

**SAFMC
OPTIONS PAPER
September 2012**

South Atlantic CMP Framework



September 2012

Background

The percentage of quota reached by king mackerel commercial landings in the past few years has decreased. There is concern that the stock may be in decline and changes to the trip limits and other regulations may be necessary.

Table 1. Percentage of Atlantic Group King Mackerel quota landed in the past ten years. Source: SERO Mackerel Quota Reports.

Fishing Year	% of King Mackerel Quota Landed for Atlantic Group King Mackerel
2002-03	44.7%
2003-04	52.8%
2004-05	66.9%
2005-06	57.9%
2006-07	90.8%
2007-08	71.1%
2008-09	77.6%
2009-10	94.8%
2010-11	72.5%
2011-12	54.8%

*Atlantic King Mackerel commercial quota= 3,710,000 lbs

Table 2. Percent of the Atlantic Group king mackerel quota caught by the end of each month (cumulative landings). Source: Southeast Fisheries Science Center (2007-08 through 2011-12) and SERO Mackerel reports (2012-13)

	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13
March	0.5%	2%	3%	3%	0.35%	0.65%
April	14%	11%	14%	22%	11%	3%
May	25%	29%	37%	35%	29%	12%
June	31%	39%	49%	47%	37%	17.6%
July	36%	47%	59%	52%	40%	19.8%
August	46%	56%	75%	65%	43%	
September	48%	58%	79%	66%	45%	
October	53%	64%	85%	68%	46%	
November	60%	73%	91%	70%	52%	
December	69%	77%	94%	71%	54%	
January	71%	77%	95%	72%	55%	
February	71%	78%	95%	73%	55%	

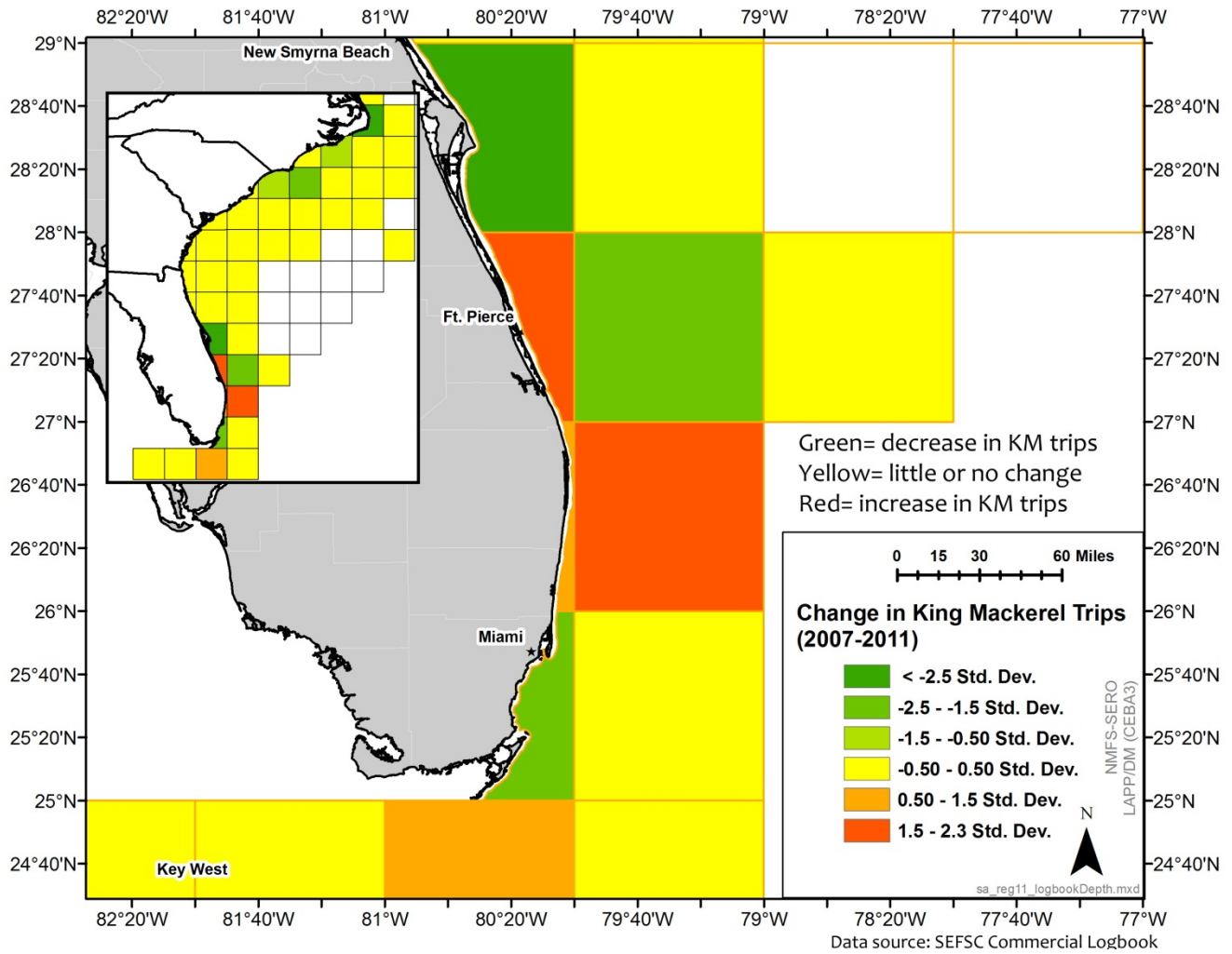


Figure 1. Change in commercial king mackerel trips (all gear types) between 2007 and 2011. Green indicates an overall decrease in the number of KM trips; yellow indicates relative stability; and red indicates an overall increase in the number of KM trips. Analysis and graphic by Nick Farmer, SERO.

Table 3. Number of unique vessels reporting commercial landings of South Atlantic king mackerel by year (2007-2011). Source: SEFSC Commercial Logbook (accessed April 2012).

Fishing Year	# of Vessels
2007	892
2008	873
2009	899
2010	806
2011	746

Public Input

In August, Council staff presented the information above for informal discussion during the public hearings, and asked for input on what was happening with the fishery and comments on potential items in the framework. The input below represents the recorded testimony of and discussion with about 12 people.

Summary of comments

- The decline in landings may be caused by:
 - too many and more efficient boats
 - fishing during the spawning
 - lack of bait fish
 - weather
 - it is a cycle, the fish are migratory
 - Gulf oil spill impacts
 - both SA and Gulf stocks are being impacted
 - KM trips not cost effective for the past few years (NC)
- Most people agreed that some management measures would be helpful, although some noted that the Council should keep an eye on landings but wait another year.
- Lower the trip limit to 25-35 fish in the mixing zone.
- Lower the trip limit to 50 in mixing zone all year.
- All zones' trip limits should be lowered to be fair and help the stock.
- The Keys trip limit should be lowered also so that boats don't stay out longer to catch the limit (quality issue).
- Maybe change the trip limit in the mixing zone to pounds instead of number of fish.
- No spawning season closures.
- Closing for a month or two in the spring would help.
- Allowing only one fish over a certain length would not help because discards would die.
- Changes in the minimum size limit are not necessary.

Potential Items for the Framework

1. Change the king mackerel size limit.
 - a) 23 inches
 - b) 22 inches
 - c) No Action (24 inches)
 - D) REDUCE THE ATLANTIC KING MACKEREL SIZE LIMIT FROM 24 TO 23 INCHES FOR COMMERCIAL ONLY AND ONLY FROM THE GA/FL LINE SOUTH TO THE DADE/MONROE LINE (SAFMC AP, April 2012)
2. Retention of 1 king mackerel greater than 50 inches.
3. Spawning season closure for Atlantic group King Mackerel
4. Change trip limits for Atlantic group King Mackerel
5. Others?

Potential Timeline

1. Informal discussions at August 2012 public meetings to get input
2. Mackerel Committee will select items to be included in the Framework and provide direction to staff to develop alternatives in September 2012
3. IPT will prepare the Framework document and complete analysis of alternatives
4. Mackerel Committee will review the document, select Preferred Alternatives, and give final approval to submit for review in December 2012

Change commercial trip limits for Atlantic group king mackerel

Here are 5 potential alternatives:

Atlantic King Mackerel Commercial Trip Limits

Alternative 1. No Action. The existing trip limits are as follows:

Northern Zone Flag/Vol north (pounds/da) 3,500	Southern Zone Volusia (April-Oct) (pounds/da) 3,500	Volusia-Brevard to Mia-Dade/Monroe (fish/da) 75	Southern Zone Monroe (pounds/da) 1250
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Alternative 2. Reduce the 75 fish trip limit to 50 and reduce the poundages by the same %reduction (33%).

Northern Zone Flag/Vol north (pounds/da) 2,310	Southern Zone Volusia (April-Oct) (pounds/da) 2,310	Volusia-Brevard to Mia-Dade/Monroe (fish/da) 50	Southern Zone Monroe (pounds/da) 825
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Alternative 3. Reduce the 75 fish trip limit to 25 and reduce the poundages by the same %reduction (66%).

Northern Zone Flag/Vol north (pounds/da) 1,155	Southern Zone Volusia (April-Oct) (pounds/da) 1,155	Volusia-Brevard to Mia-Dade/Monroe (fish/da) 25	Southern Zone Monroe (pounds/da) 413
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Alternative 4. Modify Alternative 2 to reduce the 50 fish trip limit to 25 fish during May.

Alternative 5. Modify Alternatives 2 or 3 to keep the Monroe trip limit at 1250 pounds.