

Decision Document

Coastal Migratory Pelagics Joint Amendment 26

(Changes in Allocations, Stock Boundaries and Sale
Provisions for Gulf of Mexico and Atlantic Migratory
Groups of King Mackerel)

South Atlantic Mackerel Committee
March 2016



February 17, 2016

ACTIONS FOR AMENDMENT 26

- Modify the management/stock boundary for Gulf and Atlantic migratory groups of king mackerel
- Update the biological reference points and revise the ABC, OY, ACLs and Recreational ACT for Atlantic group king mackerel
- Create an incidental catch allowance of Atlantic group king mackerel caught in the shark gillnet fishery
- Establish split season commercial quotas for harvest of Atlantic group king mackerel in the Southern Zone
- Establish a trip limit system for the Southern Zone
- Update the biological reference points and revise the ACL for Gulf group king mackerel
- Revise the commercial zone quotas for Gulf group king mackerel
- Revise the recreational and commercial allocation of Gulf group king mackerel
- Modify the recreational bag limit for Gulf group king mackerel

TENTATIVE TIMELINE FOR AMENDMENT 26

- ✓ January 2015- South Atlantic scoping
- ✓ January 2015- Gulf AP reviews potential actions and alternatives
- ✓ April 2015- South Atlantic Mackerel AP reviews actions and alternatives
- ✓ April 2015- Gulf scoping
- ✓ June 2015- Joint Gulf and South Atlantic meeting in Key West- review public input, provide direction on actions and alternatives
- ✓ August 2015- Gulf Council reviews document, selects preferred alternatives and provides direction to staff
- ✓ September 2015- South Atlantic Council reviews, modifies and selects preferred alternatives
- ✓ October 2015- Gulf Council reviews document, selects preferred alternatives, and approves for public hearings
- ✓ Nov 2015- Gulf Mackerel AP reviews the amendment
- ✓ December 2015- South Atlantic Council reviews document, selects preferred alternatives, and approves for public hearings
- ✓ January/February 2016- South Atlantic and Gulf public hearings
- ✓ February 2016- South Atlantic Mackerel AP reviews the amendment
- March 2016- South Atlantic reviews public comments and takes final action
- April 2016- Gulf Council reviews public comments and takes final action
- April/May 2016- Submit for Secretarial review

BACKGROUND

The stock assessment for Gulf and Atlantic king mackerel (SEDAR 38) was completed in 2014. SEDAR 38 used a different approach than the current management stock boundary to designate the Gulf and Atlantic stocks, and indicated a different area to be the 'mixing zone.' In addition to revising the management boundary to be aligned with the SEDAR 38 stock boundary, the Gulf of Mexico and South Atlantic Fishery Management Councils will need to update the catch limits for both stocks (and zone/subzone quotas) based on the assessment. All SEDAR 38 documents and reports are available online at: <http://sedarweb.org/sedar-38>

CMP Amendment 26 includes actions to modify the boundary for Gulf and Atlantic king mackerel to be aligned with the stock boundary under in SEDAR 38, along with actions to update the annual catch limits for Atlantic and Gulf king mackerel based on the stock assessment.

Because of the proposed change to the stock boundary, the Councils will need to revise some measures to reflect a new management system for each king mackerel stock. The potential new stock boundary would remove the Gulf Florida East Coast subzone, which will also remove any management measures in place for that subzone. For Atlantic king mackerel, the Councils will consider management measures for the Southern Zone (SC, GA and FL to the stock boundary), including split season commercial quotas and trip limits. For Gulf king mackerel, the Councils will need to review and revise the commercial allocations for the Gulf zones.

The Councils will also review the commercial and recreational allocation of Gulf king mackerel, consider increasing the bag limit for Gulf king mackerel, and establish an incidental catch allowance for Atlantic king mackerel caught in the shark gillnet fishery.

PURPOSE AND NEED

The purpose of this amendment is to modify the stock boundary and revise the ACLs for Atlantic and Gulf migratory group king mackerel; to modify the commercial zone quotas for Gulf migratory king mackerel; to review recreational and commercial allocations for Gulf migratory king mackerel; to increase the recreational bag limit for Gulf migratory king mackerel; to create an incidental catch allowance of Atlantic migratory king mackerel for the shark gillnet fishery; and to revise or create management measures for Atlantic migratory group king mackerel in the ~~Florida East Coast Subzone.~~ **Atlantic Southern Zone.**

The need for this amendment is to ensure annual catch limits are based on the best scientific information available and to ensure overfishing does not occur in the coastal migratory pelagics (CMP) fishery, while increasing social and economic benefits of the CMP fishery through sustainable and profitable harvest of king mackerel in accordance with provisions set forth in the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act.

COMMITTEE ACTION

- 1) Review and approve the recommended change to the Purpose.

ACTION 1 - Adjust the Management Boundary for Gulf and Atlantic Migratory Groups of King Mackerel

Alternative 1: No action - Maintain the current shifting management boundary between the Gulf and Atlantic migratory groups of king mackerel (**Figure 1** (Amendment Figure 2.1.1)).

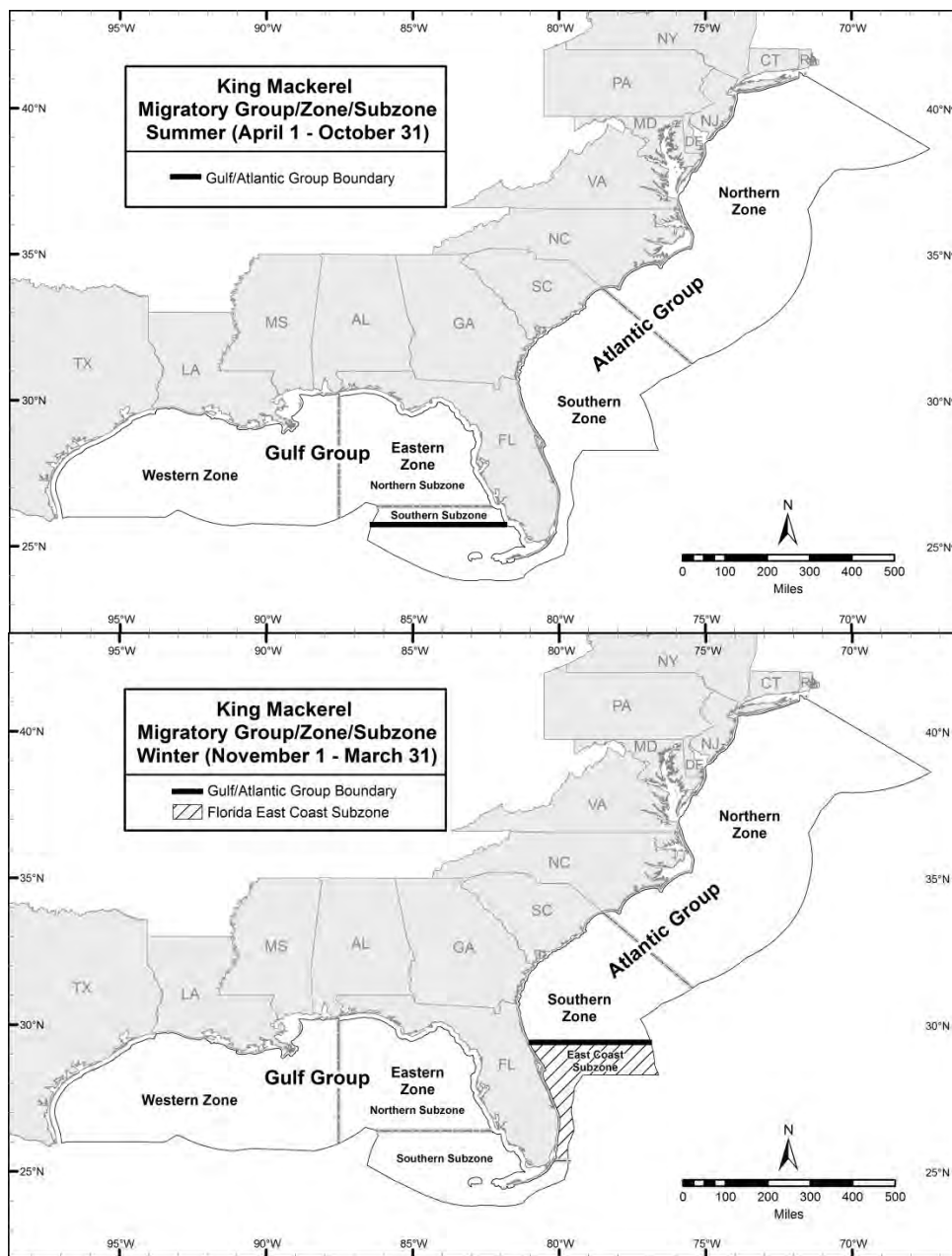


Figure 1. Alternative 1: Seasonal management boundaries for Atlantic and Gulf migratory groups of king mackerel.

Alternative 2: Establish a single year-round boundary for separating management of the Gulf and Atlantic migratory groups of king mackerel at the regulatory boundary between the Gulf and South Atlantic Fishery Management Councils (Councils) (**Figure 2** (Amendment Figure 2.1.2)). The South Atlantic Council would be responsible for management measures in the mixing zone.

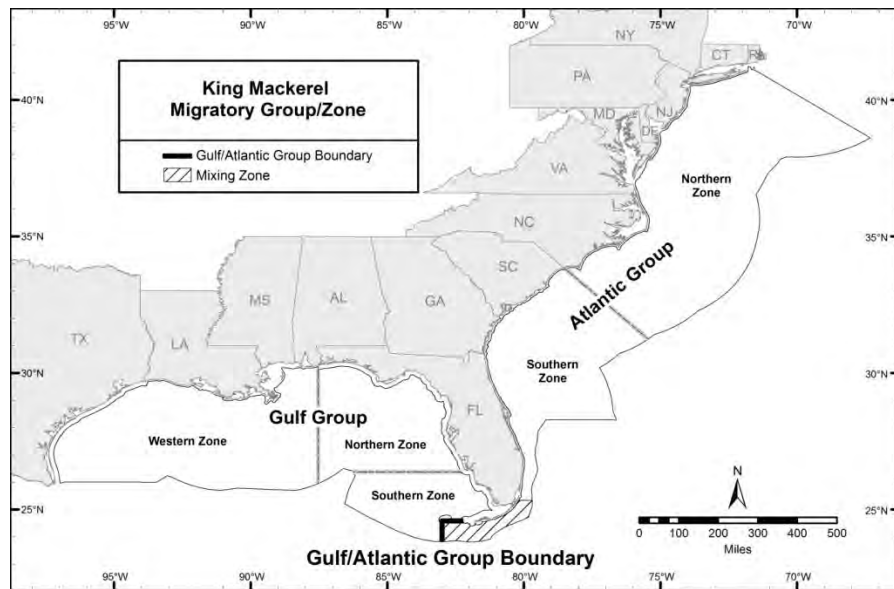


Figure 2. Alternative 2: Proposed management boundary for Atlantic and Gulf migratory groups of king mackerel.

Preferred Alternative 3: Establish a single year-round boundary for separating the Gulf and Atlantic migratory groups of king mackerel at the Miami-Dade/Monroe county line (**Figure 3** (Amendment Figure 2.1.3)). The Gulf Council would be responsible for management measures in the mixing zone. **(Gulf and South Atlantic AP Recommended)**

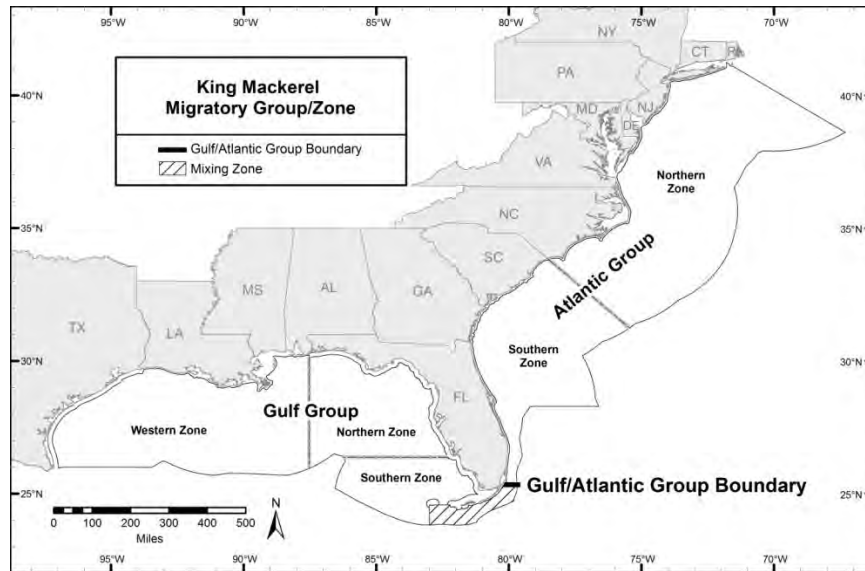


Figure 3. Preferred Alternative 3: Proposed management boundary for Atlantic and Gulf groups of king mackerel.

Discussion

This action would modify the management boundary so that it is consistent with the stock boundary used in SEDAR 38. **Alternative 2** would set a year-round boundary in which each Council manages within its jurisdiction (which could result in separate management on each side of the Florida Keys).

Preferred Alternative 3 would set a year-round boundary so that the Gulf Council would manage all of the Florida Keys.

Advisory Panel Recommendations

- South Atlantic AP: Alternative 3 as the Preferred Alternative (April 2015; February 2016)
- Gulf AP: Alternative 3 as the Preferred Alternative (March and November 2015)

Public Hearings (February 2016)

- Support for Preferred Alternative 3

Councils' rationale for the current preferred alternative

Setting the boundary at the Miami-Dade/Monroe county line will allow the Florida Keys to be under consistent management under the Gulf Council throughout the year, and is the same management boundary used for Spanish mackerel Alternative 3 would also help enforcement and compliance.

COMMITTEE ACTIONS

- 1) Do you want to add, remove or edit any alternatives?
- 2) Do you want to change the Preferred Alternative?

ACTION 2 - Update Reference Points (MSY, MSST, MFMT/OFL), and Revise the Annual Catch Limit (ACL) and Recreational Annual Catch Target (ACT) for Atlantic Migratory Group King Mackerel

The South Atlantic Council has determined that the value for MSY is the value of yield at F_{MSY} from the most recent stock assessment. Currently $MSY = 10.4$ million pounds (mp) (SEDAR 16). In October 2014, the SSC recommended a proxy for MSY at 30% SPR (spawning potential ratio), which is 12.7 mp.

The South Atlantic Council has determined that the value for MSST is the value from the most recent stock assessment. Currently $MSST = 1,827.5$ million hydrated eggs (SEDAR 16). Based on the SEDAR 38 assessment, $MSST = 1,991$ million hydrated eggs. The South Atlantic Council has determined that the value for MFMT is the value of F_{MSY} or proxy from the most recent stock assessment. Currently $MFMT = F_{MSY} = F_{30\%SPR} = 0.256$ (SEDAR 16). Based on the SEDAR 38 assessment, $MFMT = F_{MSY} = F_{30\%SPR} = 0.157$.

Table 1. Recommendations from the October 2014 SSC meeting for Atlantic Migratory Group King Mackerel.

Criteria	Deterministic
Overfished evaluation	No, $SSB/SSB_{30\%SPR} = 1.86$
Overfishing evaluation	No, $F/F_{30\%SPR} = 0.17$
MFMT	$F_{30\%SPR} = 0.157$
$SSB_{30\%SPR}$ (unit)	2,372 million eggs
MSST (unit)	1,991 million eggs
MSY (1000 lb)	12.7 mp
ABC Control Rule Adjustment	17.5%
P-Star	32.5%

The SSC provided the following OFLs at their October 2014 meeting (**Table 2**).

Table 2. Recommendation for OFL from the October 2014 SSC meeting for Atlantic Migratory Group King Mackerel.

Fishing year	OFL (million pounds whole weight)
2016/17	19.8
2017/18	18.3
2018/19	16.7
2019/20	15.2

Action 2-1. Revise the Acceptable Biological Catch (ABC) for Atlantic Migratory Group King Mackerel

Alternative 1: No action - Retain the current ABC for Atlantic Migratory Group King Mackerel (10.46 mp).

Preferred Alternative 2: Revise the ABC for Atlantic Migratory Group King Mackerel for 2016/17 through 2019/20 based on the ABC levels recommended by the SSC for ABC under a high recruitment scenario. **(Gulf AP and South Atlantic AP Recommended)**

Alternative 3: Revise the ABC for Atlantic Migratory Group King Mackerel for 2016/17 through 2019/20 based on the ABC levels recommended by the SSC for ABC under a medium recruitment scenario.

Alternative 4: Revise the ABC for Atlantic Migratory Group King Mackerel for 2016/17 through 2019/20 based on the ABC levels recommended by the SSC for ABC under a low recruitment scenario.

Table 3. ABC recommendations from the October 2014 SSC meeting for Atlantic Migratory Group King Mackerel.

P star= 0.325	ABC HIGH Recruitment Scenario	ABC MED Recruitment Scenario	ABC LOW Recruitment Scenario	Buffer between ABC and OFL		
Fishing year	Pref Alt 2	Alt 3	Alt 4	HI	MED	LO
2016/17	17.4 mp	16.5 mp	15.4 mp	12%	16%	22%
2017/18	15.8 mp	14.3 mp	12.9 mp	14%	22%	29%
2018/19	14.1 mp	12.9 mp	11.9 mp	15%	23%	28%
2019/20	12.7 mp	12.1 mp	11.6 mp	17%	21%	24%

Advisory Panel Recommendations

- South Atlantic AP: Alternative 2 as the Preferred Alternative (April 2015 and February 2016), with a review after two years to evaluate if it is the appropriate ABC level (April 2015).
- Gulf AP: Alternative 2 as the Preferred Alternative (November 2015)

Public Hearing Comments (February 2016)

- Several commenters supported setting the ACL= ABC under the high recruitment. The stock is not overfished and overfishing is not occurring. The fishermen report that there are lots of small fish and that the way the Council is specifying recruitment [as not in a high period] is incorrect.

Councils' rationale for the current preferred alternative

Public input and recommendations from the APs support selecting Alternative 2. Anecdotal information suggests that there is a new cohort of fish, and recent SEAMAP data also indicate an increase in juveniles. The projections can be run after two years to incorporate catch data and updated information from surveys into the ABC recommendations. Last, the high recruitment ABC levels are the only alternative that would set the ABC levels higher than or equal to the ACL in the preferred alternative in Action 2-2.

COMMITTEE ACTIONS

- 1) Do you want to add, remove or edit any alternatives?
- 2) Do you want to change the Preferred Alternative?

Action 2-2. Revise the ACLs, Commercial Quotas, and Recreational ACT for Atlantic Migratory Group King Mackerel

Please see Appendix E in the draft Amendment 26 (Attachment 6a) for details of how the Northern and Southern Zone quotas will work with the new stock boundary.

Alternative 1: No action - Retain the ACL and recreational ACT for Atlantic king mackerel based on the previous ABC. ACL = optimum yield (OY) = ABC.

Alternative 2: Revise the ACL and recreational ACT based on the ABC levels selected under Action 2-1. ACL = OY = ABC, recreational ACT = [0.5 or (1-PSE), whichever is greater]. **(South Atlantic AP Recommended)**

Preferred Alternative 3: Establish ACL = OY = Deterministic equilibrium yield at $F_{30\%SPR} = 12.7$ mp for fishing years 2016/17 through 2019/20. **(South Atlantic SSC and Gulf AP Recommended)**

Alternative 3	
Atlantic King Mackerel ACL	12.7 mp
Commercial ACL	4.7 mp
Northern Zone Quota	1,082,880 lbs
Southern Zone Quota	3,617,120 lbs
Recreational ACL	8.0 mp
Recreational ACT*	7.4 mp

*ACT value calculated based on formula from CMP Amendment 18, using the average PSE from 2005-2009.

Alternative 4: Establish ACL = OY = Deterministic equilibrium yield at $75\% F_{30\%SPR} = 11.6$ mp for fishing years 2016/17 through 2019/20.

Alternative 4	
Atlantic King Mackerel ACL	11.6 mp
Commercial ACL	4.3 mp
Northern Zone Quota	990,720 lbs
Southern Zone Quota	3,309,280 lbs
Recreational ACL	7.3 mp
Recreational ACT*	6.8 mp

*ACT value calculated based on formula from CMP Amendment 18, using the average PSE from 2005-2009.

Alternative 5: Establish ACL = OY = 90% ABC based on the ABC levels selected under Action 2-1.

Advisory Panel Recommendations

- South Atlantic AP: Alternative 2 as the Preferred Alternative (April 2015 and February 2016).

In February 2016, the South Atlantic AP maintained their recommendation to set the ACL equal to the high recruitment ABC. In addition to reports of large numbers of small fish and an increase in landings in 2014-15, some AP members also pointed out that the stock assessment indicated that the Atlantic king mackerel stock is not overfished and that overfishing is not occurring, which does not support the more conservative alternatives for catch limits, and that there are already buffers in place ($OFL > ABC > ACL$) that eliminate the need for a more conservative ACL under Action 2-2, Preferred Alternative 3.

- Gulf AP: Alternative 3 as the Preferred Alternative (November 2015). The Gulf AP felt that a constant catch may help protect the stock if there was an issue with recruitment, and that the more conservative ACL (compared to Alt 2) would not affect either sectors because landings have been below the ACLs in recent years.

Public Hearing Comments (February 2016)

- Several commenters supported setting the ACL= ABC under the high recruitment. The stock is not overfished and overfishing is not occurring. The fishermen report that there are lots of small fish and that the way the Council is specifying recruitment [as in a low/medium period] is incorrect.

Councils' rationale for the current preferred alternative

Alternative 3 will provide stability with the constant catch of 12.7 million pounds. This is also the recommendation from the South Atlantic SSC, under which the ACL is based on the SPR. Additionally, there is concern that the relatively low landings in recent years may have indicated a problem with the stock. If that is the case, a more conservative ACL will allow the juveniles to move into the older year classes, and help build the stock before the ACL is increased. After a few years, the ACL and projections can be reviewed, and the ACL modified to increase the quotas if feasible and necessary.

COMMITTEE ACTIONS

- 1) Do you want to add, remove or edit any alternatives?
- 2) Do you want to change the Preferred Alternative?

ALTERNATIVES

Alternative 1: No action - Retain the ACL and recreational ACT for Atlantic king mackerel based on the previous ABC. ACL = optimum yield (OY) = ABC.

Alternative 2: Revise the ACL and recreational ACT based on the ABC levels selected under Action 2-1. ACL = OY = ABC, recreational ACT = [0.5 or (1-PSE), whichever is greater]. **(South Atlantic AP Recommended)**

Preferred Alternative 3: Establish ACL = OY = Deterministic equilibrium yield at $F_{30\%SPR} = 12.7$ mp for fishing years 2016/17 through 2019/20. **(Recommended by the South Atlantic SSC and Gulf AP)**

Alternative 4: Establish ACL = OY = Deterministic equilibrium yield at 75% $F_{30\%SPR} = 11.6$ mp for fishing years 2016/17 through 2019/20.

Alternative 5: Establish ACL = OY = 90% ABC based on the ABC levels selected under Action 2-1.

Please see the draft amendment (Attachment 6a) for tables of all potential ACLs and quotas under each alternative.

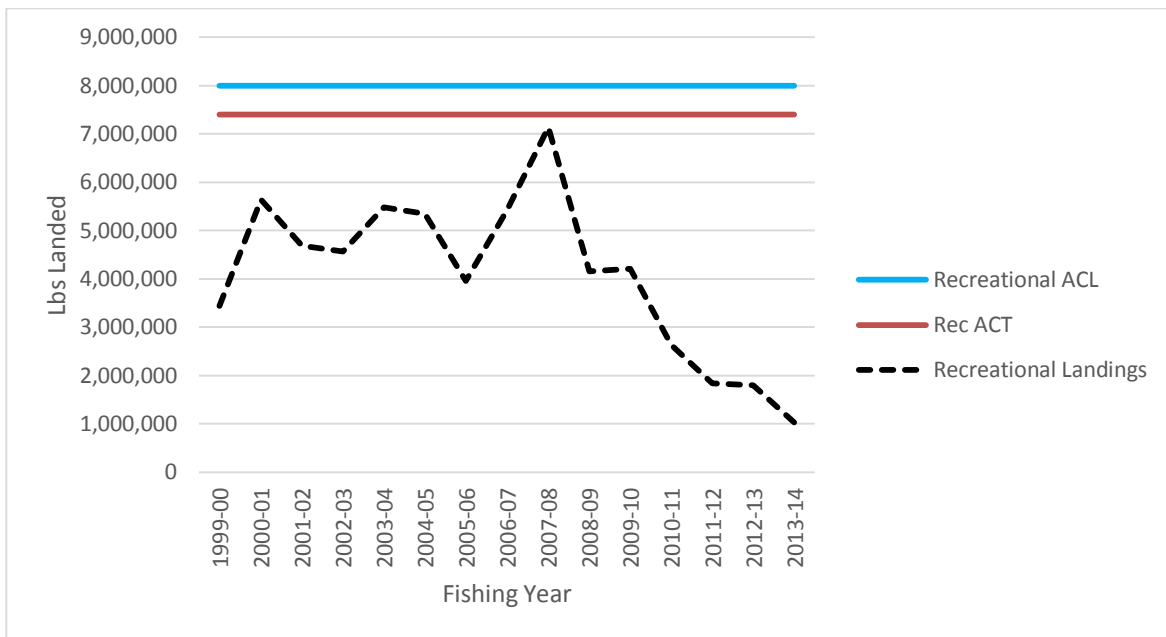


Figure 4. Recreational landings of Atlantic king mackerel compared to the recreational ACL and ACT under **Preferred Alternative 3** (ACL=deterministic equilibrium yield at $F_{30\%SPR} = 12.7$ mp)

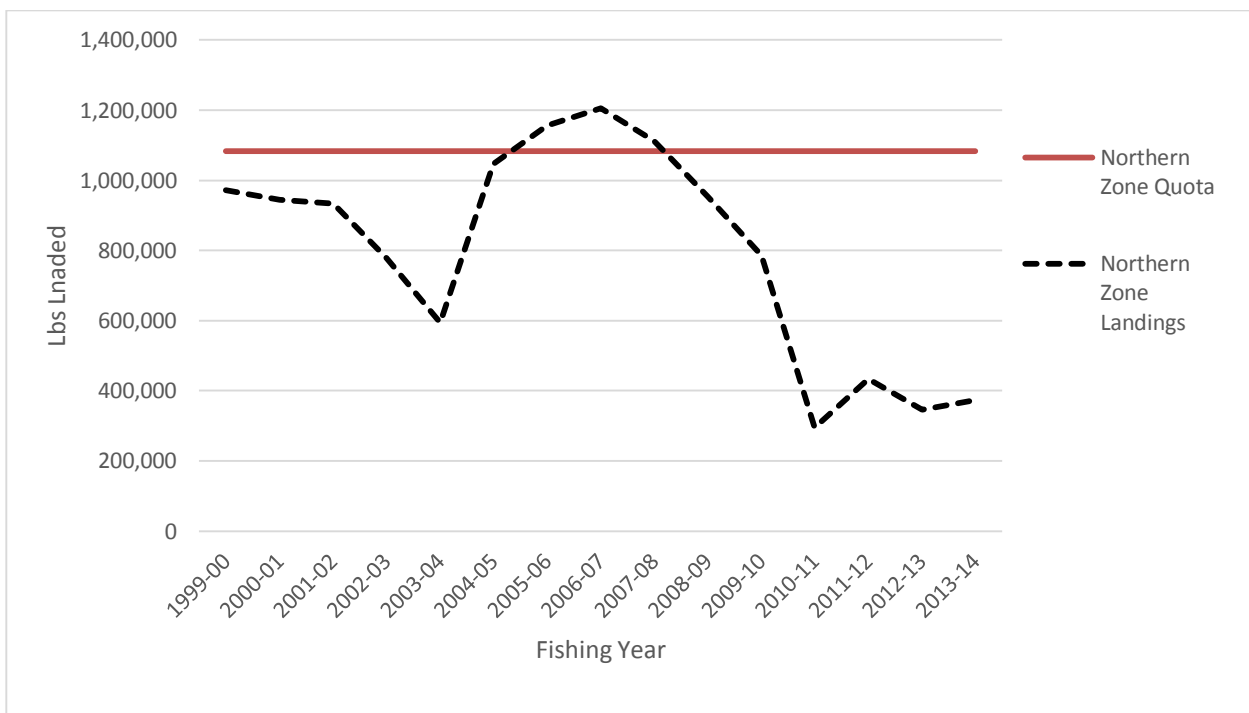


Figure 5. Northern Zone commercial landings of Atlantic king mackerel compared to Northern Zone quota under **Preferred Alternative 3** (ACL=deterministic equilibrium yield at $F_{30\%SPR} = 12.7$ mp)

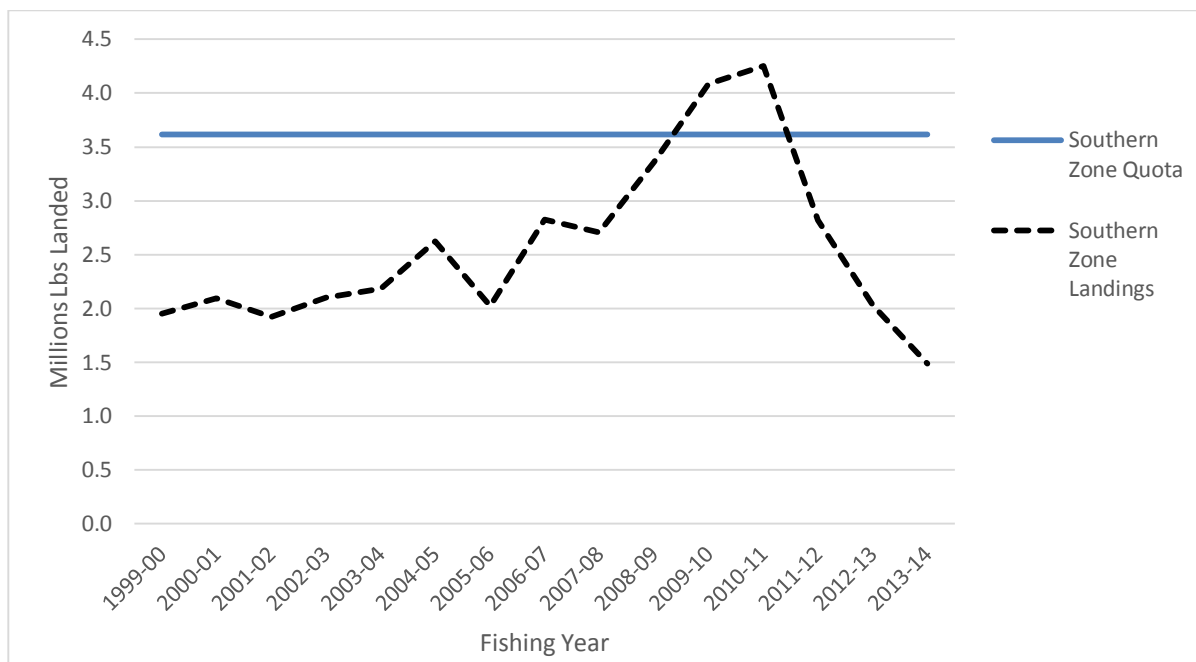


Figure 6. Southern Zone commercial landings of Atlantic king mackerel compared to Southern Zone quota under **Preferred Alternative 3** (ACL=deterministic equilibrium yield at $F_{30\%SPR} = 12.7$ mp).

NOTE: This figure compares Southern Zone commercial landings to potential Southern Zone ACLs that would be year-round. Action 4 considers split season quotas.

ACTION 3 - Incidental Catch Allowance of Atlantic Migratory Group King Mackerel Caught in the Shark Gillnet Fishery

Alternative 1: No action - Retention and sale of Atlantic migratory group king mackerel caught with gillnet as incidental catch in the gillnet portion of the commercial shark fishery remains prohibited.

Alternative 2: Allow retention and sale of Atlantic migratory group king mackerel caught with gillnet as incidental catch in the gillnet portion of the commercial shark fishery for any vessel with a valid shark directed commercial permit AND valid federal king mackerel commercial permit. The king mackerel must be sold to a dealer with the Southeast federal dealer permit. For shark gillnet trips in the EEZ off Florida, no more than 2 king mackerel per crew member can be on board, and no more than 2 king mackerel per crew member can be sold from the trip. For shark gillnet trips in the EEZ north of the GA/FL line, no more than 3 king mackerel per crew member can be on board, and no more than 3 king mackerel per crew member can be sold from the trip.

Preferred Alternative 3: Allow retention and sale of Atlantic migratory group king mackerel caught with gillnet as incidental catch in the gillnet portion of the commercial shark fishery for any vessel with a valid shark directed commercial permit AND valid federal king mackerel commercial permit. The king mackerel must be sold to a dealer with the Southeast federal dealer permit. For shark gillnet trips in the Southern Zone, no more than 2 king mackerel per crew member can be on board, and no more than 2 king mackerel per crew member can be sold from the trip. For shark gillnet trips in the Northern Zone, no more than 3 king mackerel per crew member can be on board, and no more than 3 king mackerel per crew member can be sold from the trip. **(Gulf AP and South Atlantic AP Recommended)**

NOTE:

The limits under Alternative 2 would be pre-20A status quo (Florida- 2 fish; other states- 3 fish)

The limits under Alternative 3 would make the limits in the Southern Zone consistent throughout the SZ.

Table 4. Information on gillnet trips landing shark and king mackerel in Florida from 2010-2014. Source: ACCSP

Year	# Gillnet Trips Shark ^a	# Gillnet Trips Shark and King Mackerel	# Participants with Shark/KM Gillnet Trips	Total Lbs King Mackerel Landed on Shark Gillnet Trips	Average Lbs King Mackerel Landed on Shark Gillnet Trips
2010	168	28	5	1255.3	44.8
2011	382	21	3	1039.0	49.5
2012	498	32	4	923.5	28.9
2013 ^b	298	33	5	2635.4	79.9
2014 ^c	161	23	4	2474.2	107.6
TOTAL	1507	137	--	8327.3	60.8

^a Small coastal sharks (SCS)—blacknose, sharpnose, bonnethead, and finetooth

^b SCS closed in September 30, 2013

^c SCS closed in July 28, 2014

Note that Alternative 3 would include the Southern Zone (FL, GA, SC) but there are no gillnet trips with shark and king mackerel in GA or SC in the last five years.

Advisory Panel Recommendations

- South Atlantic AP: Alternative 3 as the Preferred Alternative (April 2015 and February 2016).
- Gulf AP: Recommended that the small coastal shark gillnet fishery in the South Atlantic be allowed to harvest and sell the recreational bag limit so long as the vessel has a federal commercial king mackerel permit and the commercial king mackerel season is open (March 2015). Recommended Alternative 3 as the Preferred (November 2015).

Public Hearings (February 2016)

- One comment supported Alternative 3 as the preferred alternative.
- One commenter recommended adding language to specify that the shark gillnet fishery only be allowed south of the GA/FL line and north of the NC/SC line, so as not to encourage vessels on gillnet trips to fish in Georgia or South Carolina waters.

Councils' rationale for the current preferred alternative

Both the Gulf and South Atlantic AP support Alternative 3. This alternative would reduce discards and allow commercial vessels to retain and sell king mackerel, but at low levels that would not encourage direct harvest. Alternative 3 will also make the limits consistent throughout each zone, aligning management with the Northern and Southern Zone system.

COMMITTEE ACTIONS

- 1) Do you want to add, remove or edit any alternatives?
- 2) Do you want to change the Preferred Alternative?

ACTION 4 - Establish Commercial Split Seasons for Atlantic Migratory Group King Mackerel in the Southern Zone

Gulf Council Preferred Alternative 1: No action - The commercial fishing year for Atlantic king mackerel is March 1 – February 28. The Southern Zone quota is allocated for the entire fishing year. **(Gulf AP Recommended)**

South Atlantic Preferred Alternative 2. Allocate the Southern Zone quota for Atlantic king mackerel into two split season quotas: 60% to the period March 1 - September 30 (season 1) and 40% to the period October 1 – the end of February (season 2). Any remaining quota from season 1 would transfer to season 2. Any remaining quota from season 2 would not be carried forward. When the quota for the season is met or expected to be met, commercial harvest of king mackerel in the Southern Zone will be prohibited for the remainder of the season. **(South Atlantic AP Recommended)**

Alternative 3. Allocate the Southern Zone quota for Atlantic king mackerel into two split season quotas: 60% to the period March 1 – October 31 (season 1) and 40% to the period November 1 – the end of February (season 2). Any remaining quota from season 1 would transfer to season 2. Any remaining quota from season 2 would not be carried forward. When the quota for the season is met or expected to be met, commercial harvest of king mackerel in the Southern Zone will be prohibited for the remainder of the season.

Alternative 4. Allocate the Southern Zone quota for Atlantic king mackerel into two split season quotas: 50% to the period March 1 – October 31 (season 1) and 50% to the period November 1 – the end of February (season 2). Any remaining quota from season 1 would transfer to season 2. Any remaining quota from season 2 would not be carried forward. When the quota for the season is met or expected to be met, commercial harvest of king mackerel in the Southern Zone will be prohibited for the remainder of the season.

NOTE: The Gulf and South Atlantic Councils have different preferred alternatives for this action. The amendment cannot be submitted for formal review until all preferred alternatives are the same for every action.

Discussion:

With the new boundary to be established in Action 1, the Gulf Florida East Coast Subzone will no longer exist in the winter. That area will be part of the Atlantic management area year-round.

In April 2015, the South Atlantic Mackerel AP made recommendations for Florida east coast management, including the following recommendation on a split season for the Southern Zone:

The Southern Zone quota would have seasonal allocations. The first season would be March 1 – September 30 and would be allocated 60% of the Southern Zone quota. The second season would be October 1- February 28 and would be allocated 40% of the Southern Zone quota plus any unused quota from the first season. There would be no sub-quota for the FLEC subzone. Quota transfers between the Northern Zone and Southern Zone would still be allowed.

Considerations:

- A large proportion (90% or higher) of the Southern Zone quota is landed on the Florida east coast.
- A commercial split season for the Southern Zone would ensure that a portion of the Southern Zone quota would be available in the later months of the fishing year, even if there is a high level of harvest in the earlier months.
- In general, landings patterns for the Southern Zone show that landings are at high levels in the spring and start to decrease in the summer. The months of September through November usually have the lowest landings levels of the year, followed by an increase starting in November or December (**Figure 7**, (Figure 2.4.1 in the amendment document)).
- Fishermen report that although landings in the fall months usually start to increase in November, in some years the king mackerel become abundant in October.
- In years of high landings (2009/10), there may be high landings in March that may affect season 1 landings reaching a split season quota.
- Please see the draft CMP Amendment 26 (**Attachment 6a**), Section 2.4 for more details.

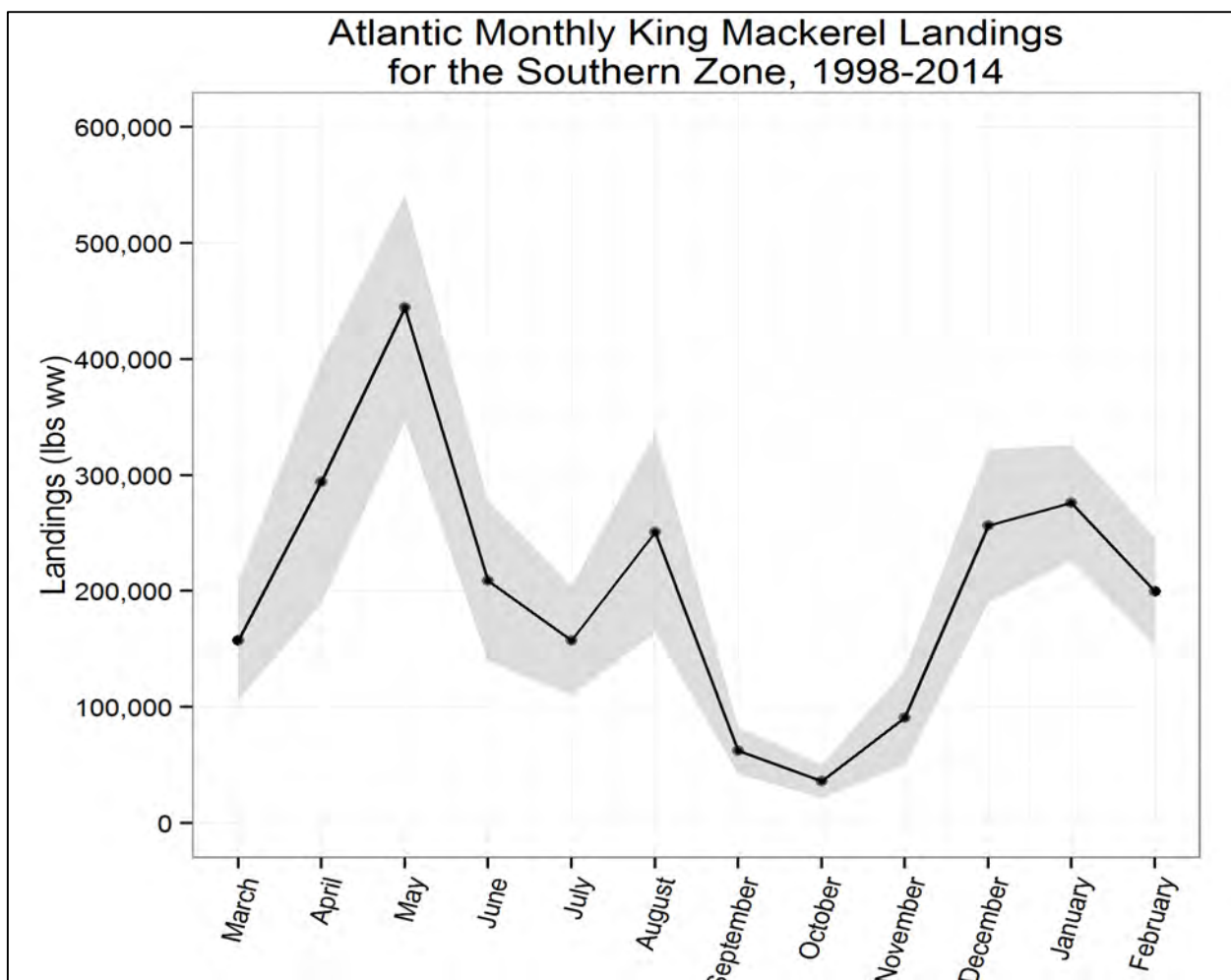


Figure 7. King mackerel commercial landings in the Southern Zone by month for fishing years 1998-99 through 2013-14. The solid line shows the average pounds per month, and the gray shaded area includes pounds per month with CI= 95%.

Source: NMFS ALS

Table 5. Examples of possible split season quotas for the Southern Zone (in lbs) with a 60/40 allocation.

	ACL=ABC ¹ High Recruitment ²		ACL=ABC ¹ Medium Recruitment ³		South Atlantic Preferred Alternative for ACL (Action 2-2) ACL=Deterministic Equilibrium Yield at F _{30%SPR} ⁴	
	Season 1 (60%)	Season 2 (40%)	Season 1 (60%)	Season 2 (40%)	Season 1 (60%)	Season 2 (40%)
2016/17	3,001,440	2,000,960	2,816,736	1,877,824	2,170,272	1,446,848
2017/18	2,724,384	1,816,256	2,447,328	1,631,552		
2018/19	2,401,152	1,600,768	2,216,448	1,477,632		
2019/20	2,170,272	1,446,848	2,077,920	1,385,280		

¹ Alternative 2 under Action 2-2² Alternative 2 under Action 2-1, ABC under High Recruitment Scenario³ Alternative 3 under Action 2-1, ABC under Medium Recruitment Scenario⁴ Alternative 3 under Action 2-2**Table 6.** Examples of possible split season quotas for the Southern Zone (in lbs) with a 50/50 allocation (Alternative 4).

	ACL=ABC ¹ High Recruitment ²	ACL=ABC ¹ Medium Recruitment ³	South Atlantic Preferred Alternative for ACL (Action 2-2) ACL=Deterministic Equilibrium Yield at F _{30%SPR} ⁴
	Season 1 or 2 (50%)	Season 1 or 2 (50%)	Season 1 or 2 (50%)
2016/17	2,501,200	2,347,280	1,808,560
2017/18	2,270,320	2,039,440	
2018/19	2,000,960	1,847,040	
2019/20	1,808,560	1,731,600	

¹ Alternative 2 under Action 2-2² Alternative 2 under Action 2-1, ABC under High Recruitment Scenario³ Alternative 3 under Action 2-1, ABC under Medium Recruitment Scenario⁴ Alternative 3 under Action 2-2

Based on landings patterns for the Southern Zone, the risk that the season 1 or season 2 quota would be met and result in an early closure will vary, because landings for king mackerel in the Southern Zone fluctuate from year to year depending on stock dynamics, environmental factors, and fishing effort.

Please see the draft amendment (Attachment 6a) for tables and figures comparing the potential split season quotas under each possible ACL.

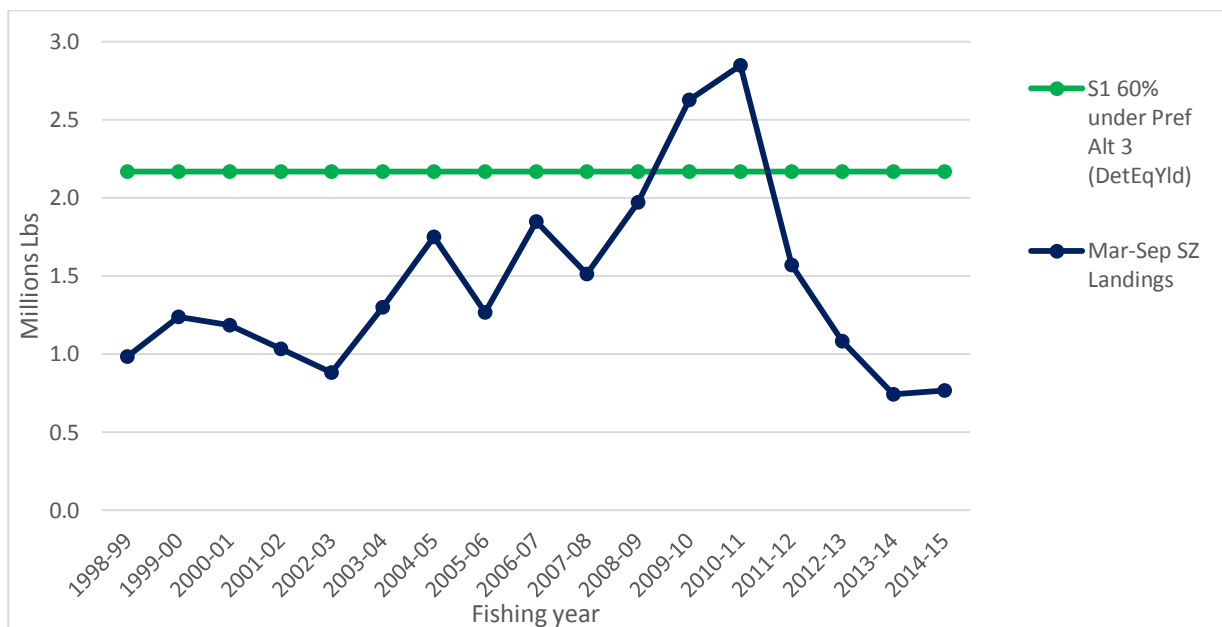


Figure 8. Southern Zone landings in the period of March through September compared to the proposed Season 1 quota under **South Atlantic Preferred Alternative 2**, based on the ACL under the preferred alternative in Action 2-2

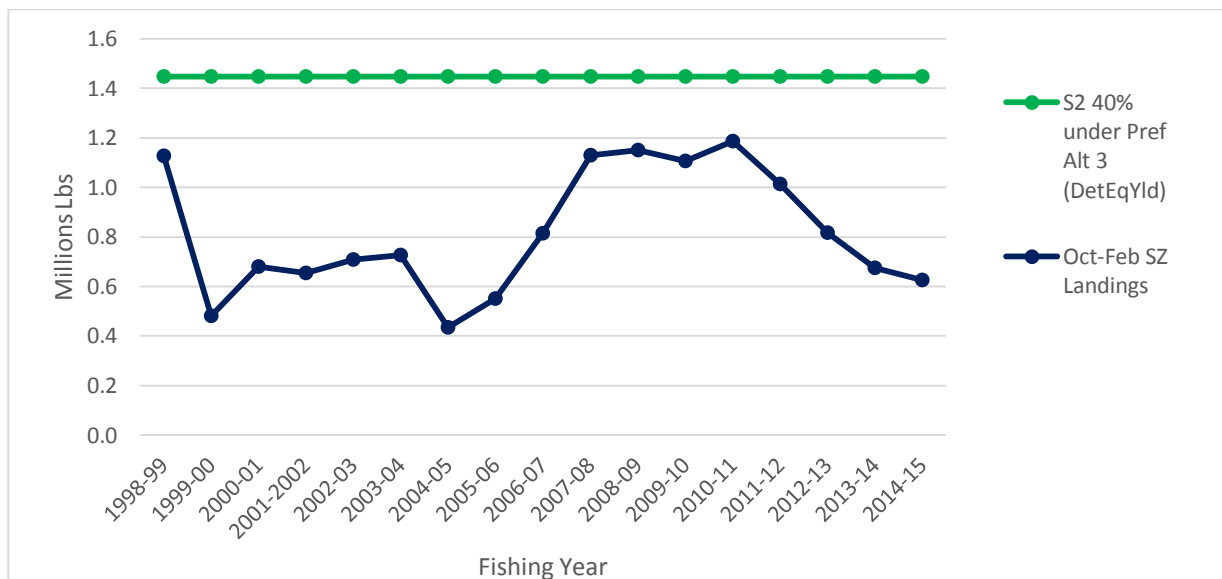


Figure 9. Southern Zone landings in the period of October through February compared to the proposed Season 2 quota under **South Atlantic Preferred Alternative 2**, based on the ACL under the preferred alternative in Action 2-2

Advisory Panel Recommendations

- South Atlantic AP: Supported Alternative 2 as the preferred alternative, but also recommended to the Councils to consider adding an alternative in which 70% of the Southern Zone quota would go to the period of March 1 through September 30, and 30% of the quota would go to the period of October 1 through the end of February (February 2016). The AP felt that Alternative 2 would set up a system under which the quotas would be similar to the current system.

The South Atlantic AP discussed how the alternatives would affect the traveling fishermen, and it was noted that the split season quotas under Alternative 2 would be more likely to provide access in December, January, and February than under a year-round quota. Additionally, because a year-round quota would be more likely to result in an early closure that would remove access in December through February, it would more likely that fishermen from the Florida east coast would travel to the Gulf to fish.

Overall, the South Atlantic AP felt that the split season quotas would help reduce the likelihood of closures on the Florida east coast during important times of the year, and would reduce the number of traveling fishermen going to the Gulf because of a closure on the Florida east coast.

- Gulf AP: Recommended Alternative 1 (No Action) as the Preferred, with trip limits to managed the rate of harvest (November 2015). The Gulf AP felt that an annual quota would reduce the number of fishermen who travel to the Gulf from the Florida east coast.

Public Hearings (February 2016)

Several commenters supported Alternative 2 as the preferred alternative. One commenter recommended using a 70/30 allocation for the split season quotas. Many commenters supported the March 1 opening date for season 1.

Councils' rationales for the current preferred alternatives

- The South Atlantic Council selected Alternative 2 as the preferred alternative based on the South Atlantic AP recommendation. Alternative 2 was based on proposed management from the South Atlantic AP.

- The Gulf Council selected Alternative 1 as the preferred alternative based on the Gulf AP recommendation in November 2015. The Gulf AP was concerned that a closure in 'season 1' would result in more fishermen from the Florida east coast traveling to the Gulf, and a year-long quota would reduce the number of traveling fishermen.

COMMITTEE ACTIONS

1) Do you want to add, remove or edit any alternatives?

2) Do you want to change the Preferred Alternative?

ACTION 5 - Establish trip limits for the Southern Zone

Alternative 1: No action. The trip limits for the Southern Zone will remain:

North of the Flagler/ Volusia county line, the trip limit is 3,500 lbs year-round.

In the area between the Flagler/ Volusia county line and the Volusia/Brevard county line, the trip limit is 3,500 lbs from April 1 through October 31.

In the area from the Volusia/Brevard county line to the Miami-Dade/Monroe county line, the trip limit is 75 fish from April 1 through October 31.

From November 1 through March 31, no trip limit is in place for the area between the Flagler/Volusia county line to the Dade/Monroe county line.

Alternative 2: In the Southern Zone, the trip limit north of the Flagler/Volusia county line is 3,500 lbs. For the area south of the Flagler/Volusia county line, establish a year-round trip limit of 75 fish for Atlantic king mackerel. (**South Atlantic AP Recommended**)

Alternative 3: In the Southern Zone, the trip limit north of the Flagler/Volusia county line is 3,500 lbs. For the area south of the Flagler/Volusia county line, establish a trip limit of 50 fish from March 1- March 31, and 75 fish for the remainder of season 1 (as designated in Action 4).

Option 3a. Beginning on August 1 and continuing through the end of season 1, if 75% of the season 1 quota has been taken, the trip limit will be 50 fish.

Option 3b. At any time during season 1, if 75% of the season 1 quota has been taken, the trip limit will be 50 fish.

Alternative 4: In the Southern Zone, the trip limit north of the Flagler/Volusia county line is 3,500 lbs. For the area south of the Flagler/Volusia county line, establish a trip limit of 50 fish for season 2 (as designated in Action 4). (**South Atlantic AP Recommended**)

Option 4a. Beginning on February 1 and continuing through the end of February--

(1) If 70 % or more of the season 2 quota has been taken, the trip limit is 50 fish. (**South Atlantic AP Recommended**)

(2) If less than 70 % of the season 2 quota has been taken, the trip limit is 75 fish.

Option 4b. Beginning on January 1 and continuing through the end of February--

(1) If 70 % or more of the season 2 quota has been taken, the trip limit is 50 fish.

(2) If less than 70 % of the season 2 quota has been taken, the trip limit is 75 fish.

Option 4c. Beginning on February 1 and continuing through the end of February--

(1) If 80 % or more of the season 2 quota has been taken, the trip limit is 50 fish.

(2) If less than 80 % of the season 2 quota has been taken, the trip limit is 75 fish.

Advisory Panel Recommendations

- South Atlantic AP: Recommended Alternative 2 and Alternative 4/Option 4a as the preferred alternatives. Based on the preferred alternative for split season quotas, the South Atlantic AP recommendation would be applied as:

March 1- October 31: 75 fish

November 1- January 31: 50 fish

Starting February 1- end of February: if $\geq 70\%$ of the season 2 quota has been harvested, the trip limit is 50 fish. If $< 70\%$ of the season 2 quota has been harvested, the trip limit is 75 fish.

Public Hearings (February 2016)

- Several commenters supported the South Atlantic AP's recommendations.
- One commenter supported 75 fish for season 2 with a possible step-down.
- One commenter was concerned that Volusia County would no longer have the 3500-lb trip limit in season 1.

COMMITTEE ACTIONS

- 1) Do you want to add, remove or edit any alternatives?
- 2) Do you want to select Preferred Alternative(s) and option(s)?

ACTION 6 - Modify the ACL for Gulf Migratory Group King Mackerel

Alternative 1: No action – Do not modify the ACL for Gulf migratory group king mackerel. The ACL of 10.8 million pounds will remain.

[Commercial ACL= 3.456 mp; Recreational ACL= 7.433 mp]

Preferred Alternative 2: Set the Gulf migratory group king mackerel ACL equal to the ABC recommended by the Gulf Scientific and Statistical Committee for 2015-2019. **(Gulf and South Atlantic AP Recommended)**

ABC values are in millions of pounds, whole weight:

Year	ABC (mp ww)
2015	9.62
2016	9.21
2017	8.88
2018	8.71
2019	8.55

Alternative 3: Establish a constant catch scenario for the Gulf migratory group king mackerel ACL for one of the following time periods. The ACL during the selected time period may not exceed the ABC recommended by the Gulf SSC for any year during the selected time period.

Option a: A three-year period (2015-2017)

Option b: A five-year period (2015-2019)

It is important to remember that even though the OFL and ABC projections are lower than the current ACL, the amount of area for which the *new* OFL and ABC recommendations applies is in fact smaller than the area for which the *old* ACL applies.

Advisory Panel Recommendations

- Gulf AP: Recommended that the Council set the ACL equal to the ABC for 2015 (9.62 million pounds), and that the SSC annually readdress the ABC every year thereafter (March 2015).
- Gulf AP: Recommended Alternative 2 as the preferred (November 2015).
- South Atlantic AP: Recommended Alternative 2 as the preferred (February 2016).

Public Hearings (February 2016)

- One commenter supported the preferred alternative.
- A few commenters voiced concern that the Gulf ACL is being set to the ABC, and it was unfair that the Atlantic ACL would not also be set to the ABC.

Councils' rationale for the current preferred alternative

Alternative 2 is based on the Gulf SSC's recommendation. The stock is not overfished or undergoing overfishing, and ACL can be set equal to ACL.

COMMITTEE ACTIONS

- 1) Do you want to add, remove or edit any alternatives?
- 2) Do you want to change the Preferred Alternative?

ACTION 7 - Revise the Commercial Zone Quotas for Gulf Migratory Group King Mackerel

Alternative 1: No action – Maintain the current commercial zone quotas for Gulf migratory group king mackerel (Western Zone: 31%; Northern Zone: 5.17%; Southern Zone Handline: 15.96%; Southern Zone Gillnet: 15.96%; Florida East Coast Zone: 31.91%).

Alternative 2: Revise the commercial zone quotas for Gulf migratory group king mackerel by dividing the Florida East Coast Zone's quota into four equal parts, to be added to each of the remaining Gulf commercial zones. **(South Atlantic AP Recommended)**

Alternative 3: Revise the commercial zone quotas for Gulf migratory group king mackerel by dividing each individual zone's quota percentage by the sum of the quota percentages for all Gulf commercial zones *except* the Florida East Coast Zone, with each resultant percentage becoming that respective zone's new commercial quota.

Gulf Council Preferred Alternative 4: Revise the commercial zone quotas for Gulf migratory group king mackerel as follows: 40% for the Western Zone; 18% for the Northern Zone; 21% for the Southern Zone Handline component; and 21% for the Southern Zone Gillnet component. **(Gulf AP Recommended)**

Table 7. Options for redistribution of commercial zone allocation for Gulf migratory group king mackerel by percentage.

Zone	Alternative 1	Alternative 2	Alternative 3	Alternative 4
Western	31%	38.98%	45.53%	40%
Northern	5.17%	13.15%	7.61%	18%
Southern: H/L	15.96%	23.93%	23.43%	21%
Southern: Gillnet	15.96%	23.93%	23.43%	21%
FL East Coast	31.91%			

Table 8. Options for redistribution of commercial zone allocation for Gulf migratory group king mackerel in pounds of fish. Assumes the ACL = ABC as in Alternative 2 of Action 6, and sector allocations represented by Alternative 1 in Action 8.

Zone	Alternative 1	Alternative 2	Alternative 3	Alternative 4
Western	1,071,360	1,199,883	1,401,596	1,231,360
Northern	178,675	404,733	234,266	554,112
Southern: H/L	551,578	736,892	721,269	646,464
Southern: Gillnet	551,578	736,892	721,269	646,464
FL East Coast	1,102,810			

Advisory Panel Recommendations

- Gulf AP: Recommended Alternative 4 as the preferred (March 2015 and November 2015).
- South Atlantic AP: Recommended Alternative 2 as the preferred (February 2016), to allocate a larger proportion to the Southern Zone.

Public Hearings (February 2016)

- Several commenters supported a larger allocation for the Gulf Northern Zone, because the zone has always had a small allocation and there should be more quota in the zone to support a longer season.
- Several commenters voiced concern that the Southern Zone Gillnet allocation was unfair.
- One commenter supported Alternative 4.

Gulf Council's rationale for the current preferred alternative

The Gulf Council has selected Alternative 4 as the preferred based on the Gulf AP recommendation, and that it represented a compromise to provide a little more of an allocation to the Northern Zone than Alternatives 2 or 3.

COMMITTEE ACTIONS

- 1) Do you want to add, remove or edit any alternatives?
- 2) Do you want to select a preferred alternative?

ACTION 8 - Revise the Recreational and Commercial Allocations of Gulf Migratory Group King Mackerel

Gulf Council Preferred Alternative 1: No action – Maintain the current recreational and commercial allocations for Gulf migratory group king mackerel (68% recreational, 32% commercial). **(Gulf AP Recommended)**

Alternative 2: Revise the recreational and commercial allocations for Gulf migratory group king mackerel by dividing the stock ACL using one of the options below.

Option a: 63% to the recreational sector, and 37% to the commercial sector.

Option b: 58% to the recreational sector, and 42% to the commercial sector.

Option c: 48% to the recreational sector, and 52% to the commercial sector.

Alternative 3: Revise the recreational and commercial allocations for Gulf migratory group king mackerel by transferring a percentage of the stock ACL to the commercial allocation annually until such a time that the recreational sector lands 80% of its allocation, after which no additional allocation will be transferred from the stock ACL to the commercial allocation.

Option a: Transfer 2% of the stock ACL annually to the commercial allocation.

Option b: Transfer 5% of the stock ACL annually to the commercial allocation.

Alternative 4: Conditionally transfer a certain percentage (*Options a-d*) of the stock ACL to the commercial sector until such a time that recreational landings reach a predetermined threshold (*Options e-g*). If this threshold is met, the recreational and commercial allocations will revert to 68% for the recreational sector and 32% for the commercial sector.

Conditional Quota Transfer (MUST CHOOSE ONE):

Option a: Transfer 5% of the stock ACL to the commercial sector. **(South Atlantic AP Recommended)**

Option b: Transfer 10% of the stock ACL to the commercial sector.

Option c: Transfer 15% of the stock ACL to the commercial sector.

Option d: Transfer 20% of the stock ACL to the commercial sector.

Recreational ACL Threshold (MUST CHOOSE ONE):

Option e: Revert to the status quo sector allocations if 80% of the adjusted recreational sector ACL is landed. **(South Atlantic AP Recommended)**

Option f: Revert to the status quo sector allocations if 90% of the adjusted recreational sector ACL is landed.

Option g: Revert to the status quo sector allocations if 100% of the adjusted recreational sector ACL is landed.

Alternative 5: Establish a sunset provision for any change in the sector allocations for Gulf migratory group king mackerel. After the predetermined time period, any change in sector allocations would revert back to the allocations specified in the original Coastal Migratory Pelagics Fishery Management Plan for the Gulf of Mexico (68% for the recreational sector and 32% for the commercial sector).

Option a: Sunset any change in sector allocations after a five year period (2016-2020).

Option b: Sunset any change in sector allocations after a ten year period (2016-2025).

Option c: Sunset any change in sector allocations after a fifteen year period (2016-2030).

Discussion:

The Councils are considering modifying the sector allocations for Gulf migratory group king mackerel. Over the past ten years, the commercial sector has consistently landed near the commercial ACL while the recreational sector has landed decreasingly lower proportions of the recreational ACL.

Table 9. Proportion of sector ACLs landed and proportion of total ACL landed for Gulf migratory group king mackerel, including those landings attributed to the Florida East Coast Zone (FLEC). The FLEC landings are included here since there is not a recreational allocation specifically for the FLEC Zone.

Fishing Year	Total TAC/ACL	Comm ACL	Comm Landings	Rec ACL	Rec Landings	% of Sector ACL Landed		Total ACL Landed
						Comm ¹	Rec ²	
2001-02	10.2 mp	3.264 mp	2.902 mp	6.936 mp	3.669 mp	88.9%	52.9%	64.7%
2002-03	10.2 mp	3.264 mp	3.186 mp	6.936 mp	2.816 mp	97.6%	40.6%	59.3%
2003-04	10.2 mp	3.264 mp	3.094 mp	6.936 mp	3.211 mp	94.8%	46.3%	62.7%
2004-05	10.2 mp	3.264 mp	3.215 mp	6.936 mp	2.532 mp	98.5%	36.5%	56.4%
2005-06	10.2 mp	3.264 mp	2.983 mp	6.936 mp	2.996 mp	91.4%	43.2%	58.9%
2006-07	10.8 mp	3.456 mp	3.231 mp	7.344 mp	3.305 mp	93.5%	45.0%	60.5%
2007-08	10.8 mp	3.456 mp	3.459 mp	7.344 mp	2.629 mp	100.1%	35.8%	56.3%
2008-09	10.8 mp	3.456 mp	3.833 mp	7.344 mp	2.350 mp	110.9%	32.0%	57.6%
2009-10	10.8 mp	3.456 mp	3.674 mp	7.344 mp	3.525 mp	106.3%	48.0%	68.0%
2010-11	10.8 mp	3.456 mp	3.522 mp	7.344 mp	2.181 mp	101.9%	29.7%	53.0%
2011-12	10.8 mp	3.456 mp	3.428 mp	7.344 mp	2.438 mp	99.2%	33.2%	54.3%
2012-13	10.8 mp	3.456 mp	3.539 mp	7.344 mp	2.710 mp	102.4%	36.9%	57.9%
2013-14	10.8 mp	3.456 mp	3.055 mp	7.344 mp	2.916 mp	88.4%	39.7%	55.3%

¹Commercial allocation = 32%

²Recreational allocation = 68%

Source: SERO

Table 10. Resultant allocations based on options presented in Action 8. Alternative 3 would be dependent upon the landings reported in the year during which the recreational sector landed 80% of its allocation.

Option	Commercial Allocation	Recreational Allocation
Alternative 1	32%	68%
Alternative 2, Option a	37%	63%
Alternative 2, Option b	42%	58%
Alternative 2, Option c	52%	48%
Alternative 3		
Alternative 4, Option a	37%	63%
Alternative 4, Option b	42%	58%
Alternative 4, Option c	47%	53%
Alternative 4, Option d	52%	48%

Advisory Panel Recommendations

- Gulf AP: Recommended Alternative 1, or if not, then Alternative 5 Option a (November 2015).
- South Atlantic AP: Recommended Alternative 4/Option 4a/Option 4e as the preferreds (February 2016).

Public Hearings (February 2016)

- One commenter supported moving some recreational ACL to the commercial ACL.
- The written comment supported Alternative 4/Option 4a/Option 4e as the preferred alternative and options.

Gulf Council's rationale for the current preferred alternative

The Gulf Council has selected Alternative 1 as the preferred based on the Gulf AP recommendation, and that there has been an increase in recreational landings of Gulf king mackerel in the last year. The potential increase in the bag limit in Action 9 could increase recreational landings, resulting in an in-season closure if the recreational ACL is reduced due to changes in the allocation.

COMMITTEE ACTIONS

- 1) Do you want to add, remove or edit any alternatives?
- 2) Do you want to select a preferred alternative and/or options?

ACTION 9 - Modify the Recreational Bag Limit for Gulf Migratory Group King Mackerel

Alternative 1: No action - Maintain the current recreational bag limit of two fish per person per day.

Gulf Council Preferred Alternative 2: Increase the bag limit to three fish per person per day. **(South Atlantic and Gulf AP Recommended)**

South Atlantic Council Preferred Alternative 3: Increase the bag limit to four fish per person per day.

NOTE: The Gulf Council changed their preferred alternative to Alternative 2 on January 28, 2016.

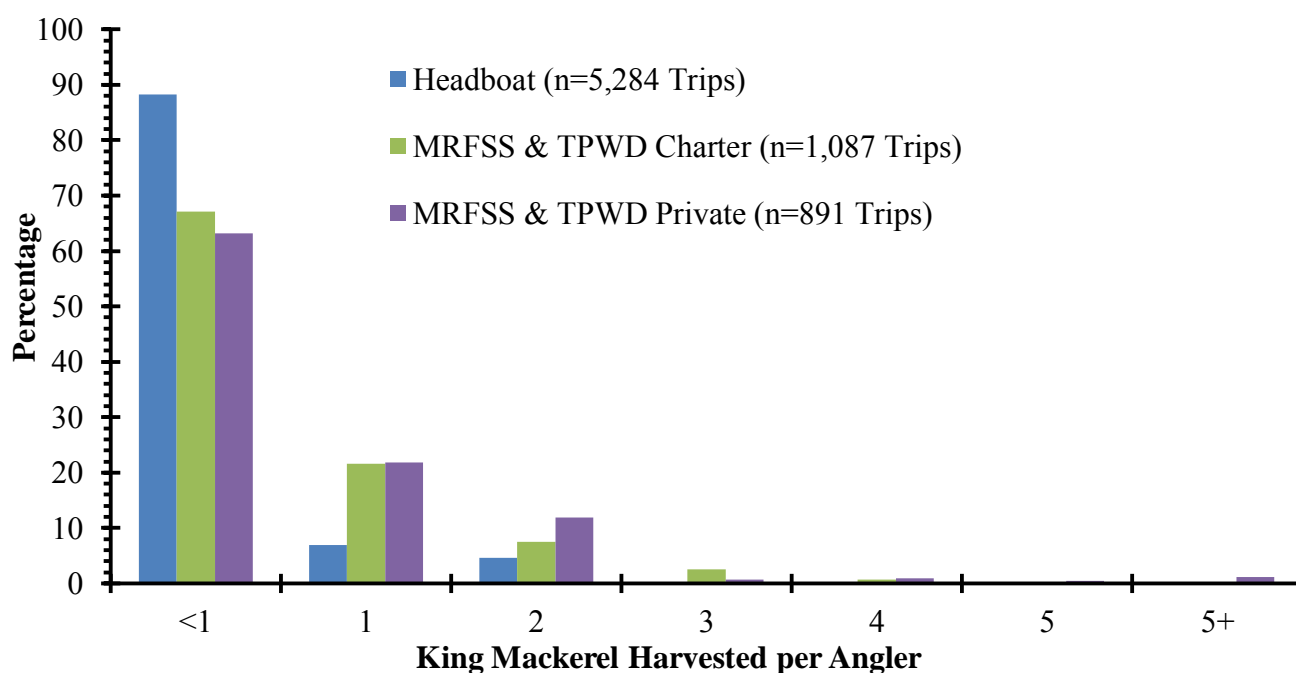


Figure 10. Distribution of Gulf of Mexico migratory group king mackerel harvested per angler by mode from 2011 through 2013.

Source: NMFS SERO LAPP/DM Branch.

Advisory Panel Recommendations

- Gulf AP recommended Alternative 2 as the Preferred Alternative (March 2015 and Nov 2015). Additionally, the Gulf AP recommends that there be no closed season for the recreational sector under any management measures (November 2015).
- South Atlantic AP: Recommended Alternative 2 as the preferred.

Public Hearings (February 2016)

One comment supported Alternative 2 as the preferred alternative.

Councils' rationale for the Gulf current preferred alternatives

The Gulf Council selected Alternative 2 based on the Gulf AP recommendation. The South Atlantic Council had selected Alternative 3 based on the previous Gulf preferred alternative.

COMMITTEE ACTIONS

- 1) Do you want to add, remove or edit any alternatives?
- 2) Do you want to change the Preferred Alternative?

APPROVE AMENDMENT 26 FOR FORMAL REVIEW

DRAFT MOTION: APPROVE COASTAL MIGRATORY PELAGICS AMENDMENT 26 FOR SECRETARIAL REVIEW, AND DEEM THE CODIFIED TEXT AS NECESSARY AND APPROPRIATE. GIVE STAFF EDITORIAL LICENSE TO MAKE ANY NECESSARY EDITORIAL CHANGES TO THE DOCUMENT/CODIFIED TEXT AND GIVE THE COUNCIL CHAIR AUTHORITY TO APPROVE THE REVISIONS AND RE-DEEM THE CODIFIED TEXT.