

Coastal Migratory Pelagic
Draft Framework Amendment 14

Tab C, No. 4(b)



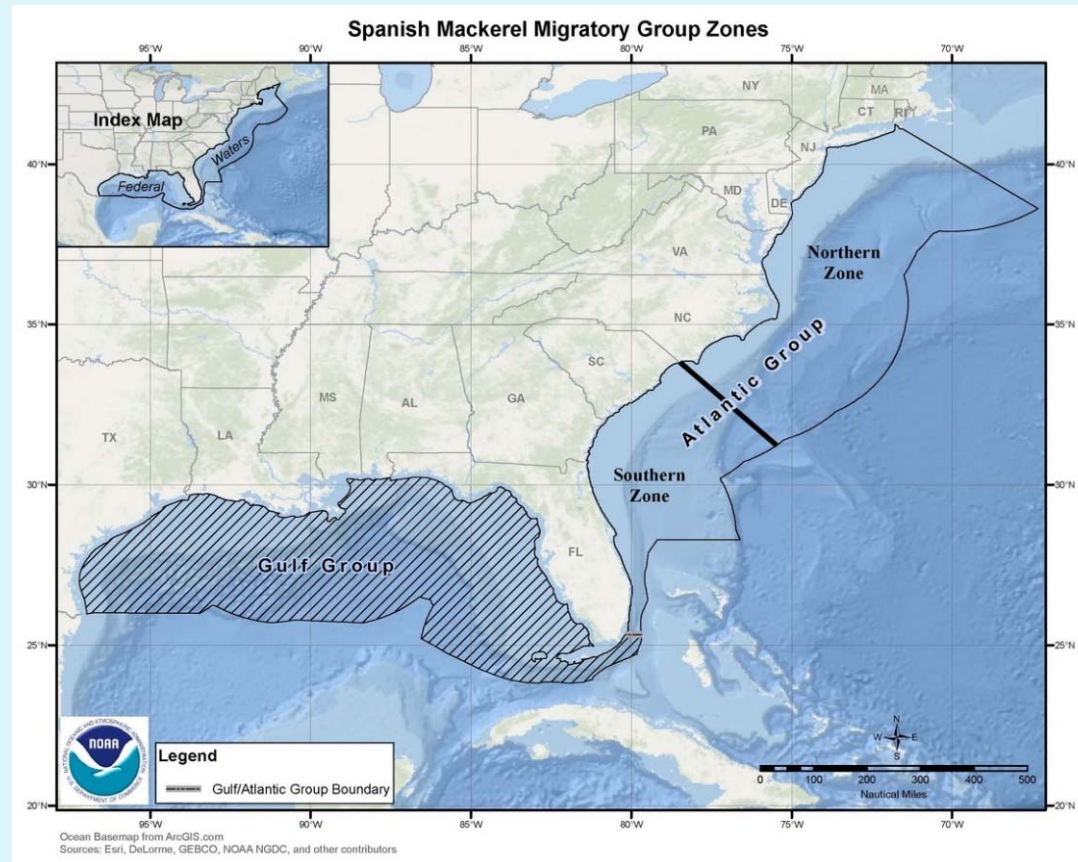
Modifications to the Gulf of Mexico Migratory Group Spanish Mackerel Catch Limits and Accountability Measures



Tab C, No. 4b
June 2024

Gulf Spanish Mackerel

- FY: April 1 – March 31
- No sector allocation
- Min. size limit 12" FL
- Rec. bag limit 15 pp
- In-season AM, closure if the stock ACL is reached or projected to be reached



Purpose and Need

The purpose is to modify Gulf Spanish mackerel catch limits and management measures based on the results of the SEDAR 81 stock assessment.

The need is to update existing Gulf Spanish mackerel catch limits and management measures consistent with the best scientific information available for managing Gulf Spanish mackerel and to achieve optimum yield, in accordance with the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act.



Action 1: Modify Gulf Spanish Mackerel OFL, ABC, and ACL

Alternative	OFL	ABC	Stock ACL (FES)
Alt 1 No Action	15.2	14.9	14.9
Preferred Alt 2 2025/2026 – 2027/2028 +	12.074	9.630	9.630
Alt 3 2025/2026 – 2027/2028 + <i>Uses ACL/ACT Control Rule</i>	12.074	9.630	8.667

*Weights are expressed in millions of pounds whole weight



Action 2: Modify Gulf Spanish Mackerel AM

- **Alternative 1:** No Action. Retain the current in-season AM, whereby the Regional Administrator will close the fishing season for Gulf Spanish mackerel for the commercial and recreational sectors when the stock ACL is reached or projected to be reached.
- **Preferred Alternative 2:** Modify the AM for Gulf Spanish mackerel to a post-season AM. If the stock ACL is exceeded in a fishing year, then in the following fishing year, the Regional Administrator will close the fishing season for Gulf Spanish mackerel for the commercial and recreational sectors if the stock ACL is projected to be reached.



April Council Meeting Public Comment

- “I would like to see us reduce the bag limit to ten fish per person, and possibly even a thirty-fish-per-boat-per-trip limit.”
- “Spanish mackerel, I would be good going down to ten, or maybe seven, and I feel like they may be declining a little bit, but it’s definitely nothing drastic, and I want to take “drastic” out of your vocabulary.”
- “Spanish mackerel, very quickly, ten fish per person would be fantastic, and I think that’s enough fish. Thirty fish per day, or per trip, on a boat, and that would be five fish on a six-pack boat, and it would be less fish on a multi-passenger boat, and that would kind of constrain the harvest a little bit, and I think that’s a fair and adequate bag limit.”
- “Moving to five mackerel per person and one king mackerel per person.”
- “For Spanish mackerel, we do agree that the bag limit needs to be reduced, but we would like to see it between seven and ten fish. We believe that five fish will drastically increase an already high discard mortality.”



Action 3: Modify Gulf Spanish Mackerel Daily Bag limits

- **Alternative 1:** No Action. Retain the current bag limit of 15 fish per person per day for the recreational sector.
- **Alternative 2:** Reduce the bag limit to 10 fish per person per day for the recreational sector.
- **Alternative 3:** Reduce the bag limit to 7 fish per person per day for the recreational sector.
- **Alternative 4:** Reduce the bag limit to 5 fish per person per day for the recreational sector.
- **Alternative 5:** Reduce the bag limit to 3 fish per person per day for the recreational sector.



Action 3: Bag limit analysis

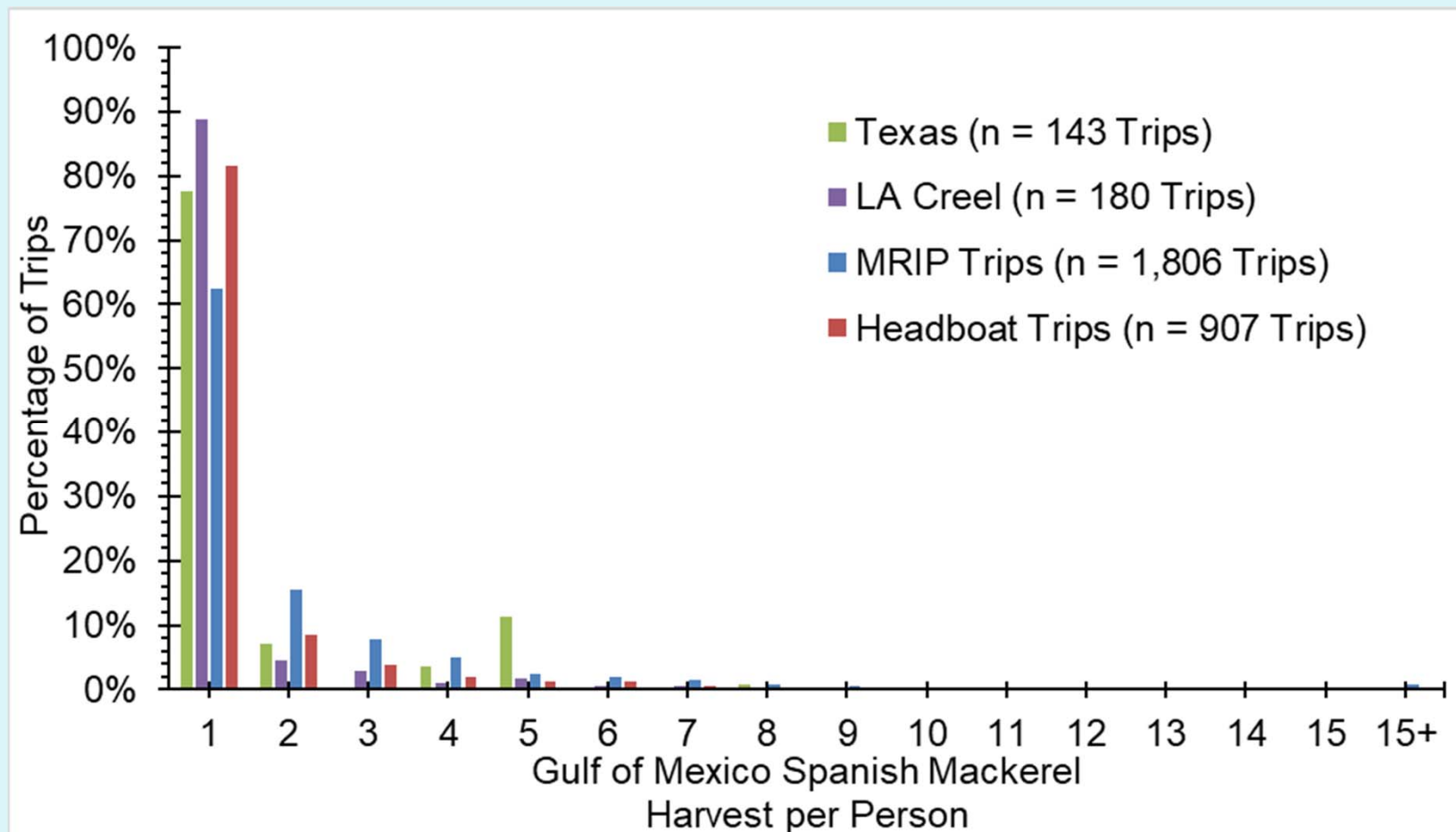


Figure 2.3.1. Distribution of Gulf Spanish mackerel recreationally harvested per person by dataset. The data are from 2021 through 2023.

Action 3: Bag limit analysis

- Trips exceeding the considered daily bag limit were reduced to that limit. For example, for a 5-fish per person daily limit, trips with 6-15 fish were reduced to 5.

Bag Limit	Percent Decrease in Landings
3 Fish per Person	17%
5 Fish per Person	7%
7 Fish per Person	2%
10 Fish per Person	<1%



Questions

- Preferred alternative for action 3?