

SUMMARY
for
AMENDMENT 20
to the Joint Fishery Management Plan for
Coastal Migratory Pelagic Resources
of the
Gulf of Mexico and South Atlantic
(zones and boundaries)



Law Enforcement Advisory Panel Meeting
Charleston, SC
February 2013

Actions in Amendment 20

1. Modify Subzones and Allocation of Gulf Migratory Group Eastern Zone King Mackerel.
2. Modify the Commercial Hook-and-Line Trip Limits for Gulf Migratory Group King Mackerel
3. Change the Fishing Season for Gulf Group King Mackerel for the Eastern and Western Zone
4. Establish a transit provision for king mackerel harvested in the exclusive economic zone (EEZ) off Monroe County when the rest of the west coast of Florida is closed
5. Establish State Quotas for Atlantic Migratory Group King Mackerel and Spanish Mackerel for North Carolina
6. Modify the Framework Procedure

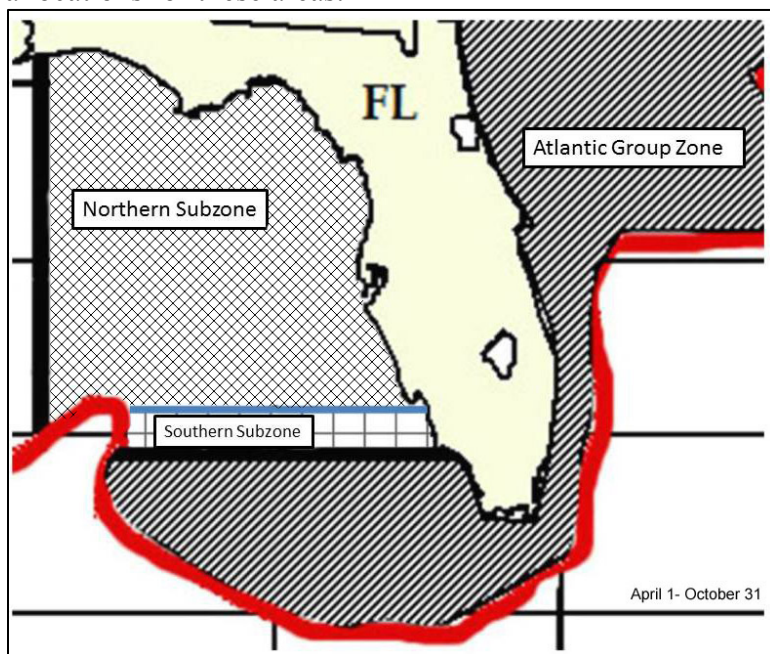
Expected Schedule

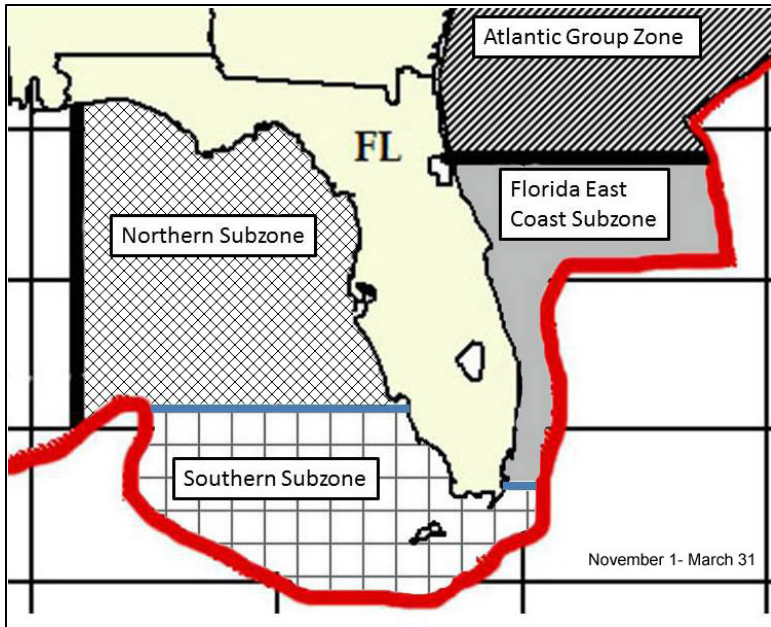
<i>March 2013</i>	Joint Gulf and South Atlantic Committee meeting to review the amendment and finalize actions and alternatives
<i>April 2013</i>	Mackerel Advisory Panel review SSC review
<i>June 2013</i>	South Atlantic Council review final analyses and approve for public hearings
<i>August 2013</i>	Public hearings
<i>September 2013</i>	South Atlantic Council review public comment, approve the amendment for submission to the Secretary
<i>Mid- 2014</i>	Implementation

Action 1. Modify Subzones and Allocation of Gulf Migratory Group Eastern Zone King Mackerel.

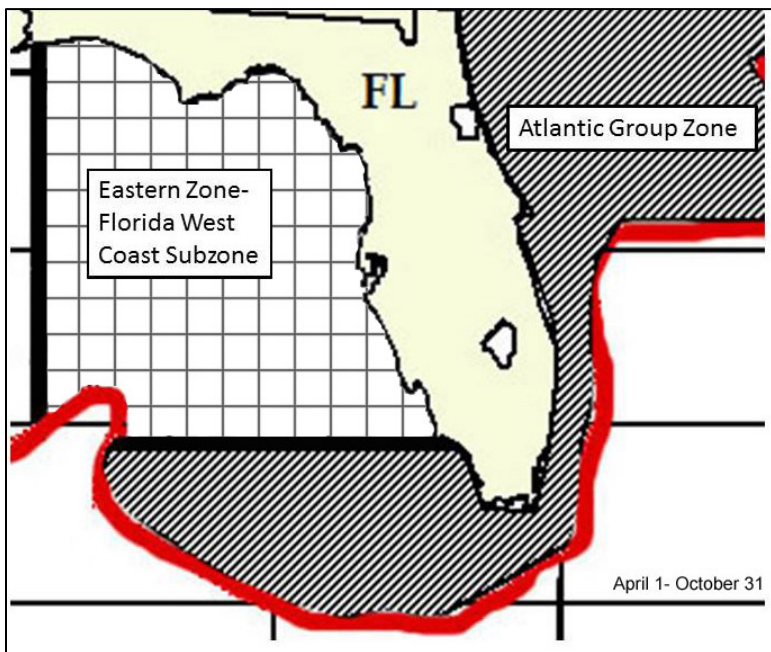
Background: The Northern Subzone of the Gulf Eastern Zone has caught its allocation in seven of the last twelve years and the closure of the subzone has usually occurred in the fall before the fish have migrated south. As a result, fishermen along the peninsula of Florida have not had an opportunity to participate in the fishery during those years. Combining the Northern Subzone with the Southern Subzone reduces the number of quota areas for Gulf of Mexico (Gulf) group king mackerel from three to two, thus it simplifies monitoring. It also provides for a larger potential share of total allowable catch for fishermen over a broader area.

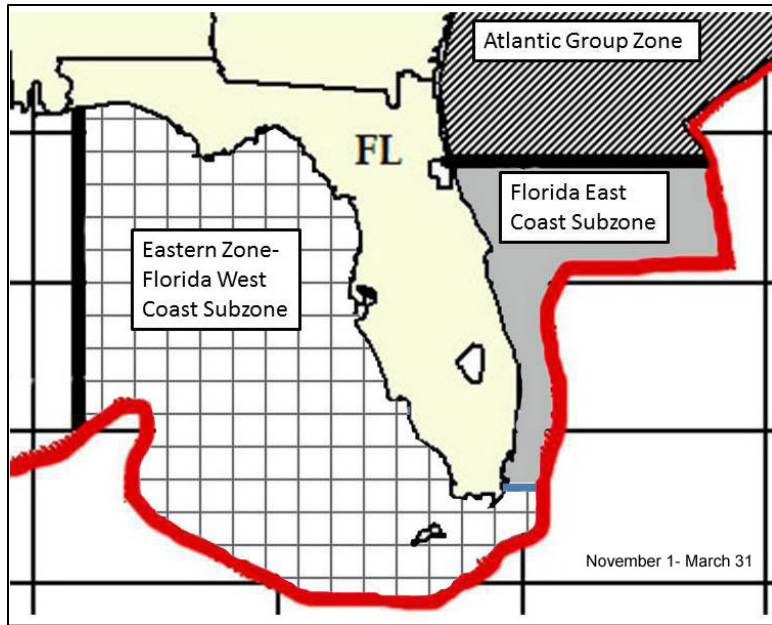
Alternative 1: No Action – Retain the existing Northern and Southern Subzones and retain the existing allocations for these areas.





Alternative 2: Eliminate the current Northern and Southern Subzones and add the assigned allocation to the combined eastern zone.





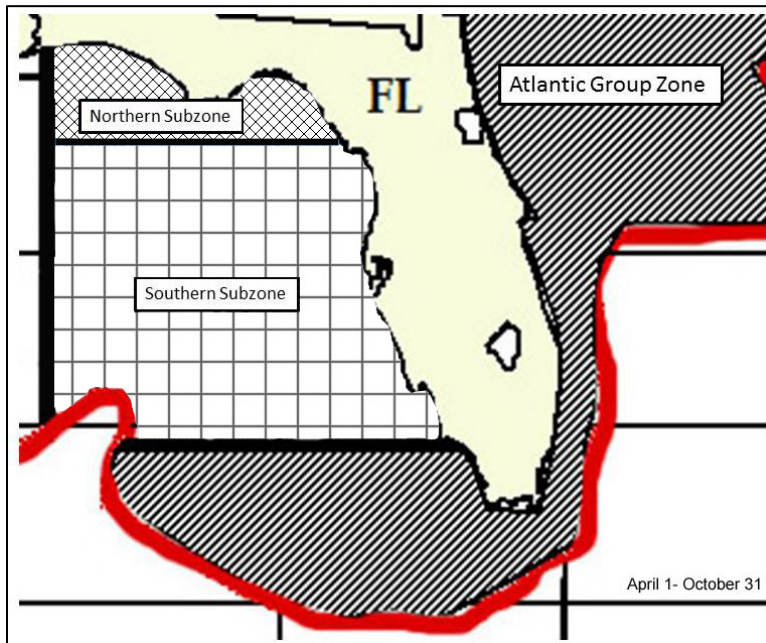
Alternative 3: Modify the Florida west coast subzones and reallocate quota

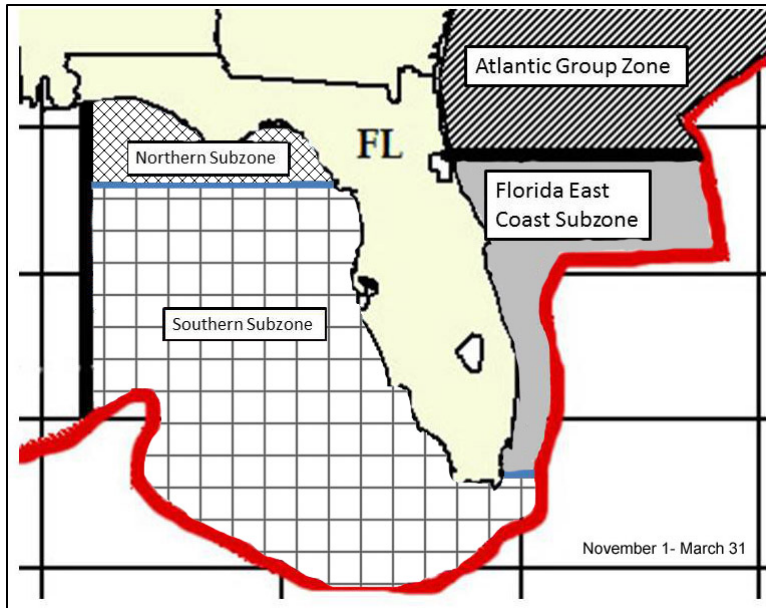
Option a: Retain the subzones but modify the boundary between the Northern and Southern Subzones to the Dixie/Levy County line and set allocation based on:

Suboption i. Reallocating x pounds from the Southern Subzone hook-and-line fishery to the Northern Subzone.

Suboption ii. Reallocating 2% from the recreational sector allocation to the Northern Subzone based on a temporary reallocation for the next 5 years. Monitor recreational catches annually and revert the 2% allocation back to the recreational sector if the recreational catch reaches 75%, 85%, or 90% of the recreational ACL.

Option b. Maintaining the current allocation

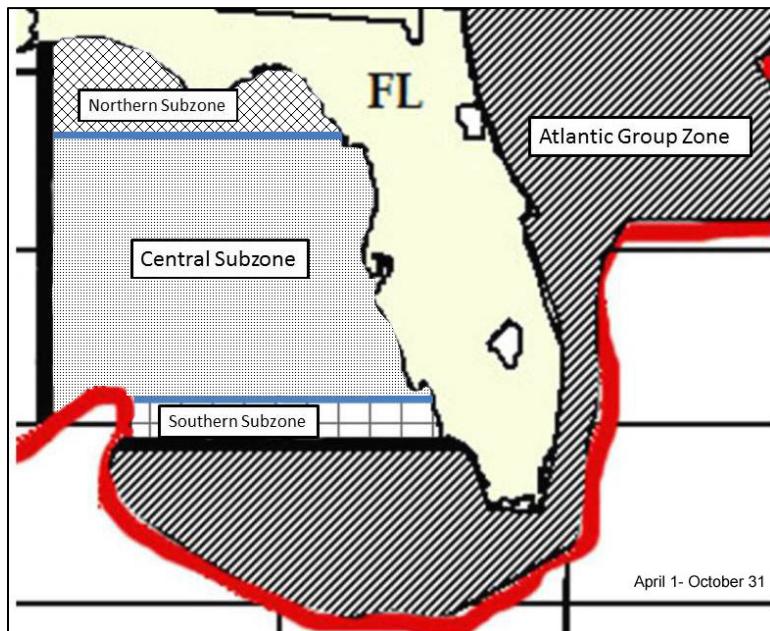


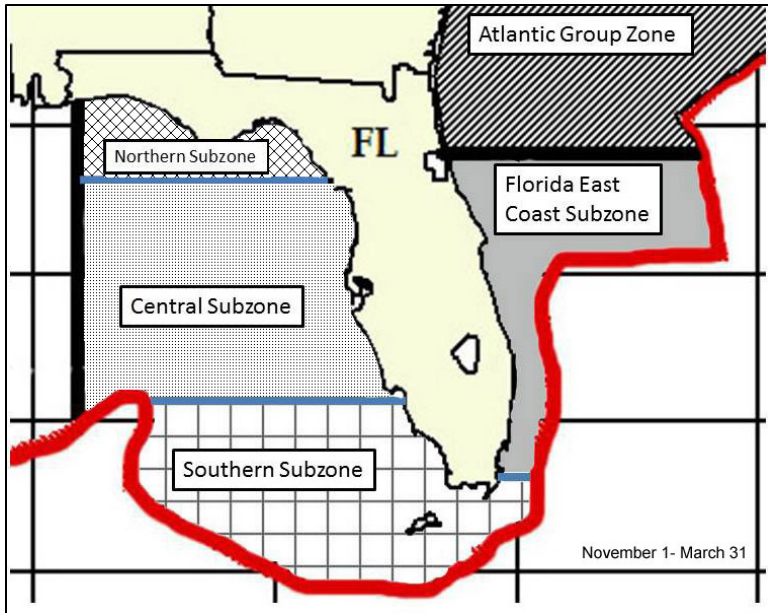


Option b: Create a Central Subzone from the Collier/Lee County line to the Dixie/Levy County line with an allocation based on:

Suboption i. Reallocating x pounds from the Southern Subzone hook-and-line fishery to the Central Subzone.

Suboption ii. Reallocating 2% from the recreational sector allocation to the Central Subzone based on a temporary reallocation for the next 5 years. Monitor recreational catches annually and revert the 2% allocation back to the recreational sector if the recreational catch reaches 75%, 85%, or 90% of the recreational ACL.

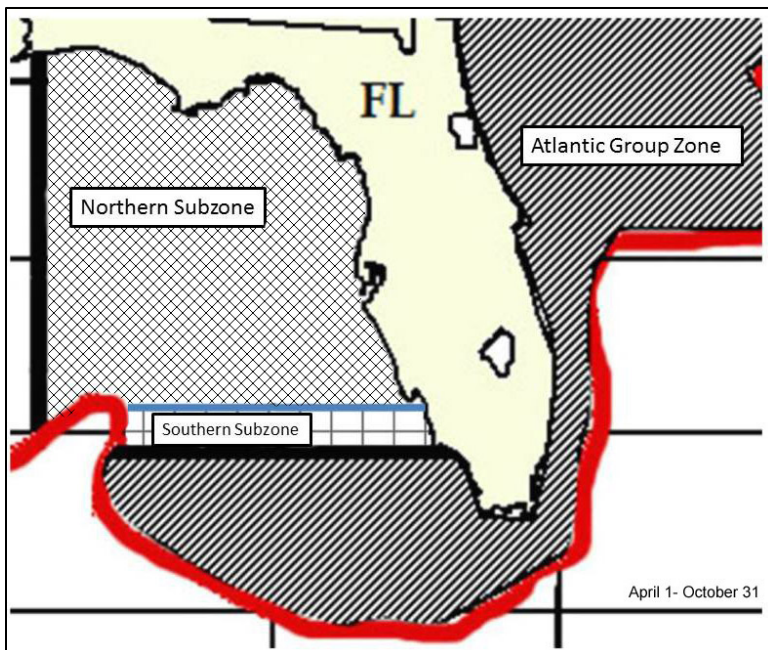


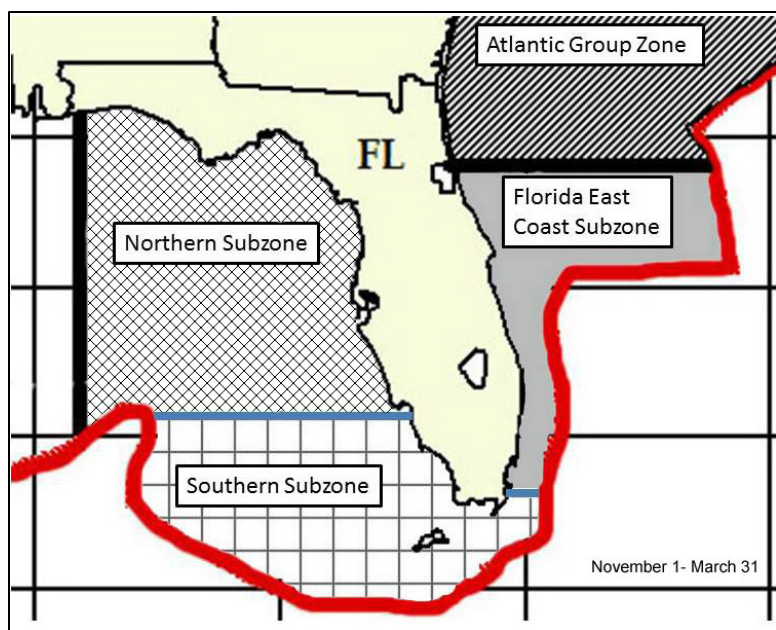


Option c: Retain the subzones but increase the allocation to the Northern Subzone based on:

Suboption i. Reallocating x pounds from the Southern Subzone hook-and-line fishery to the Northern Subzone.

Suboption ii. Reallocating 2% from the recreational sector allocation to the Northern Subzone based on a temporary reallocation for the next 5 years. Monitor recreational catches annually and revert the 2% allocation back to the recreational sector if the recreational catch reaches 75%, 85%, or 90% of the recreational ACL.





Note to Law Enforcement AP: Combining the Eastern zone quota into one ACL (Alternative 2) would affect South Atlantic fishermen harvesting in the Florida East Coast subzone (around Cape Canaveral and Jupiter). The options under Alternative 3 would not directly affect the Florida East Coast subzone ACL because the subzone's allocation would not change. Fishermen in the Florida Keys may be impacted by changes in the subzone allocations.

Action 2. Modify the Commercial Hook-and-Line Trip Limits for Gulf Migratory Group King Mackerel.

Background: The Gulf King Mackerel Western Zone is usually closed for more than six months each year even with the 3,000-lb trip limit implemented in 1999, and the Gulf Council wants to consider lowering the Western Zone trip limit to extend the season. For the Eastern Zone northern and southern subzones, there is concern that the 1,250-lb trip limit is not economically efficient. There is also consideration of eliminating the step-down to a 500-lb trip limit for the northern and eastern subzones to maximize efficiency for trips.

Alternative 1: No Action – Retain the existing commercial hook-and-line trip limits.

Option a. Western zone at 3,000 lbs

Option b. Eastern zone northern subzone at 1,250 lbs until 75% of the quota is taken, at which time the trip limit decreases to 500 lbs

Option c. Eastern zone southern subzone at 1,250 lbs until 75% of the quota is taken, at which time the trip limit decreases to 500 lbs

Alternative 2: Set the commercial hook-and-line trip limit at 1,500 lbs with no reduction.

Option a: For the Western zone

Option b: For the Eastern zone northern subzone

Option c: For the Eastern zone southern subzone

Alternative 3: Set the commercial hook-and-line trip limit at 2,000 lbs with no reduction.

Option a: For the Western zone

Option b: For the Eastern zone northern subzone

Option c: For the Eastern zone southern subzone

Alternative 4: Set the commercial hook-and-line trip limit at 2,500 lbs with no reduction.

Option a: For the Western zone

Option b: For the Eastern zone northern subzone

Option c: For the Eastern zone southern subzone

Alternative 5: Set the commercial hook-and-line trip limit at 3,000 lbs with no reduction.

Option a: For the Western zone

Option b: For the Eastern zone northern subzone

Option c: For the Eastern zone southern subzone

Note to Law Enforcement AP: The lower trip limit in the Western zone will likely not affect South Atlantic fishermen and fishing communities. The increased trip limits would affect the fishermen in the Florida Keys.

Action 3. Change the Fishing Season for Gulf Group King Mackerel for the Eastern and Western Zone.

Background: Some fishermen have indicated in the past that a later opening would allow them to harvest king mackerel from the Western Zone more efficiently because fish are present in larger numbers and closer to shore in the main fishing areas off south Louisiana in the fall as opposed to the summer. They also claim that fish can be kept in better condition due to the cooler weather. A later opening, possibly combined with a lower trip limit, might also discourage movement of fishers from the Atlantic coast of Florida to south Louisiana and into the Florida Panhandle as has been the case for several years.

Alternative 1: No Action - the fishing season remains **July 1** – June 30.

Alternative 2: Change the fishing season for Gulf group king mackerel season to **September 1** – August 31.

Option a: For the western zone

Option b: For the eastern zone

Alternative 3: Change the fishing season for Gulf group king mackerel season to **October 1** – September 30.

Option a: For the western zone

Option b: For the eastern zone

Alternative 4: Change the fishing season for Gulf group king mackerel season to **November 1** – October 31.

Option a: For the western zone

Option b: For the eastern zone

Note to Law Enforcement AP: Changes in the fishing season start date for the eastern zone (Option b) may affect the Florida Keys fishermen. There will be no change for the Florida east coast subzone.

Action 4. Establish a transit provision for king mackerel harvested in the exclusive economic zone (EEZ) off Monroe County when the rest of the west coast of Florida is closed.

Background: Often the Florida west coast southern subzone, comprised of Collier and Monroe Counties, closes in early spring (see Table 2.2.1). Beginning April 1 of each year, Monroe County is considered to contain Atlantic migratory group king mackerel and the Florida west coast southern subzone is comprised of only Collier County. Some fishermen fish in the northern portion of Monroe County, which is a sparsely populated area. To land those fish they must travel to the Florida Keys where dealers in Monroe County are located. This trip could be up to 100 miles. A transit provision would allow fishermen who legally harvest king mackerel from Monroe County after April 1 of each year to transport and land their catch in other areas of the Gulf that are closed.

Alternative 1: No Action - do not establish a transit provision.

Alternative 2: Establish a transit provision for fish harvested in the EEZ off Monroe County when the rest of the west coast of Florida is closed.

Alternative 3: Establish a transit provision for fish harvested in the EEZ off Monroe County to be landed in Collier County when the rest of the west coast of Florida is closed.

South Atlantic Preferred Alternative 4: Establish a provision allowing transit through Collier County when the Florida west coast Southern Subzone is closed for vessels possessing Atlantic group king mackerel that were legally harvested in the EEZ off Monroe County only from April 1 – June 30

IPT RECOMMENDATION TO ADD: Alternative 5: Establish a provision allowing transit through areas closed to king mackerel fishing for vessels possessing king mackerel that were legally harvested in the EEZ off areas open to king mackerel fishing.

IPT RECOMMENDATION TO ADD: Alternative 6: Establish a provision allowing transit through the Florida west coast Northern Subzone when that is closed for vessels possessing king mackerel that were legally harvested in the EEZ off Collier County.

Note: For Alternatives 2-4, the following conditions apply:

Only from April 1 – June 30

For Alternatives 2-6, the following conditions apply:

Only for vessels in direct and continuous transit and with gear stowed

Only for fishermen holding a federal commercial king mackerel permit

Action 5. Establish State Quotas for Atlantic Migratory Group King Mackerel and Spanish Mackerel for North Carolina

Background: The South Atlantic Council is concerned that the commercial ACLs will be filled by fishermen in one state before fish are available to fishermen in other states, particularly North Carolina). This becomes more probable as the ACLs are lowered. Allocating by region would be similar to how commercial quotas are managed in the Mid-Atlantic and New England areas for some species. Fishermen and some state representatives have expressed a desire to move in this direction. North Carolina currently monitors quotas and reports catches to ACCSP and to NOAA Fisheries Service, including state-by-state quotas of some Mid-Atlantic species.

Alternative 1: No Action - retain one commercial quota each for Atlantic migratory groups of king mackerel and Spanish mackerel

Alternative 2: Establish a separate commercial quota of Atlantic group king mackerel for North Carolina based on:

Option a- the average of the proportion of landings in North Carolina from 2006-07 through 2011-12.

Option b- the average of the proportion of landings in North Carolina from 2006-07 through 2011-12 plus the proportion of the unused quota equal to North Carolina's percentage of landings 2006-07 through 2011-12.

Option c- the average of the proportion of landings in North Carolina from 2002-03 through 2011-12.

Option d- the average of the proportion of landings in North Carolina from 2002-03 through 2011-12 plus the proportion of the unused quota equal to North Carolina's percentage of landings 2002-03 through 2011-12.

Option e- 50% based on the proportion of landings in North Carolina 2002-03 through 2011-12 and 50% based on the proportion of landings in North Carolina 2006-07 through 2011-12 (Boyles Law).

Alternative 3: Establish a separate commercial quota of Atlantic group Spanish mackerel for North Carolina based on:

Option a- the average of the proportion of landings in North Carolina from 2006-07 through 2011-12.

Option b- the average of the proportion of landings in North Carolina from 2006-07 through 2011-12 plus the proportion of the unused quota equal to North Carolina's percentage of landings 2006-07 through 2011-12.

Option c- the average of the proportion of landings in North Carolina from 2002-03 through 2011-12.

Option d- the average of the proportion of landings in North Carolina from 2002-03 through 2011-12 plus the proportion of the unused quota equal to North Carolina's percentage of landings 2002-03 through 2011-12.

Option e- 50% based on the proportion of landings in North Carolina 2002-03 through 2011-12 and 50% based on the proportion of landings in North Carolina 2006-07 through 2011-12 (Boyles Law).

Table 1. Atlantic group King mackerel- (commercial ACL=3,710,000 lbs)

	North Carolina		FL, GA and SC		Used Quota
	% of Quota	% of Total Landings	% of Quota	% of Total Landings	
2002 - 2003	20.9%	44.7%	25.9%	55.3%	53.1%
2003 - 2004	16.0%	34.3%	30.5%	65.5%	53.5%
2004 - 2005	28.2%	38.2%	45.5%	61.7%	26.3%
2005 - 2006	31%	51.1%	29.5%	48.6%	39.3%
2006 - 2007	32.4%	40.2%	48.3%	59.8%	19.3%
2007 - 2008	29.8%	41.4%	41.9%	58.3%	28.1%
2008 - 2009	25.7%	30.7%	58.1%	69.3%	16.2%
2009 - 2010	21.2%	22%	74.9%	77.9%	3.9%
2010 - 2011	7.9%	8.6%	83.9%	91.4%	8.2%
2011 - 2012	11.7%	21.1%	43.7%	78.9%	44.6%

Data source: SEFSC

Table 2. Atlantic group Spanish mackerel

	North Carolina		FL, GA and SC		Unused Quota
	% of Quota	% of Total Landings	% of Quota	% of Total Landings	
2002 - 2003	18.1%	21.9%	60.8%	73.6%	17.4%
2003 - 2004	11.8%	12.2%	81.4%	84.5%	3.6%
2004 - 2005	Confidential				17.9%
2005 - 2006	Confidential				5.2%
2006 - 2007	Confidential				-0.6%
2007 - 2008	13.5%	15.8%	69.6%	81.9%	14.9%
2008 - 2009	Confidential				12.4%
2009 - 2010	26.6%	21.9%	84.9%	73.3%	-15.8%
2010 - 2011	25.2%	20.0%	99.5%	78.8%	-26.3%
2011 - 2012	24.1%	21.7%	85.5%	77.2%	-10.7%

ACL 2002-03 through 2005-06= 3,870,000 lbs

ACL 2006-07- present= 3,620,000 lbs

Data source: SEFSC

NOTE: North Carolina would monitor the landings and prohibit landings in the state when the North Carolina allocation is met. Fishing in the NC EEZ would not be prohibited, only landings.

Action 6. Modify the Framework Procedure.

Alternative 1: No Action – Do not modify the framework procedure adopted through Amendment 18.

Gulf Preferred Alternative 2: Modify the framework procedure to include changes to accountability measures (AMs) under the standard documentation process for open framework actions. Accountability measures that could be changed would include:

Inseason AMs

- Closures and closure procedures
- Trip limit reductions or increases
- Designation of an IFQ program as the AM for species in the IFQ program
- Implementation of gear restrictions

Postseason AMs

- Adjustment of season length
- Implementation of a closed season
- Adjustment or implementation of bag, trip, or possession limit
- Reduction of the ACL to account for the previous year overage
- Revoking a scheduled increase in the ACL if the ACL was exceeded in the previous year
- Implementation of gear restrictions
- Reporting and monitoring requirements

Alternative 3: Modify the framework procedure to include changes to accountability measures (AMs) under the standard documentation process for open framework actions. Accountability measures that could be changed would include:

Inseason AMs

- Closure procedures
- Trip limit reductions or increases

Postseason AMs

- Adjustment of season length
- Adjustment of bag, trip, or possession limit

Gulf Preferred Alternative 4: Modify the framework procedure to include designation of responsibility to each Council for setting regulations for the migratory groups of each species.

Gulf Preferred Alternative 5. Make editorial changes to the framework procedure to reflect changes to the Council advisory committees and panels.

Note: Alternatives 4 and 5 could be selected in addition to Alternative 2 or 3.