

King Mackerel Traveling Fishermen
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Historically, fishermen from the Florida east coast travel at different times of the year to the Gulf of Mexico to harvest king mackerel. Negative effects of the traveling fishermen have been raised as a concern by the Gulf Council and Gulf fishermen. The Southeast Fisheries Science Center provided data on vessels homeported in a county on the Florida east coast with a commercial king mackerel permit, including pounds landed each month by zone for the years 2004 through 2015. The data are from commercial logbooks.

General information about the Florida east coast fleet and traveling fishermen

As of February 2016, there were 531 commercial king mackerel permits on vessels with homeport listed in a county on the Florida east coast (Table 1). The largest concentrations were in the counties of Palm Beach, Brevard, Miami-Dade, St Lucie, Indian River, Martin and Broward. The primary communities are Jupiter (Palm Beach County), Miami (Miami-Dade County), Port Canaveral (Brevard County), Sebastian (Indian River), Fort Pierce (St Lucie County), and Port Salerno (Martin County). There are also smaller groups in Jacksonville/ Mayport (Duval County), Stuart/Jensen Beach (Martin County), and Ponce Inlet (Volusia County).

Table 1. Number of vessels on the Florida east coast with commercial king mackerel permits by home port county, as of February 2016.

County	Number of Vessels
Brevard	63
Broward	38
Duval	26
Indian River	59
Martin	55
Miami-Dade	60
Nassau	2
Palm Beach	130
St Johns	9
St Lucie	60
Volusia	29
TOTAL	531

Of these 531 vessels, logbook data indicate that 106 of these vessels had some king mackerel catch from the Gulf Western, Southern or Northern zone between 2004 and 2015. A majority (71 vessels) had fewer than 10 records of monthly king mackerel catch in a Gulf zone for the time period. Based on the number of records of monthly king mackerel catch in a Gulf zone, the remaining 35 vessels can be categorized by participation as low (10-20 records), medium (21-34 records) and high (over 35 records).

Table 2. Number of Florida East Coast vessels at each level of participation of fishing in Gulf zones

Level based on number of monthly Gulf catch records	Number of Vessels
High	10
Medium	11
Low	14
Very Low	71
None	425
TOTAL	531

High Participation Traveling Vessels

The high participation vessels form a core group of traveling vessels that have king mackerel catch from the Gulf Western Zone in every year, with the exception of one vessel that only had catch from the Southern Zone in 2004- 2015. There are a few vessels that did not catch from the Western Zone for one or two years at a time, and one vessel that had catch only after 2007. Several of the vessels reported catch from the Northern Zone in 8 or more years, along with Western Zone catch. Some vessels also reported catch from the Southern Zone in a few (4 or less) years. No vessels reported catch from all three Gulf zones in one year, but it was common for these vessels to fish in at least two Gulf zones in a year. All of these vessels also have catch from Atlantic zones and/or the Florida East Coast Subzone in almost all years.

Potential fishing year for the core traveling fishermen:

November-February or March—Florida East Coast on Gulf KM

April- June- Florida East Coast on Atlantic KM

July- September- Gulf Western Zone

October-November- Gulf Northern Zone

Table 3. Number of FLEC vessels reporting catch from at least one Gulf Zone

Year	Number of FLEC vessels in the Gulf Western, Northern &/or Southern Zone
2004	11
2005	16
2006	16
2007	20
2008	18
2009	21
2010	30
2011	41
2012	50
2013	46
2014	37
2015	40

Table 4. Number of FLEC vessels reporting catch from Gulf Northern and/or Western Zones

Year	Number of FLEC vessels in the Gulf Western and/or Northern Zone
2004	7
2005	6
2006	8
2007	10
2008	9
2009	13
2010	22
2011	30
2012	35
2013	40
2014	30
2015	29

Information By Zone

Western Zone

Typically the FLEC vessels are in the Gulf Western Zone July through September or October.

Table 5. Number of FLEC vessels and landings in the Gulf Western Zone.

Year	# FLEC Vessels In Gulf Western Zone	FLEC Western Zone Landings	Total Gulf Western Zone Landings	Percentage FLEC boats
2004-05	7	218,222	1,071,603	20.4%
2005-06	6	281,051	942,902	29.8%
2006-07	8	263,427	1,054,992	25.0%
2007-08	10	319,084	1,002,337	31.8%
2008-09	9	248,260	923,877	26.9%
2009-10	11	228,412	1,047,792	21.8%
2010-11	14	500,421	976,113	51.3%
2011-12	19	570,713	1,016,886	56.1%
2012-13	23	459,201	1,163,731	39.5%
2013-14	32	509,737	934,646	54.5%
2014-15	29	737,056	1,039,977	70.9%
2015-16	24	518,237	1,227,794	42.2%

Table 6. Season Length for Gulf Zones

Fishing Year	Western	Northern	Southern
2015-16	Jul 1- Nov 11	Oct 1- Nov 28	open
2014-15	Jul 1- Oct 17	Jul 1-Oct 27	Jul 1- Feb 5
2013-14	Jul 1- Sep 20	Jul 1- Oct 12	Jul 1-Feb 21
2012-13	Jul 1- Aug 22	Jul 1- Oct 5	Jul 1- Mar 14
2011-12	Jul 1- Sept 16	Jul 1- Oct 7	Jul-Feb 26

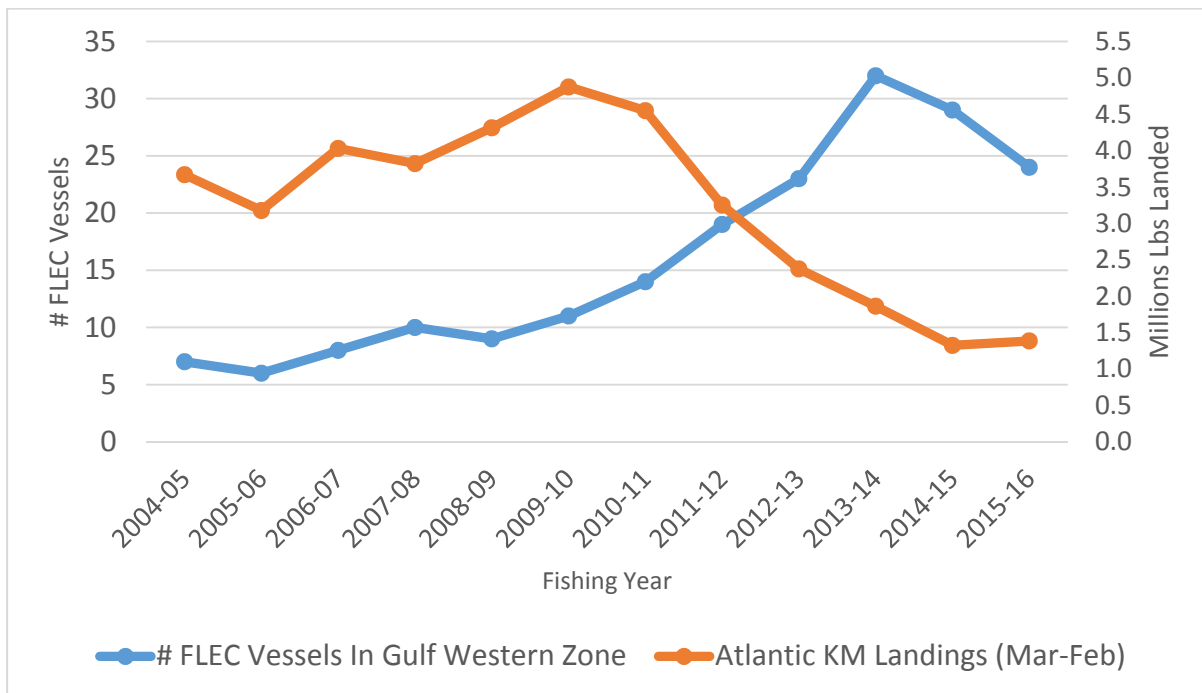


Figure 1. Number of Florida East Coast vessels with king mackerel catch from the Gulf Western Zone each fishing year, compared to commercial landings of Atlantic king mackerel.

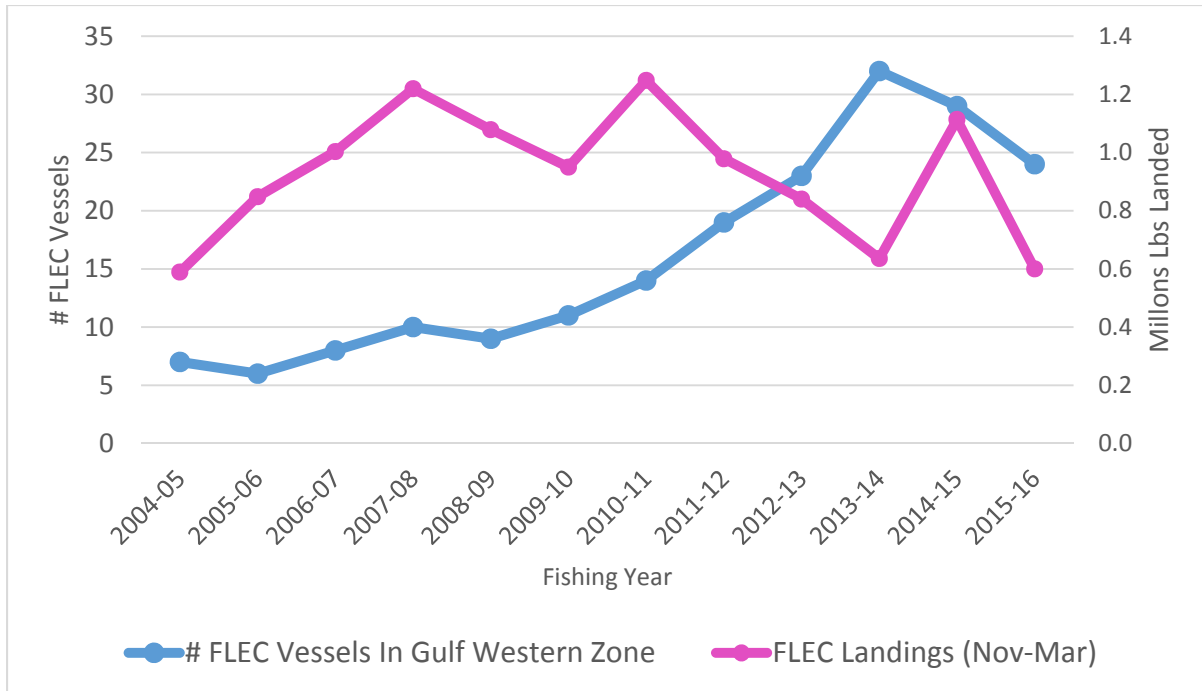


Figure 2. Number of Florida East Coast vessels with king mackerel catch from the Gulf Western Zone each fishing year, compared to commercial landings of king mackerel from the Gulf Florida East Coast Subzone.

Northern Zone

Typically the FLEC vessels are in the Gulf Northern Zone in the months September through November, ± 1-2 months.

Southern Zone

Typically the FLEC vessels are in the Gulf Southern Zone in the months November through March.