geographical distribution, Spanish mackerel can be found from the edge of the continental shelf to shallow coastal waters. Adults are associated with coral reefs, rocky shoals and current lines on outer reef areas and offshore. Small juveniles up to 10 cm fork length (FL) occur in creeks, estuaries and sheltered mud flats during the early wet season in north Queensland.

Sampling of Spanish mackerel in WA showed that 50% of females reached sexual maturity at about 79 cm, while 50% of males reached sexual maturity at 63 cm. Females can be categorised as serial or partial spawners with fish showing a peak in reproductive activity between August and January in WA, and during the spring/summer months in Queensland. They are highly fecund - large females produce more than 1 million eggs. In Queensland waters, Spanish mackerel can reach 240 cm FL and a maximum weight of 70 kg with females growing to a larger size than males. Initial growth is rapid with fish reaching 100 cm in the first few years of life. The oldest males and females sampled from catches by the Queensland commercial fishery were 10 (127 cm FL, 19 kg) and 14 years (155 cm FL, 35 kg) respectively.

Migrations of Spanish mackerel extend along the entire east coast of Queensland although permanently resident populations also seem to exist. Resident fish disperse from reefs after spawning whilst migrating fish can move up to 1000 nautical miles to the south (into NSW waters). The use of parasites to distinguish between stocks suggested that there may be six separate stocks of Spanish mackerel across northern Australia, however, the use of isozyme, allozyme and mitochondrial DNA genetic analysis failed to find any significant differences. The diet of Spanish mackerel consists of small fish like anchovies, clupeids and carangids, as well as squid and prawns.
Additional Notes

- NSW commercial landings are small (< 10 t) compared with Queensland (200 - 600 t).
- There are significant recreational landings of Spanish mackerel, especially in Queensland.
- A length-based stock assessment conducted in 2008 by Queensland Fisheries concluded that the stock was at about maximum sustainable yield level, with exploitable biomass estimated to be 35-60% of the unfished level.
- There is a minimum legal length of 75 cm total length for Spanish mackerel and a combined recreational bag limit of 5 for all Spanish and spotted mackerel.

Catch

Recreational Catch of Spanish Mackerel

The annual recreational harvest of Spanish mackerel in NSW is likely to lie between 10 and 100 t. This estimate is based upon the results of the offsite National Recreational and Indigenous Fishing Survey (Henry and Lyle, 2003) and onsite surveys undertaken by I & I NSW.

Historical Landings of Spanish Mackerel

Commercial landings (including available historical records) of Spanish mackerel for NSW from 1978/79 to 2008/09 for all fishing methods.
Further Reading


Please visit the CSIRO website, http://www.marine.csiro.au/caab/ and search for the species code (CAAB) 37 441007, common name or scientific name to find further information.