

# Spanish Mackerel

## *Scomberomorous Maculatus*

### Where:

- Offshore in open waters around structure
- Nearshore around open water, including the flats and oyster bars
- Onshore in the surf and near piers, especially during the warmer weather

### When:

- From March to September
- As the water warms, they will come closer to shore

### Gear:

- Light to medium spinning or baitcasting tackle preferred
- Medium to stout 7 to 8-foot rod
- 12-20 lb. braided line
- 30-40 lb. fluorocarbon leader; steel leader if losing gear
- 1/0-2/0 circle hook to match bait size
- Bobber, especially one that attracts upon intermittent retrieval.

### Bait:

- Minnows, mullet, greenbacks
- Cut bait such as squid
- Live or dead shrimp threaded on hook

### Lures:

- Shiny spoons, heavy metal lures
- Plastics with jig heads—anything flashy or colorful that can be reeled in quickly

### Tactics:

- Look for diving terns and pelicans or bait being driven to the surface
- Drift into the area so as not to spook the mackerel
- Retrieve shiny lures quickly
- Try varying depth and retrieval speed
- Use steel leader if the fish are cutting the line too often
- If fly fishing, use colorful flies that mimic minnows
- Sight fishing is one of the best ways to find these fish

### Trends:

- Spanish mackerel begin moving from the deeper offshore waters to inshore in March.
- As the water begins to warm above 70 degrees, they move onshore where anglers can catch them from piers and from the beach.
- They usually travel in large schools and move constantly in search of prey

**Community:**

- Just about anyone, from marina personnel to anglers, will tell you where the Spanish mackerel can be found.
- Boats will often follow schools and congregate where the fish are being caught. Be sure to leave plenty of room for the other boats as a courtesy.
- Check the fishing section in the local newspapers and magazines. Scan online fishing reports such as those produced by Fishin' Franks in Southwest Florida.



Spanish Mackerel Catch Card			Salt-STRONG
Tactics	Trends	Tips	
Open water, diving birds, boiling water, bait driven to the surface	Beginning offshore in March. Inshore and onshore in warm weather	Retrieve quickly, vary depth and speed, keep steel leader on hand.	
Shiny, colorful lures retrieved quickly. Spoons and bright heavy metal lures.	Will often be found with King Mackerel, Ladyfish, redfish and speckled trout	Drift into the area and cast into the center of the boiling bait. Bring the whole family for great fun!	

