



THE SOUTH ATLANTIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

King and Spanish Mackerel Fishing Tournaments

Mackerel Cobia Advisory Panel

November 2023

Background

At their December 2022 meeting the Council requested NMFS provide information on king and mackerel tournament landings over the last ten years and how those landings were accounted for against the annual catch limit. The SEFSC worked with state agencies to provide tournament landings over the last ten years, specifically South Atlantic tournament landings in the commercial data streams (trip tickets through ACCSP).

- Compiled by SEFSC Fisheries Statistics Division
- Contact: Alan Lowther (alan.lowther@noaa.gov)
- Data for North Carolina, Georgia, and Florida provided by state fisheries management agencies.
- Data for South Carolina was not provided as this (tournament landings on trip tickets) does not occur in South Carolina.



Current Tournament Regulations

The Fishery Management Plan for Coastal Migratory Pelagic Resources in the Gulf of Mexico and Atlantic Regions (CMP FMP) does not allow king and Spanish mackerel harvested in the state-permitted tournament to be sold for profit, however, they may be donated to state or federal dealer. The dealer who accepts these tournament-caught fish must be permitted and comply with all transfer and reporting requirements. Federally permitted dealers are able to receive donated fish from a non-federally permitted vessel.

The dealer then must donate the monetary value (sale price or cash equivalent of value) from the sale of a tournament-caught fish to a charitable organization, as determined by the state. The monetary value cannot be used to pay for tournament expenses. Additionally, fish must be handled and iced according to the Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point (HACCP) standards and reported as “tournament catch” to comply with federal and state reporting requirements.

Questions for the Advisory Panel

1. What role do king and Spanish mackerel fishing tournaments play in your community?
2. Have you noticed any change in number of (or popularity of) king and Spanish mackerel fishing tournaments over the last five years?
3. What is your experience with donating fish from a tournament and/or donating the monetary value of sold tournament fish?
4. What size fish are typically harvested during tournaments?

North Carolina Tournament Landings

Table 1. North Carolina king mackerel tournament landings, 1999-2022.

Year	King Mackerel Tournaments	All Tournaments w/landings	Pounds	Dealers	Estimated avg. weight	Estimated number
1999	11	15	21,954	6	8.2	2688
2000	17	20	55,765	9	8.3	6756
2001	16	23	38,168	8	9.3	4093
2002	22	30	42,238	12	10.5	4006
2003	24	33	36,056	12	7.3	4939
2004	28	36	41,368	13	8.8	4678
2005	22	31	39,268	13	7.3	5378
2006	24	29	29,730	11	10.2	2927
2007	24	30	40,477	10	7.2	5608
2008	17	22	28,392	9	6.5	4401
2009	11	15	23,304	8	7.8	2997
2010	11	14	18,203	9	12.1	1509
2011	12	17	7,330	10	10.3	714
2012	13	16	20,783	10	10.6	1967
2013	10	15	20,152	8	12.6	1605
2014	13	16	24,704	9	10.1	2453
2015	15	18	30,965	8	10.7	2881
2016	13	17	28,981	9	11.4	2553
2017	21	25	35,482	9	8.3	4296
2018	17	21	37,581	6	8.7	4315
2019	21	23	45,994	6	8.9	5162
2020	19	20	46,687	7	10.1	4636
2021	20	21	52,904	8	8.1	6526
2022	20	21	37,897	5	9.2	4114

Data notes: Data provided by the North Carolina Division of Marine Fisheries. NC does not collect landings from every tournament. They collect landings from tournaments that sell their catch to a dealer. Tournaments who sell the catch are required to obtain a special license allowing them to sell that catch. The dealers that the tournaments sell to are then required to report those landings on trip tickets, with the tournament license number recorded on the trip ticket. There may be more king mackerel tournaments occurring that do not sell their catch, in which case, those landings would not be reported here. NC does not report numbers of fish.

The values in the King Mackerel Tournaments Count column are a count of the distinct number of tournament license numbers with king mackerel landings on trip tickets for each year. The All-Tournaments W/Landings column shows the number of distinct tournament license numbers with trip ticket landings.

These data begin in fall of 1999, the numbers for 1999 may not be complete (but most tournaments do occur in the fall). Estimated numbers are based on SEFSC calculations using estimated average weights calculated from TIP length sampling and the most recent King mackerel SEDAR length-weight equation.

Georgia Tournament Landings

Table 2. Georgia king mackerel tournament landings, 2014-2022.

Year	Number of tournaments	Pounds	Estimated avg. weight	Estimated number
2014	2	668	10.1	66
2015	5	903	8.8	102
2016	4	717	9.2	78
2017	5	980	8.1	122
2018	4	3800	8.2	463
2019	5		8.6	0
2020	5	1247	9.2	135
2021	5	1580	8.7	183
2022	5		8.7	0

Data notes: Data provided by the Georgia Department of Natural Resources Coastal Resources Division. These data reflect what is in the ACCSP Data Warehouse including missing values for 2007 and 2022 Georgia reports there has been some confusion with tournament mackerel and reporting.

In Georgia, the proceeds from selling the tournament mackerel fish have to be donated to a charitable cause. The dealer acts as the sales agent and does not take a cut (does not have a business interest).

Estimated numbers are based on SEFSC calculations using estimated average weights calculated from TIP length sampling for the Atlantic coast from North Carolina to Florida (since there are very few Georgia records in the database) and the most recent King mackerel SEDAR length-weight equation.

Florida Tournament Landings

Table 3. Florida king mackerel tournament landings, 2001-2022.

Year	King Mackerel Tournaments	Pounds	Dealers	Estimated avg. weight (lbs)	Estimated number
2001	1	CONF	1	8.8	N/A
2002	3	CONF	1	8.8	N/A
2003	0	0	0	8.9	0
2004	0	0	0	9.7	0
2005	0	0	0	8.8	0
2006	0	0	0	9.6	0
2007	0	0	0	9.2	0
2008	0	0	0	9.5	0
2009	0	0	0	9.0	0
2010	1	CONF	1	8.7	N/A
2011	0	0	0	9.9	0
2012	0	0	0	10.9	0
2013	0	0	0	12.3	0
2014	0	0	0	10.2	0
2015	1	CONF	1	8.4	N/A
2016	3	CONF	1	8.5	N/A
2017	0	0	0	7.9	N/A
2018	1	CONF	1	7.9	0
2019	2	CONF	2	8.3	N/A
2020	5	22,738	3	8.7	2620
2021	5	13,981	3	9.1	1544
2022	7	15,648	5	8.6	1817

Data notes: Data provided by the Florida Fish and Wildlife Research Institute. If fish are caught in a tournament and the dealer wishes to sell the catch and donate the profits to charity, they must obtain a mackerel tournament donation permit (<https://myfwc.com/license/saltwater/mackerel/>). One of the requirements is that there must be an associated trip ticket. These landings can be identified by trip ticket numbers beginning with "TN".

The values in the King Mackerel Tournaments Count column are a count of the distinct number of tournament trip tickets with king mackerel landings for each year. Florida was not asked to provide information to populate the All-Tournaments W/Landings column.

Florida began using the "TN" code for trip tickets generated from tournaments beginning in 2001. Estimated numbers are based on SEFSC calculations using estimated average weights calculated from TIP length sampling and the most recent King mackerel SEDAR length-weight equation."



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South Atlantic King Mackerel Tournament Landings

**Presentation to:
South Atlantic Fishery Management Council**

**John Walter, SEFSC
June 13, 2023**

Background

- Previous concern expressed about possibility of King mackerel tournament landings being counted towards both recreational and commercial landings (and thus ACLs)
- Tournament landings can end up on a dealer report if the fish are collected by a dealer (and normally donated to charity or earnings from sale donated to charity)
- Removals should be considered to be recreational – landings are accounted for in MRIP, as tournament trips are not excluded from MRIP effort survey



State information (provided by the state fishery mgmt agencies)

- **NC** – tournament landings may be reported to ACCSP on a trip ticket – working on way to identify so they can be separated (using ACCSP Catch-Source variable)
- **SC** – tournament landings do not get reported on trip tickets
- **GA** – small amount of tournament landings reported on trip tickets
- **FL** – tournament landings may be reported to ACCSP on a trip ticket but can be identified and removed for ACL calculations (SEFSC does this)

Percentage of S. Atlantic King mackerel tournament landings-commercial

YEAR	Tournament Percentage	Tourn % (exclude FL)
1999	0.69%	0.69%
2000	1.88%	1.88%
2001	1.43%	1.43%
2002	1.71%	1.71%
2003	1.27%	1.27%
2004	1.27%	1.27%
2005	1.26%	1.26%
2006	0.78%	0.78%
2007	1.08%	1.08%
2008	0.65%	0.65%
2009	0.48%	0.48%
2010	0.43%	0.43%
2011	0.24%	0.24%
2012	0.85%	0.85%
2013	1.05%	1.05%
2014	1.07%	1.07%
2015	1.41%	1.41%
2016	1.13%	1.13%
2017	1.17%	1.17%
2018	1.52%	1.52%
2019	1.44%	1.44%
2020	2.43%	1.65%
2021	2.67%	2.12%
2022	2.83%	2.00%

Notes:

- Percentages represent the share of tournament King mackerel landings relative to total commercial King mackerel landings, in weight.
- In all cases the percentage is well below 3%
- Florida tournament landings are excluded in ACL calcs, so the right column is most appropriate

Percentage of S. Atlantic King mackerel tournament landings-recreational

YEAR	Tournament Percentage	Tourn % (exclude FL)
1999	0.29%	0.29%
2000	0.62%	0.62%
2001	0.60%	0.60%
2002	0.55%	0.55%
2003	0.38%	0.38%
2004	0.49%	0.49%
2005	0.79%	0.79%
2006	0.33%	0.33%
2007	0.36%	0.36%
2008	0.41%	0.41%
2009	0.28%	0.28%
2010	0.38%	0.38%
2011	0.21%	0.21%
2012	0.73%	0.73%
2013	0.72%	0.72%
2014	0.78%	0.78%
2015	0.92%	0.92%
2016	0.70%	0.70%
2017	0.60%	0.60%
2018	0.75%	0.75%
2019	0.65%	0.65%
2020	1.24%	0.84%
2021	1.63%	1.30%
2022	1.26%	0.89%

Notes:

- Percentages represent the share of tournament King mackerel landings relative to total recreational King mackerel landings, in weight.
- In all cases the percentage is well below 3% (amount assumed for assessments)
- Florida tournament landings are excluded in ACL calcs, so the right column is most appropriate

Concluding thoughts

- Tournament landings should be considered to be recreational
- Overall tournament landings are a very small percentage of the total King mackerel removals
- However, a small amount of king mackerel landings (less than 2%) in NC and GA may have been attributed to both commercial and recreational
- ACCSP is working with NOAA and the states to provide mechanism to report tournament landings on dealer reports (Catch_Source variable)
- Once implemented, we will be able to exclude all tournament landings from ACL calculations

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- FishSmart colleagues

https://safmc.net/documents/attach4fishsmart_takeholder_final_report-pdf/

Fisheries Magazine

Feature: Fisheries Management

FishSmart: An Innovative Role for Science in Stakeholder-Centered Approaches to Fisheries Management

Thomas J. Miller ✉ Jeff A. Blair, Thomas F. Ihde, Robert M. Jones, David H. Secor, Michael J. Wilberg

First published: 09 January 2011 | <https://doi.org/10.1577/1548-8446-35.9.422> | Citations: 30

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Abstract

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Until recently, marine fisheries managers have predominately interacted with a single user group—commercial fisheries. However, changes in participation in fisheries and progress toward ecosystem-based approaches have introduced new stakeholders into the management process. Yet, there are few examples of successful approaches of how to engage the spectrum of stakeholders interested in management policy and decisions. Here we describe one such approach that was used in the fisheries for king mackerel (*Scomberomorus cavalla*) along the U.S. southeast coast. The approach combined consensus building in facilitated workshops and decision analysis in which stakeholders could compare the consequences of alternative management options on trends in the king mackerel population and the fisheries it supports. The process resulted in a workgroup of stakeholders that developed a clear vision for its desired future of king mackerel fisheries and several alternative management options. Decision analysis was used to select the best options that were then recommended to the South Atlantic Fisheries Management Council (SAFMC). These options were more conservative than the council's own recommendations. Additional benefits of the process included stakeholder education, both in stock assessment methodology and in an understanding other stakeholder positions, and the development of closer cooperation among stakeholders and managers.