

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

## Meet the Pacific Mackerel **KEY**



**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?

Answers may vary, but should describe how schooling behavior can help for both protection from predators and catching prey.

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

Mackerel will general migrate with changes in water temperature in order to have a stable food source, as well as move to warmer water in order to reproduce (spawn.)

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

Answers may vary, but should relate to the affects on mackerel populations to the entire food chain or ecosystem, as well as our fisheries industry.

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

Answers will vary!

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

Answers will vary!