



THE SOUTH ATLANTIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

**For-Hire Limited Entry for the Snapper Grouper,  
Dolphin Wahoo, and Coastal Migratory Pelagics  
Fisheries in the Atlantic**

**March 2024**



# Background



- The Council established a control date of June 15, 2016 in for-hire fisheries.
  - Also initiated an amendment to consider limiting entry into the for-hire component of the snapper grouper, dolphin wahoo, and coastal migratory pelagics fisheries.
  - Eventually narrowed down the scope to just the snapper grouper fishery.
    - Became Snapper Grouper Amendment 47 and developed through the public scoping stage.
    - Halted work on Amendment 47 after scoping in 2018.
- What is a control date?
  - A control date establishes eligibility criteria for determining future access to fisheries or sectors of fisheries based on past participation.

# Recent Council Action



- December 2023 meeting - Council discussed Snapper Grouper and Mackerel Cobia AP recommendations and received an update on the SEFHIER program.
  - APs recommended exploring limited entry.
  - SEFHIER - Poor compliance and the accuracy of submitted data is not clear.
  - **Council Action - Initiated development of an amendment to consider limited entry for the snapper grouper, coastal migratory pelagics, and dolphin wahoo fisheries.**
- New Control Dates
  - Establish an additional control date of December 8, 2023, that the Council may use if implementing for-hire limited entry.
  - Additionally, federal for-hire permit holders that have not reported snapper grouper, coastal migratory pelagics, and/or dolphin wahoo catches from the Atlantic to the SEFHIER program on or prior to December 5, 2023, will not be assured of future access.
  - NOAA Fisheries has published an advance notice of proposed rulemaking reflecting these control date criteria.
    - The comment period is open through March 11, 2024.

# Topics Considered in Amendment 47



## 1) A moratorium on South Atlantic for-hire snapper grouper permits

- Magnuson-Stevens Act and National Standard Guidelines considerations
- Moratoriums and limited entry in other federally managed fisheries
- Start date of a moratorium and exceptions for eligibility
  - i. Historic captains (i.e., captains working on a vessel owned by someone else)
  - ii. Commercial license holders
- Transferability of permits and allowing new entrants
  - i. New entrants permit pool
  - ii. New entrants or “green horn” permit

## 2) Revising or removing regulations that prevent federally permitted snapper grouper for-hire operators from possessing snapper grouper species in state waters when harvest of these species closes in federal waters.

# Magnuson-Stevens Act Considerations



- Under MSA section 303(b)(6) a Council should consider the following for implementing a limited access system:

## **Sec. 303. CONTENTS OF FISHERY MANAGEMENT PLANS**

### **(b) DISCRETIONARY PROVISIONS**

(6) establish a limited access system for the fishery in order to achieve optimum yield if, in developing such system, the Council and the Secretary take into account—

- (A) present participation in the fishery;
- (B) historical fishing practices in, and dependence on, the fishery;
- (C) the economics of the fishery;
- (D) the capability of fishing vessels used in the fishery to engage in other fisheries;
- (E) the cultural and social framework relevant to the fishery and any affected fishing communities;
- (F) the fair and equitable distribution of access privileges in the fishery; and
- (G) any other relevant considerations





# National Standard Guidelines

- **National Standard 4 - Allocations**

- Fairness and equity, promotion of conservation, avoidance of excessive shares
- Other factors such as economic and social consequences, food production, consumer interest, dependence on the fishery by present participants and coastal communities, efficiency of various types of gear used in the fishery, transferability of effort to and impact on other fisheries, opportunity for new participants to enter the fishery, and enhancement of opportunities for recreational fishing.

- **National Standard 5 - Efficiency**

- Outlines the concept of efficiency within a fishery,
- Establishes limited access as a management technique that may be used to address issues such "overfishing, overcrowding, or overcapitalization in a fishery to achieve OY"
- Provides additional considerations when implementing a limited access program.
  - Notably qualifying criteria and permit transferability.



# Limited Entry In Other Fisheries

- Federally, most for-hire fisheries are open access.
  - All federal fisheries on the east coast: HMS, New England, Mid-Atlantic, and South Atlantic Councils.
- However, there are several limited entry federal for-hire fisheries.
  - Alaskan halibut fishery (North Pacific Council)
  - Gulf of Mexico Reef Fish and Coastal Migratory Pelagics charter/headboat permits
    - Moratorium on new permits from June 16, 2003 to June 16, 2006.
    - Established indefinite limited entry in June 2006.
- More common management practice for commercial fisheries
  - Example: Gulf of Mexico and South Atlantic commercial king mackerel permit
    - Moratorium on new permits from Oct 16, 1995 to Oct 15, 2000.
    - Moratorium was extended to Oct 15, 2005.
    - Established indefinite limited entry in July 2005.

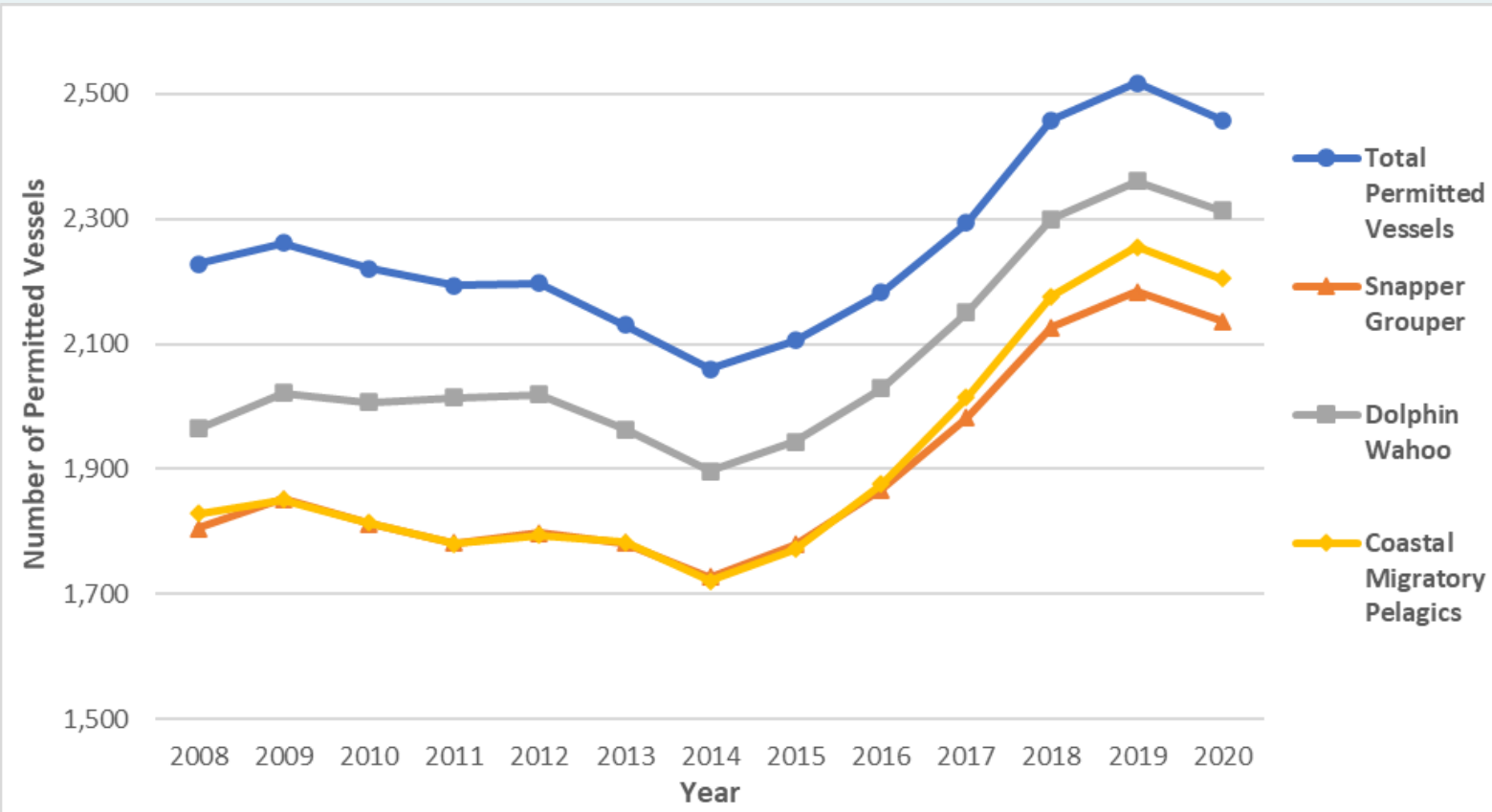


# Available Permit Data

- The number of federal for-hire permitted vessels for the three finfish fisheries was examined from 2008 through 2020.
- Full-year data after 2020 are currently unavailable due to issues and ongoing updates with the SERO permits system.
- It is expected that information from 2020 onwards will be available later in 2024.
- **It should be noted that COVID-19 and the comprehensive for-hire logbook reporting amendment (effective January 4, 2021) likely affected and decreased the number of federally permitted for-hire vessels in recent years. These trends are not reflected in the following figures and tables.**

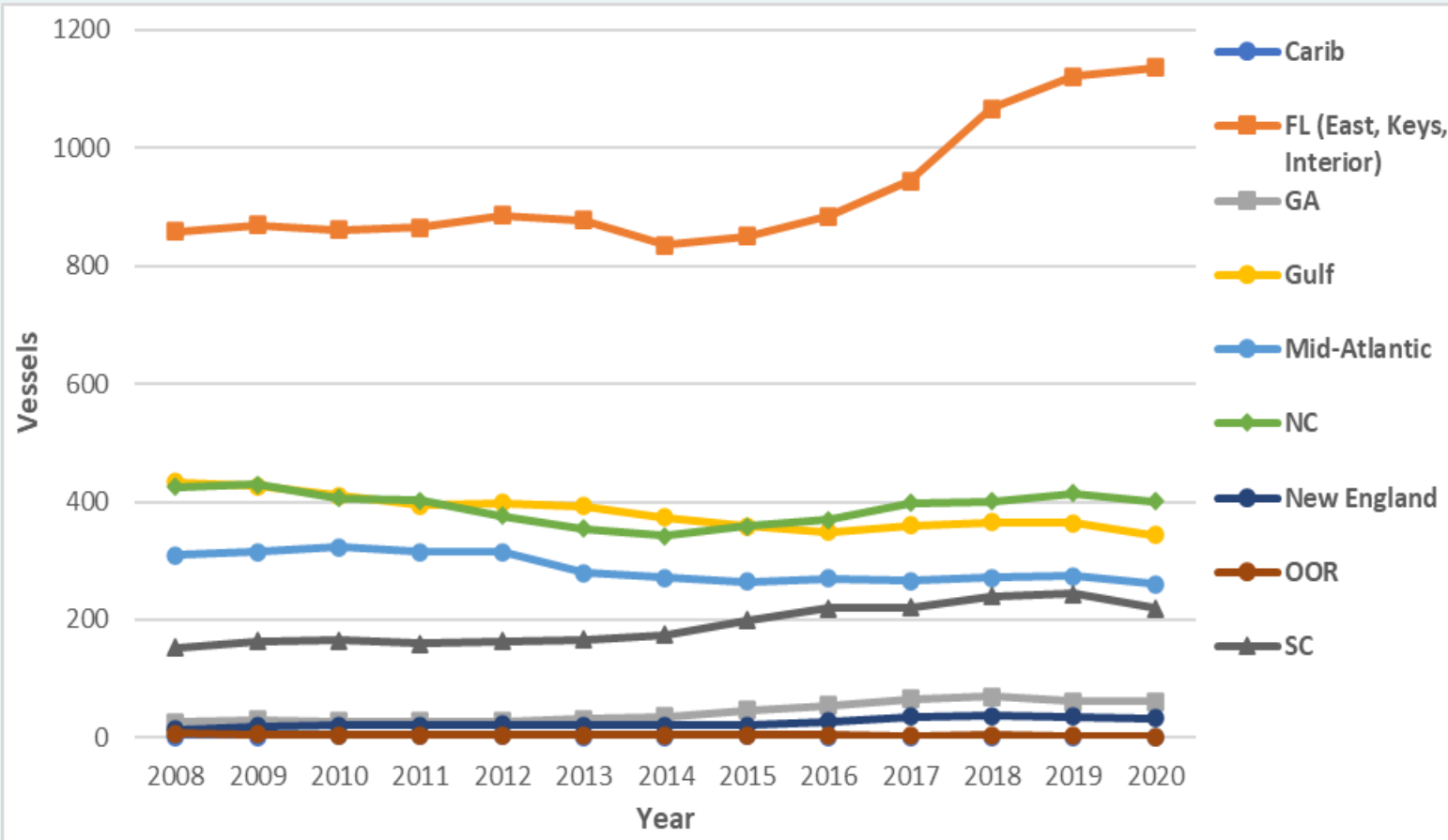


# Number of SG, CMP, and DW Permitted Vessels (combined)



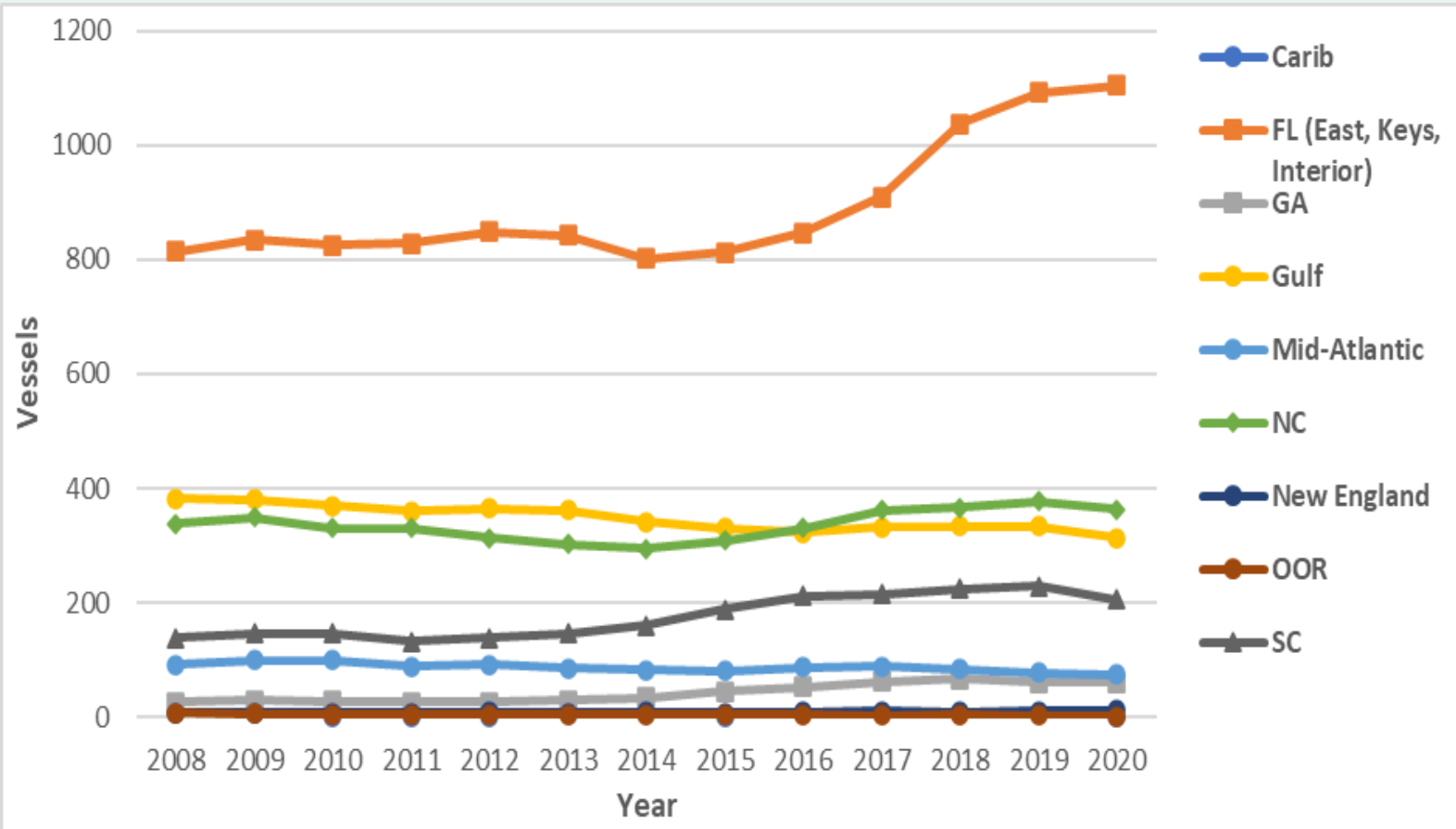
- Permitted vessels increased from 2014-2019.
  - Have likely decreased since.
- DW consistently the highest number of permits.
- CMP and SG permits were similar in number until 2016.
  - CMP permits have exceeded SG permits after that time.
- 2,458 permitted vessels in 2020.

# Distribution of SG, CMP, and DW Permitted Vessels (combined)



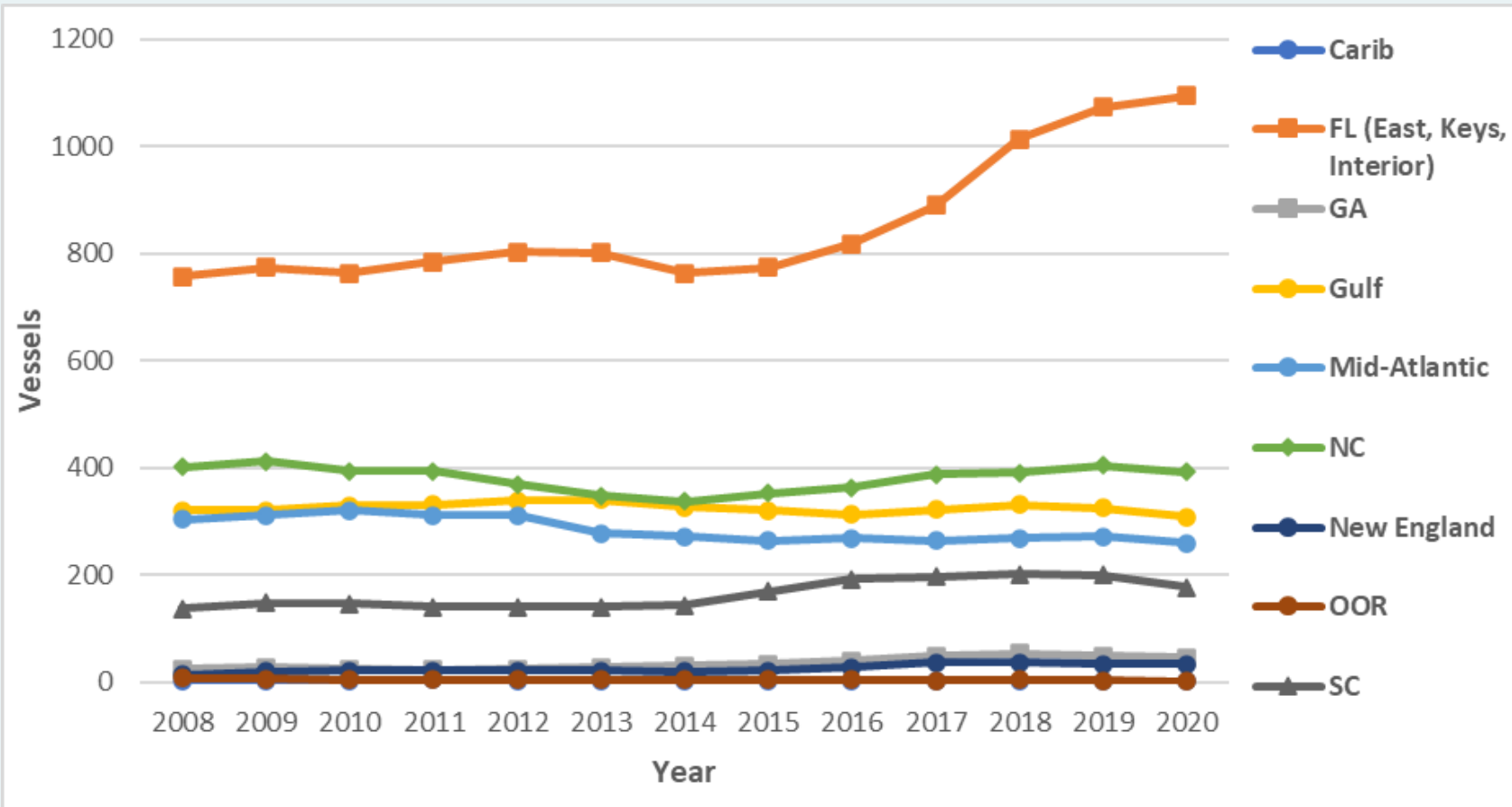
- Most of permits held by vessels with a homeport in SA region.
  - Majority on the east coast of FL.
- Notable number of permits from GARFO (Mid-Atlantic and New England) and GOM regions.
  - 294 in GARFO and 343 in the GOM in 2020.
  - Slightly decreasing trend in these permits.

# Distribution of Snapper Grouper Permitted Vessels



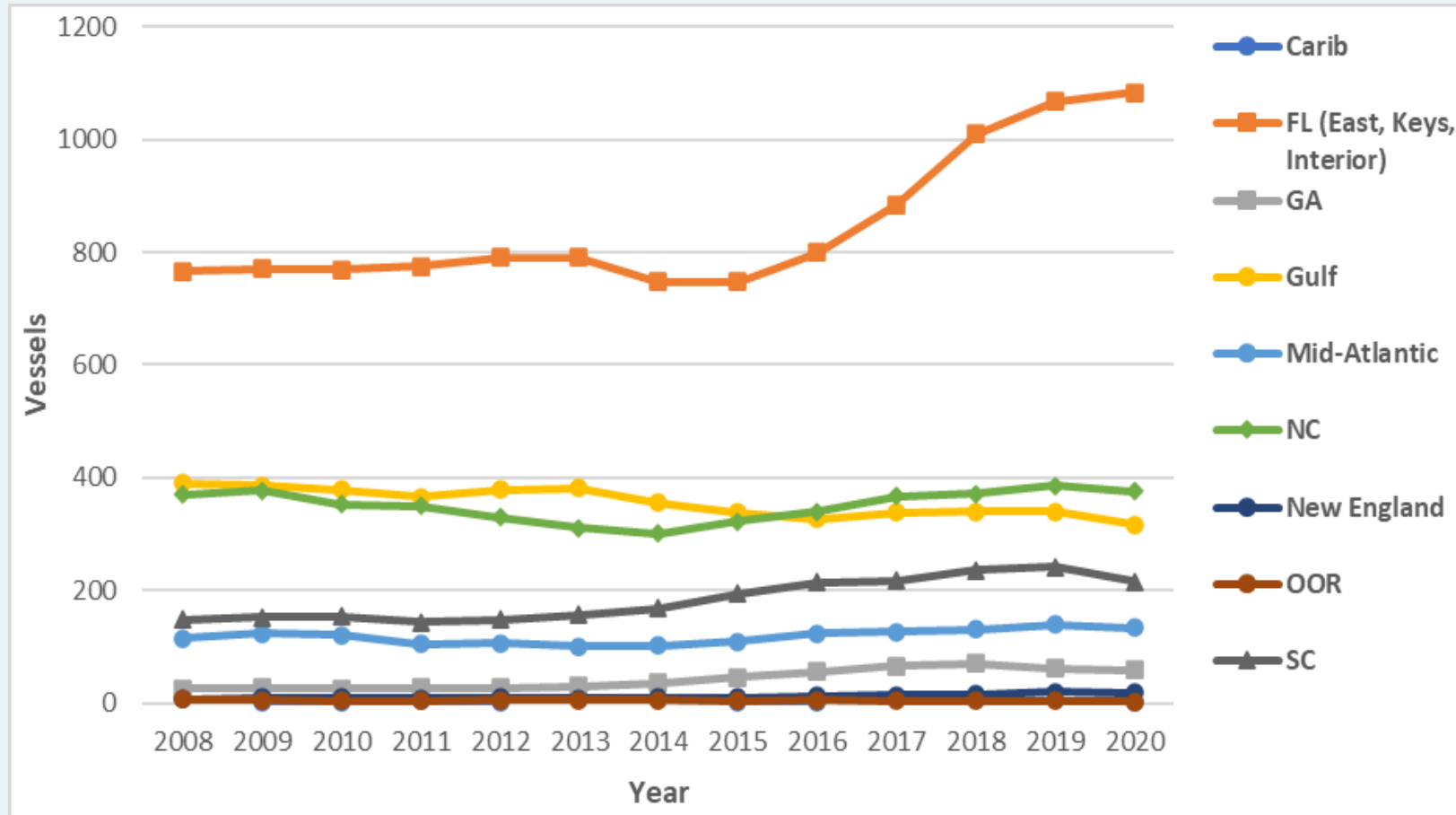
- Highest number of permits held by vessels on the Florida east coast.
  - Also area of highest growth since the control date was implemented June 15, 2016.
- Generally increasing trend across all states in the SA.
- 2,136 permits in 2020.

# Distribution of Dolphin Wahoo Permitted Vessels



- Similar trends to SG permits.
- Notably higher number of vessels from the Mid-Atlantic and New England
  - Due to extended range of FMP jurisdiction.
- 2,314 permitted vessels in 2020.

# Distribution of Coastal Migratory Pelagic Permitted Vessels



- Similar trend to DW permits.
- Notably higher number of vessels from the Mid-Atlantic.
  - Due to extended range of FMP jurisdiction.
- For-hire permit currently under limited entry in the Gulf of Mexico.