



# Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission

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## MEMORANDUM

**TO:** Coastal Pelagics Management Board

**FROM:** Emilie Franke, FMP Coordinator

**DATE:** October 20, 2022

**SUBJECT:** Differences Between the Interstate FMP and Federal FMP for Spanish Mackerel

In February 2020, the former South Atlantic Management Board, which is now split into the Coastal Pelagics Management Board and Sciaenids Management Board, discussed differences between the Interstate Fishery Management Plan (FMP) for Spanish mackerel and the federal Coastal Migratory Pelagics FMP for Spanish mackerel. The last update to the Interstate FMP was the Omnibus Amendment for Spanish Mackerel, Spot, and Spotted Sea Trout (2011) and its Addendum I for Spanish Mackerel (2013).

Differences between the Interstate and Federal FMPs exist in terms of commercial management zones, commercial trip limits and closures, allowable gears, recreational season, and recreational accountability measures. Board action to consider addressing these differences was postponed until completion of the 2022 stock assessment. The differences between the Interstate and Federal FMPs are outlined below.

### ***Definition of Commercial Management Zones***

The Interstate FMP defines the Northern Zone as New York through Georgia, and the Southern Zone as the east coast of Florida. The Federal FMP defines the Northern Zone as New York through North Carolina, and the Southern Zone as South Carolina through Florida (through the Miami-Dade/Monroe County line). For the Interstate FMP, Rhode Island joined the interstate management unit in 2021.

### ***Commercial Trip Limits and Closures***

For their respective Northern Zones, both the Interstate and Federal FMPs set a 3,500-pound commercial trip limit. For the interstate Southern Zone, the trip limit starts at 3,500 pounds and is reduced throughout the season depending on the date and how much of the quota is met. For the federal Southern Zone, the trip limit also starts at 3,500 pounds and is reduced depending on how much of the quota is met.

In federal waters, each management zone closes when that federal zone's total quota is met. Under the Interstate FMP, states are not required to close state waters when federal waters close. In recent years, Maryland, Virginia, and North Carolina have implemented a reduced 500-pound trip limit in state waters when the Northern Zone federal waters closed.

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The commercial trip limits and management zones are summarized in the following table.

<b>Commercial Management Zones and Trip Limits</b>	
<p><b>Interstate FMP</b></p> <p><u>Northern Zone</u>            New York to Georgia (RI joined in 2021)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– 3,500-pound trip limit</li> <li>– Not required to close when federal waters close.</li> </ul> <p><i>Note: In recent years, Maryland, Virginia, and North Carolina have implemented a 500-lb trip limit in state waters when the Northern Zone federal waters closed.</i></p> <p><u>Southern Zone</u>            Florida (east coast)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– 3,500-pound trip limit: 3/1-11/30;</li> <li>– 3,500 limit Mon-Fri &amp; 1,500 limit Sat-Sun: 12/1 until 75% adjusted quota taken;</li> <li>– 1,500 limit until 100% adjusted quota taken;</li> <li>– 500 limit after 100% adj. quota taken;</li> <li>– Not required to close when federal waters close.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Federal FMP</b></p> <p><u>Northern Zone</u>            New York to North Carolina</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– 3,500-pound trip limit</li> <li>– Closed when Northern Zone total quota is met.</li> </ul> <p><u>Southern Zone</u>            South Carolina to Florida (east coast)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– 3,500-pound trip limit until 75% of the Southern Zone adjusted quota is met;</li> <li>– 1,500 limit until 100% of the Southern Zone adjusted quota is met;</li> <li>– 500 limit after 100% of the Southern Zone adjusted quota is met;</li> <li>– Closed when the Southern Zone total quota met.</li> </ul>

***Allowable Gears***

The Interstate FMP lists prohibited gears for each sector. For the commercial sector, purse seines, and drift gill nets south of Cape Lookout, NC are prohibited. For the recreational sector, drift gill nets south of Cape Lookout, NC are prohibited. The Federal FMP lists allowable gears: only automatic reel, bandit gear, handline, rod and reel, cast net, run-around gillnet, and stab net allowed.

***Recreational Season***

The Interstate FMP specifies a calendar year recreational season, while the Federal FMP’s recreational fishing year is March 1 through the end of February.

***Recreational Accountability Measures***

Under the Interstate FMP, if the total annual catch limit (ACL) is exceeded and the stock is overfished, the recreational quotas are decreased via reduced bag limits the following year. Under the Federal FMP, if the total ACL is exceeded, bag limits are reduced the following year to achieve the annual catch target (ACT) but not to exceed the ACL. If the stock is overfished and the ACL is exceeded, there is a payback reducing the ACT by the overage amount the following year.