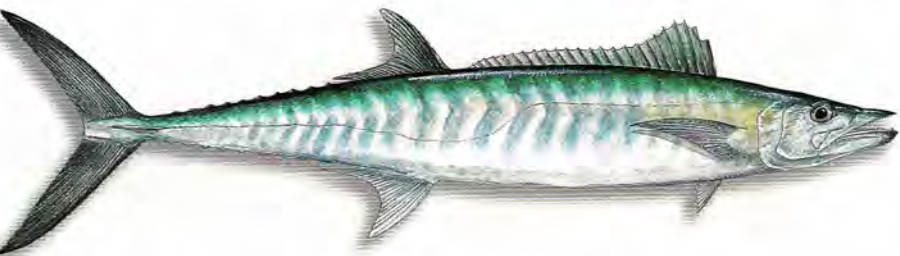


King Mackerel

Scomberomorus cavalla



DESCRIPTION: Adults are heavy bodied, with large mouth and razor teeth. Elongated body is greenish above but mostly silvery and unmarked, except in juveniles, which have spots that can cause confusion with Spanish Mackerel (next).

SIZE: School fish may run from 4 to around 20 pounds; individuals to 50 pounds, or slightly more, are not rare. Potential is from 75 to possibly 100 pounds. World record 90 pounds.

FOOD VALUE: Depends on taste of the individual. The flesh is rich and oily—not at all to the taste of people who like their fish on the mild side. Many, however, consider the broiled steaks a delicacy, and nearly everyone likes smoked King Mackerel.

GAME QUALITIES: Kings are about as fast as Wahoo, although they seldom get that acknowledgment. Regardless, they are strong and sizzling fighters at any size.

TACKLE AND BAITS: Trollers generally choose ocean outfits with lines testing from 20-40 pounds, but kings of all sizes can be caught on spinning, baitcasting and even fly tackle. Spoons trolled behind planers are good, as are rigged Cigar Minnows and feather-minnow combinations. Fishing with Pilchards as both chum and live bait could be the most productive system of all, but drifting with small dead fish, strips or live baits, including live shrimp, is effective too. For casters, spoons and nylon jigs usually work best. Fly rodders can connect with shiny flies on sinking lines.

FISHING SYSTEMS: Drifting; Trolling; Still Fishing.

OTHER NAMES:

Kingfish
Sierra
Cavalla

RANGE: All Gulf areas.

HABITAT: Widely distributed from the edge of blue water all the way to the beaches. Separate runs occur at about the same time on opposite sides of the Gulf in spring and fall, with Louisiana being the approximate dividing point. Action continues throughout the summer in more northerly waters, and also throughout the winter in southern stretches of the Gulf, and throughout the winter in the Florida Keys. The very biggest fish, however, are often hooked very close to the beach, even from piers, and are often referred to as "Beachcombers."