

# Framework Amendment 6 to the Fishery Management Plan for Coastal Migratory Pelagic Resources in the Gulf of Mexico and Atlantic Region



## (King Mackerel Trip Limits) Decision Document

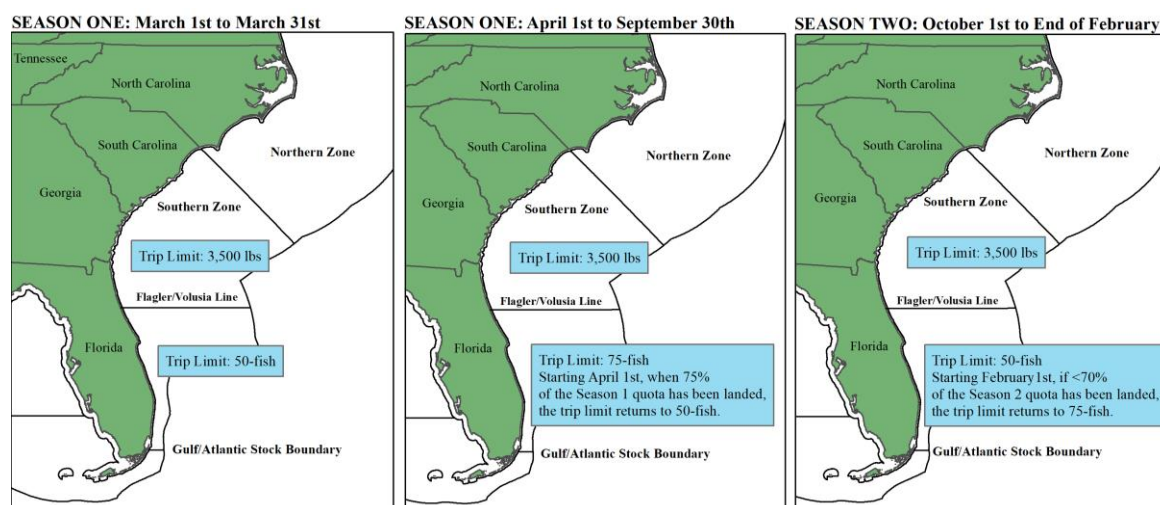
### Background

The new regulations for king mackerel established in Amendment 26 to the Fishery Management Plan (FMP) for Coastal Migratory Pelagic (CMP) Resources in the Gulf of Mexico and Atlantic Regions (Amendment 26) became effective on May 11, 2017, including updated commercial trip limits for the Atlantic Southern zone. Each Atlantic Southern Zone season has a quota and specified trip limits (**Figure 1**):

**North** of the Flagler/Volusia line (29°25'N): 3,500 pounds year-round.

**South** of the Flagler/Volusia line (29°25'N) to the Miami-Dade/Monroe line (25°20'24"N):

- *March 1 – March 31 (Season 1):* 50-fish
- *April 1 – September 30 (Season 1):* 75-fish, unless NMFS determines that 75% or more of the Season 1 quota has been landed, then, 50-fish
- *October 1 – January 31 (Season 2):* 50-fish
- *February 1 – end of February (Season 2):* 50-fish, unless NMFS determines that less than 70% of the Season 2 quota has been landed, then, 75-fish.



**Figure 1.** Current commercial trip limits for king mackerel in the Atlantic Southern Zone

Prior to implementation of Amendment 26, the commercial king mackerel trip limits for the Atlantic Southern Zone were as follows (**Figure 2**):

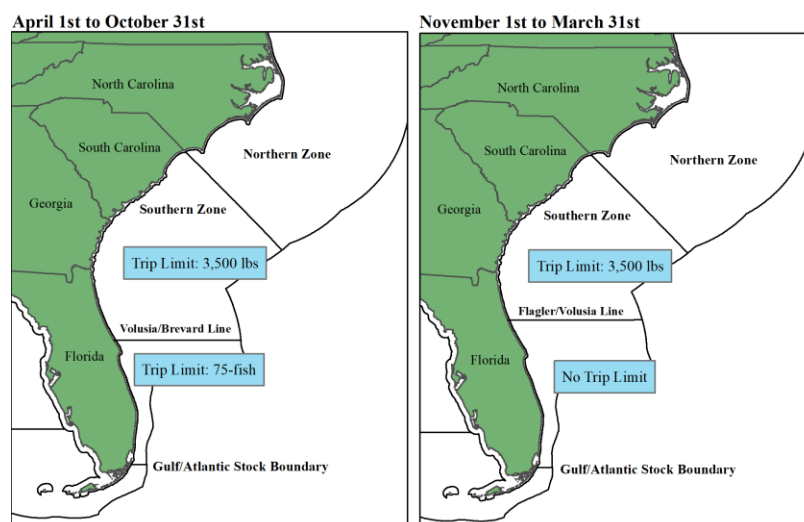
**North** of the Flagler/Volusia line ( $29^{\circ}25'N$ ): 3,500 pounds year-round.

**South** of the Flagler/Volusia line ( $29^{\circ}25'N$ ) to the Volusia/Brevard line ( $28^{\circ}47.8'N$ ):

- *April 1 – October 31*: 3,500 pounds
- *November 1 – March 31*: No trip limit

**South** of the Volusia/Brevard line ( $28^{\circ}47.8'N$ ) to the Miami-Dade/Monroe line ( $25^{\circ}20'24''N$ ):

- *April 1 – October 31*: 75-fish
- *November – March 31*: No trip limit



**Figure 2.** Commercial king mackerel trip limits in place in the Atlantic Southern Zone prior to implementation of Amendment 26.

The South Atlantic Council chose to modify the commercial trip limit system for king mackerel in the Atlantic Southern Zone in Amendment 26 to ensure that the commercial fishery was open year-round. Fishermen operating along the east coast of Florida indicated the importance of providing year-round access to king mackerel for fishermen and communities that harvest the fish at various times throughout the year. However, fishermen on the Florida east coast have also expressed concern about the new trip limits, especially the Season 1 (March 1 through September 30) trip limits in the EEZ from the Flagler/Volusia County line to the Volusia/Brevard County line (Volusia County). Comments from stakeholders indicated that fishermen operating out of Volusia County travel farther offshore to target king mackerel and often complete trips lasting two or three days. Additionally, at their April 2017 meeting, the South Atlantic Council's Mackerel Cobia Advisory Panel (MCAP) recommended that the South Atlantic Council review the March trip limit and consider a different trip limit for north of the Volusia/Brevard line that would support those multiday trips while still allowing year-round access to the king mackerel fishery.

## Action in this amendment

- **Action:** Modify commercial trip limits for Atlantic king mackerel in the Atlantic Southern Zone.

## Objectives for this meeting

- Review Coastal Migratory Pelagics Framework Amendment 6 to modify commercial trip limits for king mackerel in the Atlantic Southern Zone.
- Vote whether to recommend sending Coastal Migratory Pelagics Framework Amendment 6 to the U.S. Secretary of Commerce for approval.

## Expected amendment timing

	Process Step	Date
✓	Council reviews options and directs staff to start work on a framework amendment.	September 2017
✓	Council approves framework amendment for scoping.	December 2017
✓	Scoping at Council Meeting	March 2018
✓	Council reviews scoping comments and actions/alternatives to be analyzed.	March 2018
✓	Council reviews the draft amendment, selects preferred alternative, modifies the document as necessary, and approves for public hearings.	June 2018
	Public hearings	September 2018
	Council takes final action on CMP Framework Amendment 6.	September 2018
	CMP Framework Amendment 6 transmitted for Secretarial Review.	October 2018
	Implementation	Early 2019

## Purpose and need statement

### Purpose for Actions

The *purpose* is to modify the commercial trip limit for Atlantic king mackerel in the Atlantic Southern Zone.

### Need for Actions

The *need* is to provide a commercial trip limit sufficient to support fishing activity and revenue opportunity while constraining harvest to the annual catch limit and providing for year-round access.

### Committee Action:

- REVIEW PURPOSE AND NEED STATEMENT AND MODIFY AS NECESSARY
- OTHER?

## Proposed Action and Alternatives

### **Action. Modify the commercial trip limit for Atlantic king mackerel in the Atlantic Southern Zone:**

**Alternative 1 (No Action):** The commercial trip limits for Atlantic king mackerel are:

**North** of the Flagler/Volusia line (29°25'N): 3,500 pounds year-round.

**South** of the Flagler/Volusia line (29°25'N) to the Miami-Dade/Monroe line (25°20'24"N):

- March 1 – March 31 (Season 1): 50-fish
- April 1 – September 30 (Season 1): 75-fish, unless NMFS determines that 75% or more of the Season 1 quota has been landed, then, 50-fish
- October 1 – January 31 (Season 2): 50-fish
- February 1 – end of February (Season 2): 50-fish, unless NMFS determines that less than 70% of the Season 2 quota has been landed, then, 75-fish.

**Alternative 2:** Adjust the commercial trip limits for Atlantic king mackerel in the Atlantic Southern Zone for Season 1:

**North** of the Flagler/Volusia line (29°25'N): 3,500 pounds year-round.

**South** of the Flagler/Volusia line (29°25'N) to the Volusia/Brevard line (28°47.8'N):

- March 1 – March 31 (Season 1): 50-fish
- April 1 – September 30 (Season 1): 3,500 pounds
- October 1 – January 31 (Season 2): 50-fish
- February 1 – end of February (Season 2): 50-fish, unless NMFS determines that less than 70% of the Season 2 quota has been landed, then, 75-fish.

**South** of the Volusia/Brevard line (28°47.8'N) to the Miami-Dade/Monroe line (25°20'24"N):

- March 1 – March 31 (Season 1): 50-fish
- April 1 – September 30 (Season 1): 75-fish, unless NMFS determines that 75% or more of the Season 1 quota has been landed, then, 50-fish
- October 1 – January 31 (Season 2): 50-fish
- February 1 – end of February (Season 2): 50-fish, unless NMFS determines that less than 70% of the Season 2 quota has been landed, then, 75-fish.

**Preferred Alternative 3:** Adjust the commercial trip limits for Atlantic king mackerel in the Atlantic Southern Zone for Season 1:

**North** of the Flagler/Volusia line (29°25'N): 3,500 pounds year-round.

**South** of the Flagler/Volusia line (29°25'N) to the Volusia/Brevard line (28°47.8' N):

- March 1 – March 31 (Season 1): 75-fish
- April 1 – September 30 (Season 1): 3,500 pounds
- October 1 – January 31 (Season 2): 50-fish
- February 1 – end of February (Season 2): 50-fish, unless NMFS determines that less than 70% of the Season 2 quota has been landed, then, 75-fish.

**South** of the Volusia/Brevard line (28°47.8'N) to the Miami-Dade/Monroe line (25°20'24"N):

- March 1 – March 31 (Season 1): 75-fish
- April 1 – September 30 (Season 1): 75-fish, unless NMFS determines that 75% or more of the Season 1 quota has been landed, then, 50-fish
- October 1 – January 31 (Season 2): 50-fish
- February 1 – end of February (Season 2): 50-fish, unless NMFS determines that less than 70% of the Season 2 quota has been landed, then, 75-fish.

**Alternative 4:** Adjust the commercial trip limits for Atlantic king mackerel in the Atlantic Southern Zone for Season 1:

**North** of the Flagler/Volusia line (29°25'N): 3,500 pounds year-round.

**South** of the Flagler/Volusia line (29°25'N) to the Volusia/Brevard line (28°47.8'N):

- March 1 – September 30 (Season 1): 3,500 pounds
- October 1 – January 31 (Season 2): 50-fish
- February 1 – end of February (Season 2): 50-fish, unless NMFS determines that less than 70% of the Season 2 quota has been landed, then, 75-fish.

**South** of the Volusia/Brevard line (28°47.8'N) to the Miami-Dade/Monroe line (25°20'24"N):

- March 1 – March 31 (Season 1): 50-fish
- April 1 – September 30 (Season 1): 75-fish, unless NMFS determines that 75% or more of the Season 1 quota has been landed, then, 50-fish
- October 1 – January 31 (Season 2): 50-fish
- February 1 – end of February (Season 2): 50-fish, unless NMFS determines that less than 70% of the Season 2 quota has been landed, then, 75-fish.

*Note: Underlined language identifies the difference between the proposed alternative and Alternative 1 (No Action).*

## Discussion:

- **Alternative 1 (No Action)** would not revise the trip limit system in the EEZ for the Atlantic Southern Zone during Season 1 (March - September). **Alternative 2, Preferred Alternative 3, and Alternative 4** propose a higher Season 1 trip limit in the EEZ off Volusia County, Florida, and would be expected to benefit fishermen who reside in that county by increasing their trip efficiency.
  - Fishermen operating in this area have indicated that they travel far offshore to fish and often fish on multiday trips when targeting king mackerel early in the fishing year and that **Alternative 1 (No Action)** does not provide a trip limit sufficient to support these longer trips, resulting in smaller beneficial economic and social effects.
- **Alternative 2** is not expected to be restrictive on fishery participants or result in a shortened Season 1. Based on logbook data for 2014-2016, there were no trips in Volusia County that landed 3,500 lbs ww. The highest king mackerel landings per trip were approximately 1,400 lbs ww in Volusia County.
  - **Alternative 2** would allow commercial fishermen who harvest king mackerel in the EEZ off Volusia County to land more king mackerel during those months, which could provide increased positive economic and social effects through additional revenue on king mackerel trips and increased trip efficiency.
- **Preferred Alternative 3** most closely resembles the trip limit in place prior to implementation of Amendment 26. Based on the Atlantic king mackerel trip limit analysis from Amendment 26 this increase in the trip limit from 50-fish to 75-fish would increase overall landings by about 2% and is not expected to result in a shorter season due to the Season 1 quota being reached.
  - The increased trip limit in March would be beneficial for fishery participants and seafood dealers through increased revenue per trip and increased sales of king mackerel, so long as the price for king mackerel does not drop due to the increase in landings.
- **Alternative 4** is not expected to be restrictive on fishery participants or result in a shortened Season 1. In reviewing logbook data from 2014-2016, there were no trips with landings more than 3,500 lbs ww in Volusia County.
  - Fishery stakeholders have expressed concern that a high trip limit during the month of March could result in a lower market price for king mackerel.

## Committee Action:

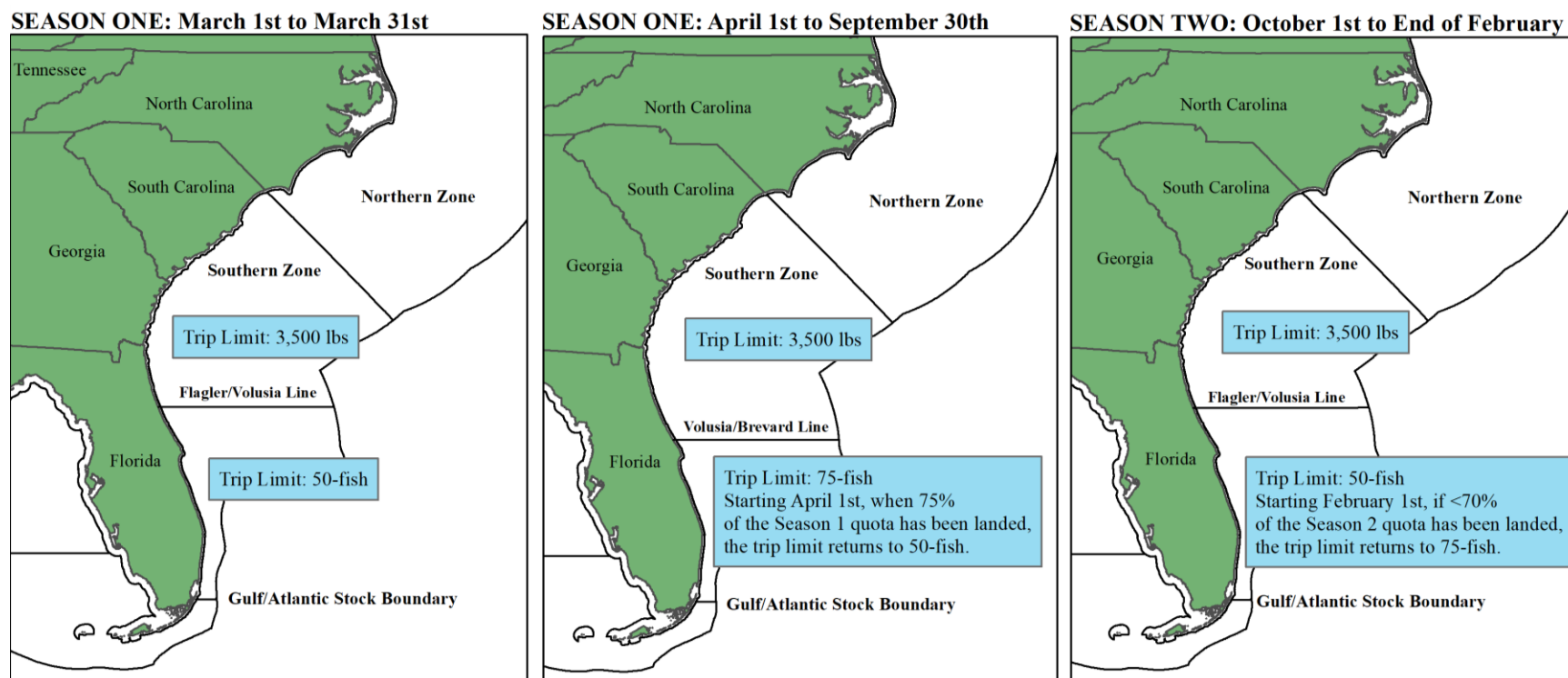
- REVIEW ALTERNATIVES UNDER THE ACTION, MODIFY AS NECESSARY
- APPROVE DOCUMENT FOR FORMAL REVIEW
- OTHER?

**Draft Motions:**

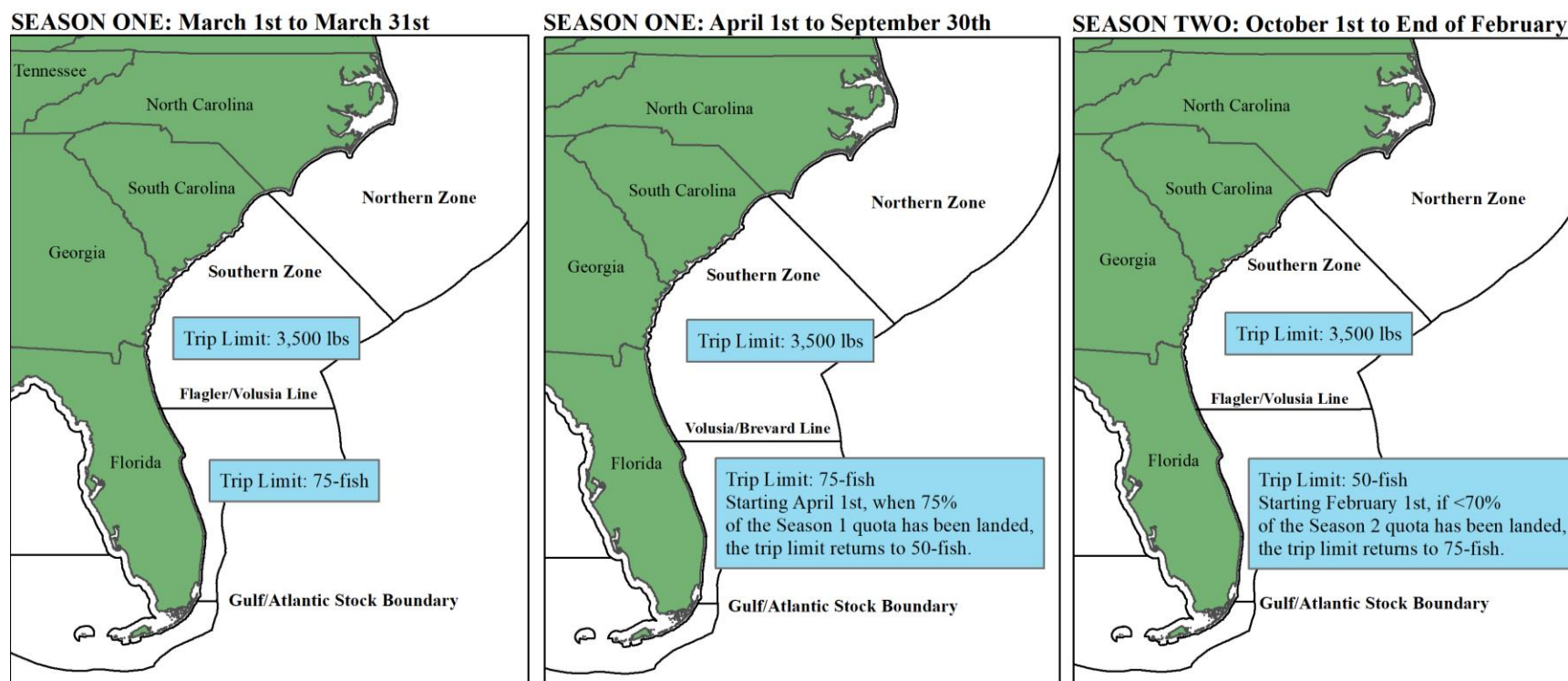
**DRAFT MOTION:** APPROVE COASTAL MIGRATORY PELAGICS FRAMEWORK AMENDMENT 6 FOR FORMAL SECRETARIAL REVIEW AND DEEM THE CODIFIED TEXT AS NECESSARY AND APPROPRIATE. GIVE STAFF EDITORIAL LICENSE TO MAKE ANY NECESSARY EDITORIAL CHANGES TO THE DOCUMENT/CODIFIED TEXT AND GIVE THE COUNCIL CHAIR AUTHORITY TO APPROVE THE REVISIONS AND RE-DEEM THE CODIFIED TEXT.



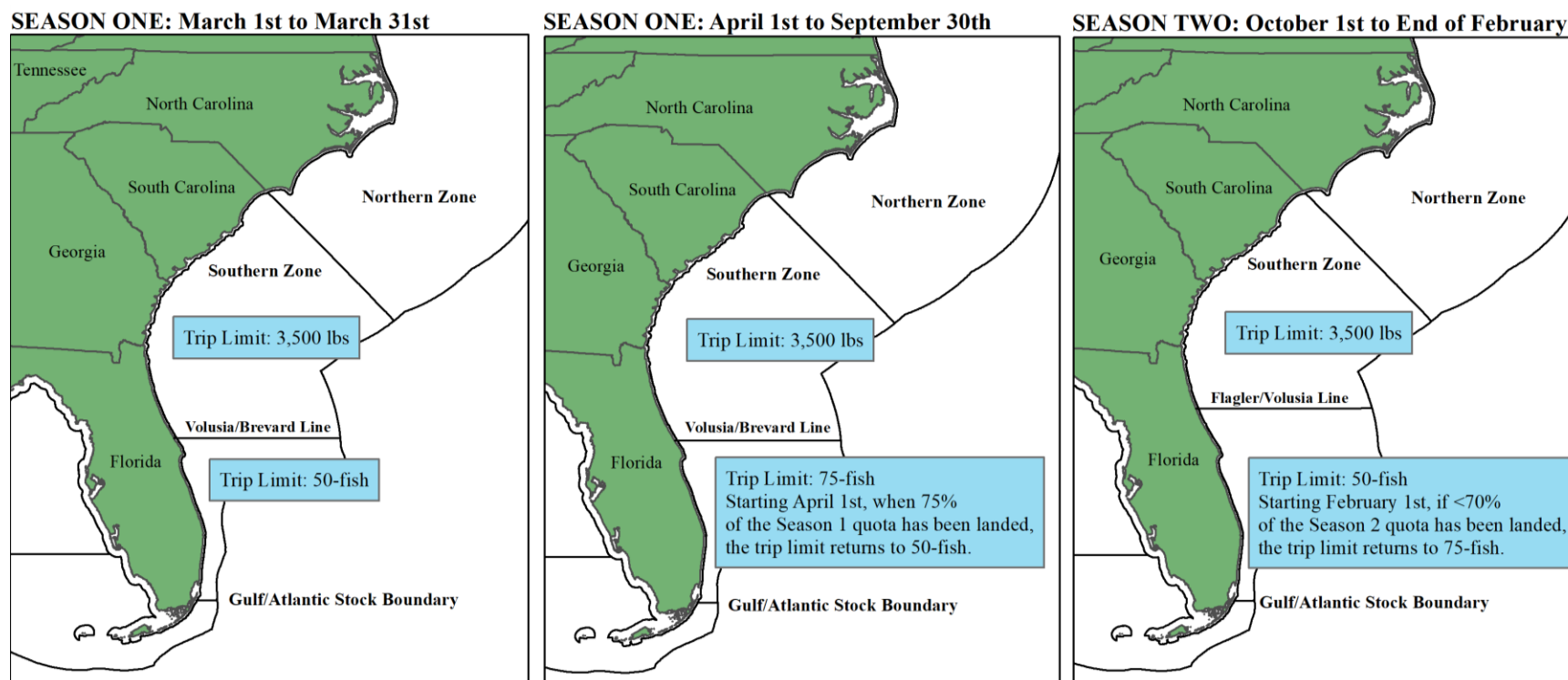
The following figures illustrate the commercial trip limit modifications for Alternative 2, **Preferred Alternative 3**, and Alternative 4:



**Figure 2.** Alternative 2: Proposed seasonal king mackerel commercial trip limits in the Atlantic Southern Zone.



**Figure 3.** Preferred Alternative 3: Proposed seasonal king mackerel commercial trip limits in the Atlantic Southern Zone



**Figure 4.** Alternative 4: Proposed seasonal king mackerel commercial trip limits in the Atlantic Southern Zone.