



Norfolk Anglers Club
P.O. Box 8422, Norfolk, VA 23503-0422
A Non-Profit IRS 501-C7 Organization
www.NorfolkAnglersClub.com

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February 7, 2016

South Atlantic Marine Fisheries Council
Captain Ben Hartig
Chairman, South Atlantic Marine Fisheries Council
9277 Sharon Street
Hobe Sound, FL 33455

Re: Proposed Regulations Changes for the Taking of Cobia for the 2016 season

Dear Captain Hartig,

The Norfolk Anglers Club requests that the Council consider the following proposed Cobia regulation changes for the 2016 season. Our organization feels the actions of the South Atlantic Marine Fisheries Council in establishing the current cobia possession limits have been both conservative and responsible in preserving this fishery. However, after reviewing the 2015 Preliminary Annual Catch Limit information, it's clear additional steps are necessary to preserve the Atlantic Cobia Stock until another Stock Assessment can be completed. Our organization would like to propose four measures for the 2016 season.

1. **Captain/Crew Exclusion:** Exclude the Captain and Crew of Charter operations, both OUPV and Inspected Vessels, from the possession limit calculations. It is understood that Charter Operations may conduct multiple charter trips per day and without a Charter Crew exclusion the possibility of exceeding the daily per person cobia limit exists in every state in the Atlantic Cobia Fishery.

2. **Recreational/Charter Boat Limit:** Establishing a 6 fish boat limit for the Charter and Recreational sectors for all states fishing the Atlantic Cobia Stock (GA-NY). Many states already institute boat limits for commercial cobia operations and a Charter/Recreational boat limit is viewed as establishing parity with the commercial fishery. Further, within the Operator Uninspected Passenger Vessel (OUPV), or 6-Pack Charter, operations this would preserve the daily possession limit/per person regulations without causing undue harm to our Charter industry. A boat limit of less than 6 would cause exceptional harm to the OUPV Charter Fleet.

3. **Possession/Size Limit:** Reduce the possession limit from 2 Cobia to 1 Cobia and increase the minimum size limit from 33in fork length (FL)/37 inch total length (TL) to a larger class fish with an equivalent FL and TL dimension defined.

4. **Seasonal Period:** Provide states within the Atlantic Cobia Stock fishery with an established number of days the fishery may be open, e.g 90 days. Individual states are in the best position to understand when cobia migrate into their waters and regulate the fishing season within the defined period.

Sincerely,

William Bransom