

Name: _____

Meet the Pacific Mackerel



Scientific name: *Scomber japonicus*

Size: They are usually about 12-20 inches.

Lifespan: Mackerel grow and mature quickly and can live up to about 10-15 years.

Distribution: Mackerel are found worldwide in temperate (not too hot, not too cold ~50-72 °F) waters, and throughout the eastern Pacific. On the map to the right, the areas in dark grey are where mackerel are commonly found and caught by fishermen.



Behavior: Mackerel swim in compact, structured schools, and may even school with other types of fish, such as Pacific bonito, jack mackerel, and Pacific sardine. Mackerel migrate or move with seasonal changes in water temperatures. In the northern hemisphere, they move north during the summer and south for the winter.

Predators: Predators of mackerel include tunas, billfishes, white seabass, yellowtail, sea lions, sharks, sea birds, and humans.

Fisheries: Mackerel are one of the most abundant sport-caught fish in California. Since mackerel are commonly used by humans for food and bait, fisheries scientists and the government make sure that there is a good-sized population in the ocean.

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Questions:

1. Why do you think mackerel swim in a school?

2. Why would mackerel migrate from one place to another?

3. Why would fisheries scientists want to know how many mackerel are in the ocean?

4. What questions do you have about the Pacific mackerel?

5. What are you looking forward to learning about the Pacific mackerel?