

King Mackerel Summary

South Atlantic Fishery Management Council
March 2019



Issue

Fishermen in Florida and the Mackerel Cobia Advisory Panel (AP) have expressed concerns about the low commercial trip limit in the Atlantic Southern Zone (North Carolina/South Carolina line to the Miami-Dade/Monroe County line, Florida) during season two (October through the end of February). During these winter months, the weather makes it challenging for fishermen to get out on the water. Additionally, during the winter months mackerel fishermen in the Atlantic are competing with mackerel fishermen in the Gulf. More fish on the market this time of year results in lower prices, making it even more challenging to make a profitable trip. When the weather is decent, AP members feel it would be helpful if fishermen had access to a higher trip limit to make trips worthwhile.

Mackerel Cobia Advisory Panel Motions

From the April 2018 Advisory Panel Meeting:

**MOTION: REQUEST THE COUNCIL CONSIDER A 600-LB TRIP LIMIT FOR KING MACKEREL IN THE SOUTHERN ZONE SOUTH OF FLAGLER/VOLUSIA.
APPROVED BY AP (UNANIMOUS)**

Points raised during the discussion include:

- During the winter months, fishermen are only able to fish a small number of days due to the weather. When the weather is decent, it would be helpful if fishermen had access to a higher trip limit to make the trip worthwhile.
- Due to changes in the fishery, more fish are on the market during certain times of the year resulting in lower prices. This can make it challenging to make a profitable trip.
- A 600-pound trip limit would still be lower than trip limits in the surrounding waters and would likely only add an additional 150-pounds per trip. However, in the winter months that extra amount can make a significant difference.
- The 50/75-fish trip limits were originally put into place to extend the commercial season.

Current Regulations:

Regulation	Commercial		Recreational
Zones	Northern Zone (NY/CT/RI state line to the NC/SC state line) Southern Zone (NC/SC state line to the Miami-Dade/Monroe County Line, Florida)		None
Allocations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commercial Total: 37.1% <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Northern Zone: 23.04% ○ Southern Zone: 76.96% <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Season 1 (March 1st to September 30th): 60% ▪ Season 2 (October 1st to the end of February): 40% 		62.9%
Season	March 1 st to the end of February		March 1 st to the end of February
Annual Catch Limit	2018/2019 Season		2018/2019 Season
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commercial Total: 5,200,000 pounds <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Northern Zone: 1,198,080 pounds ○ Southern Zone: 4,001,920 pounds <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Season 1: 2,401,152 pounds ▪ Season 2: 1,600,768 pounds 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commercial Total: 4,700,000 pounds <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Northern Zone: 1,082,880 pounds ○ Southern Zone: 3,617,120 pounds <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Season 1: 2,170,272 pounds ▪ Season 2: 1,446,848 pounds 	8,900,000 pounds
			2019/2020 Season+
Trip/Bag Limit	Northern Zone: 3,500 pounds year-round		NEFMC/MAFMC Boundary to GA/FL Line: 3-fish per person. GA/FL to Miami-Dade/Monroe County Line: 2-fish per person.
	Southern Zone:		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Season 1 (Current) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Season 1 (CMP Framework 6) 	
	<p><i>North of Flagler/Volusia:</i> 3,500 pounds. <i>South of Flagler/Volusia:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • March: 50-fish • April through September: 75-fish (reduced to 50-fish once 75% of season one quota reached) 	<p><i>North of Flagler/Volusia:</i> 3,500 pounds <i>Flagler/Volusia to Volusia/Brevard:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • March: 75-fish • April through September: 3,500 pounds <p><i>South of Volusia/Brevard:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • March: 75-fish • April through September: 75-fish (reduced to 50-fish once 75% of season one quota reached) 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Season 2 		
<p><i>North of Flagler/Volusia:</i> 3,500 pounds. <i>South of Flagler/Volusia:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • October through January: 50-fish • February: 50-fish unless <70% of the season two quota has been reached, then 75-fish 			
Minimum Size Limit	24-inches FL		24-inches FL