

King Mackerel (*Scomberomorus cavalla*)

Description:

King mackerel are long and slim, iron-gray on the back and silvery on their sides and belly. They have pale to dusky fins, and a gray dorsal fin. King mackerel can be distinguished from Spanish mackerel by their more pronounced lateral line. King mackerel are voracious carnivores that feed on fish, squid, and shrimp.



Gulf of Mexico Stock Characteristics:

(SEDAR 38U 2020; fishbase.org)

Natural mortality rate (M):	0.174/year
Age at 50% maturity:	~Two years; ~23-inch fork length (FL)
Maximum age:	~20 years
Maximum weight:	~45 kg (100 lb) whole weight
Maximum length:	~ 167 cm (5 ½ ft) total length

Distribution:

King mackerel can be found in open waters near the coast of the Atlantic Ocean. They migrate with seasonal changes in water temperature, and prefer warm waters. In the Southeast, the Gulf and South Atlantic stocks congregate in a winter mixing zone south of the Florida Keys between November and March. King mackerel reproduce by releasing eggs in the water column where fertilization also occurs. This event occurs from May through October.



Current Gulf Council Regulations:

Gulf king mackerel has separate recreational and commercial annual catch limits (ACL). The recreational and commercial ACLs are 6,793,200 lb (in MRIP-FES) and 3,196,800 lb, respectively. The commercial sector is divided into four zones: northern, southern, and western hook-and-line, and southern zone gillnet. The recreational bag limit is three fish per person. The minimum size limit is 24-inch FL.