

# MEETING REPORT

## South Atlantic Mackerel Advisory Panel

April 7, 2014  
North Charleston, SC

The King Mackerel and Spanish Mackerel Advisory Panel (AP) met to discuss (A) Coastal Migratory Pelagics (CMP) Joint Amendment 24, (B) CMP Joint Amendment 26, and (C) Framework Amendment 2. The AP reviewed each amendment and provided recommendations for the Council to consider at their June 2014 meeting.

### AP Members

Robert Pelosi, AP Chair- *FL/Recreational*  
Ronnie Houck, Jr., AP Vice-Chair-  
*FL/Commercial*  
Tim Adams- *FL/Commercial*  
Jodie Gay- *NC/Commercial*  
Judy Helmey- *GA/Charter*  
Bill Hickman- *NC/Commercial*  
Andy High- *NC/Commercial*  
Tom Ogle- *SC/Recreational*  
Stephen Swann- *FL/Recreational*  
Bill Wickers- *FL/Charter*

### AP Members not in attendance

Charles Amory- *Mid-Atlantic Liaison*  
Richard Diaz- *FL/Commercial*  
Dick Brame- *NC/Recreational/NGO Seat*  
Bill Kelly- *FL/Commercial*

### Council Members

Ben Hartig, Council Chair  
Michelle Duval, Council Vice-Chair  
Chris Conklin

### Council Staff

Kari MacLauchlin  
Mike Errigo  
Julie O'Dell  
Gregg Waugh

### General Public

Deidra Helmey Jeffcoat

### Status of Recent Amendments

Following introductions and approval of the agenda and minutes of the April 2013 meeting, Council staff provided a status update on recent amendments that the AP had discussed at previous meetings. These included Amendment 20A, Amendment 20B, South Atlantic Framework Action 2013, and Framework Amendment 1. During the report, some AP members expressed concern that Amendment 20A would prohibit bag limit sales in the South Atlantic, including sale of king and Spanish mackerel caught on for-hire trips on dually permitted vessels.

The AP approved the following motion in regards to bag limit sales of king mackerel and Spanish mackerel:

**MOTION: RECOMMEND TO THE SOUTH ATLANTIC COUNCIL THAT THEY RECONSIDER BAG LIMIT SALES FOR CHARTER BOATS [SAME AS THE GULF COUNCIL IN AMENDMENT 20A]. Approved by AP (6/2).**

### **Report on SEDAR 38**

The Data Workshop for SEDAR 38 (Atlantic and Gulf king mackerel) was held December 9-13, 2013, and the Assessment Workshop is scheduled for March 24-28, 2014. Mike Errigo, SAFMC staff, provided an update to the AP on the Data Workshop and Assessment Workshop, and the change in the boundary between the Gulf and Atlantic stocks that has been discussed at the workshops. The change would move the mixing zone from the east coast of Florida to a smaller designation in the Florida Keys.

### **Joint CMP Amendment 24**

Amendment 24 will include actions to consider ways to improve the opportunity to reach the total ACL for Atlantic Spanish mackerel and Gulf king mackerel. The amendment was scoped in January 2014. The South Atlantic Council is considering an in-season “ACL shift” for Atlantic Spanish mackerel and the Gulf Council is interested in reallocation between the recreational and commercial sectors for Gulf king mackerel. The AP reviewed the scoping document and public comments received during the scoping process, in addition to current ideas for an options paper in development by SERO/Council staff.

Several AP members expressed concern about changing the allocations for Atlantic Spanish mackerel. The discussion included suggestions to increase the bag limit or other measures to allow the recreational sector to reach the recreational ACL; concern about confidence in MRIP data; and how changing allocations back could take years through the amendment process. AP members also discussed other factors affecting recreational anglers, including sediment issues affecting Spanish mackerel availability in-shore.

The AP felt that there was not enough information to provide specific recommendations, and approved the following motion in regards to Amendment 24:

**MOTION: THE ADVISORY PANEL RECOMMENDS NO ACTION AT THIS TIME FOR ATLANTIC SPANISH MACKEREL. MORE INFORMATION IS NEEDED.**

**Approved by AP (7/1).**

The AP provided the following recommendations and direction to staff for options for Amendment 24:

- LOOK INTO ACTION 1, ALT 2C, AFTER 3<sup>RD</sup> WAVE OF FISHING (JUL/AUG), <40% REC ACL LANDED
- LOOK AT ENTIRE HISTORY OF CATCH RATIO IN TABLE 1.
- LOOK AT BUMPING UP COMMERCIAL ACL BY 5%, 8%, 10% THROUGH ACL SHIFT, AS LONG AS UNDER TOTAL ACL

During the discussion, the AP suggested what information about recreational catch for Atlantic Spanish mackerel would be helpful in development of the amendment and options. These included a comparison of Atlantic Spanish mackerel caught recreationally in-shore and off-shore; comparison of recreational landings of Atlantic Spanish mackerel between North Carolina and Florida; and comparison of recreational landings by wave for the South Atlantic states. Mike Errigo provided the information and these are attached at the end of the document (**Figures 1-5**).

Overall, the AP expressed that while they were not opposed to an in-season ACL shift, at that time they were not ready to make recommendations to the Council for Amendment 24.

### **Joint CMP Amendment 26**

Amendment 26 will consider ways to separate the commercial permits for king and Spanish mackerel into designated permits for each region. The amendment was scoped in January 2014 and the South Atlantic Council will review a white paper on possible methods to split the permits in June or September 2014. The AP reviewed the scoping document and public comments received during the scoping process.

During the discussion, AP members pointed out the potential effects on travelling fishermen who work in both regions, and that professional fishermen go where they need to go to access the resource. It was also noted that everyone is entitled to access the resource. There was some concern about latent permits in the king mackerel fishery, and increased effort in the mixing zone around Cape Canaveral.

The AP approved the following motion in regards to Amendment 26:

**MOTION: DO NOT SEPARATE THE PERMITS.**

**Approved by AP (9/0/1).**

### **Framework Amendment 2**

In March 2014, the South Atlantic Council approved development of Framework Amendment 2 to consider changes to the Atlantic Spanish mackerel commercial trip limit system in Florida waters. The action and alternatives were previously in South Atlantic Framework Action 2013, but in June 2013 the Council approved a motion to move the action to a future amendment after the Spanish mackerel stock assessment was complete. The AP reviewed the proposed alternatives for the action.

Discussion included points about how a window of time to have a higher trip limit for the period when the cast net harvest is highest, to allow those fishermen to have more profitable trips when the fish are schooling and during Lenten season. Additionally, AP members pointed out that some kind of step-down should be in place to keep the season from closing early due to a fast rate of harvest. It was noted that the step-down from unlimited trips to a 3,500-lb trip limit has some effects on some fishermen, and shouldn't be any lower.

The AP approved the following motion for Action 1:

**MOTION: RECOMMEND ALTERNATIVE 5.**

**Approved by AP (All in favor).**

**Alternative 5.** Retain the adjusted commercial ACL but remove the period of unlimited trips for the southern zone that starts December 1 each year. The southern zone trip limit would start at 3,500 pounds on March 1 of each year. When 75% of the adjusted commercial ACL has been landed or projected to be landed the trip limit would be reduced to 1,500 pounds. When 100% of the adjusted commercial ACL is reached, the

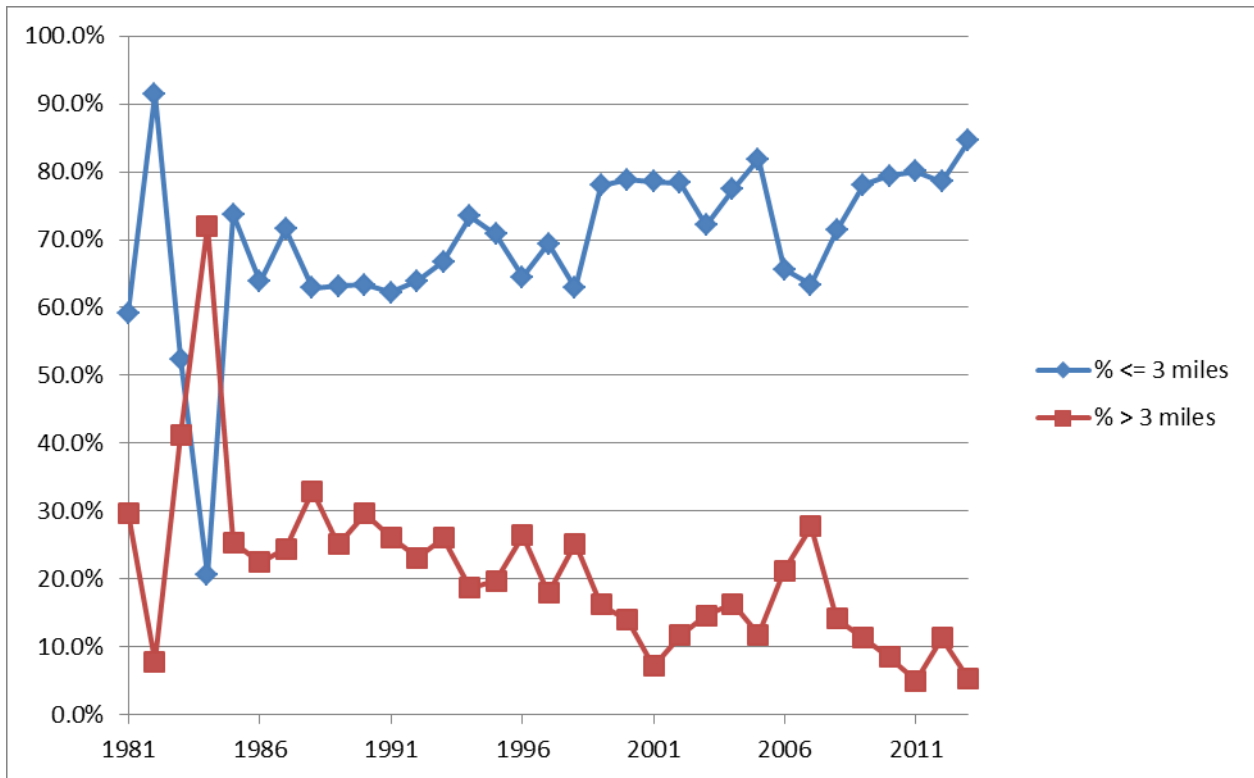
trip limit is reduced to 500 pounds until the end of the fishing year or until the commercial ACL is met or projected to be met. Close commercial harvest of Atlantic migratory group Spanish mackerel when the commercial ACL is met or projected to be met.

**Other Business**

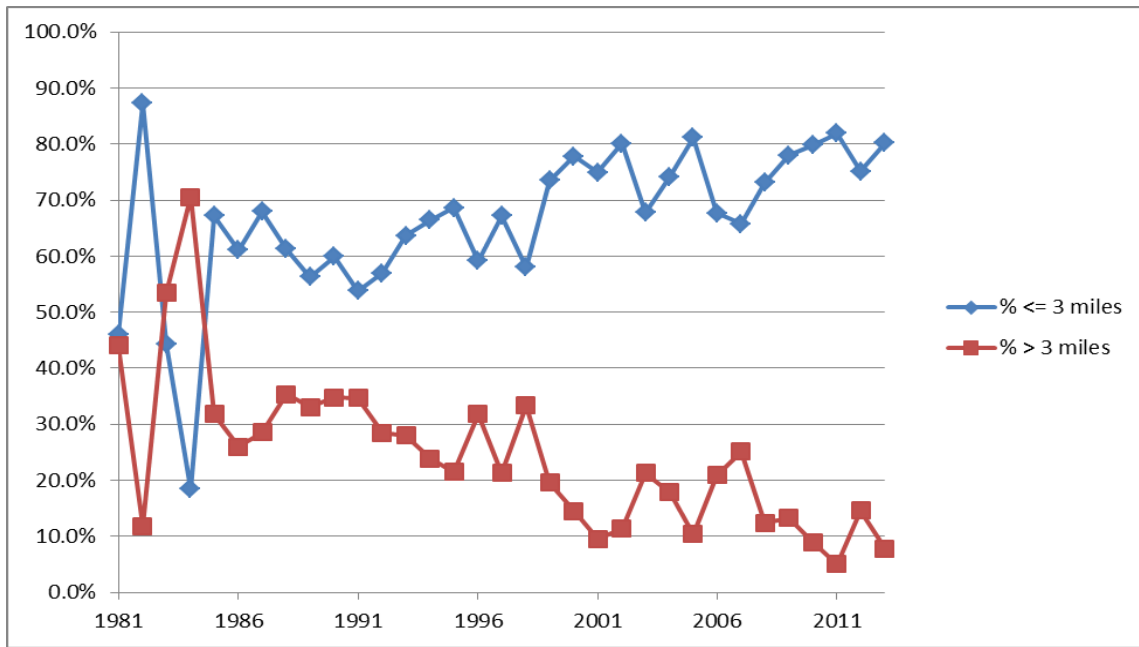
-Chairman Pelosi raised the topic of an issue with cobia and sharks in Florida, in which anglers chum bull sharks and then hook the cobia that follow the sharks. However, the sharks take most of the hooked cobia so that anglers go through several cobia before landing one cobia (note: the bag limit in Florida state waters is one cobia per person per day). The Council could consider a rule against this type of fishing practice, and possibly incorporate the lost cobia into tracked landings for the recreational ACL, to account for cobia lost to the sharks.

Other AP members reported that sharks have increased in their areas, and the number of fish lost to sharks. Several AP members recommended allowing harvest of sharks to help control the population, and that the Council work with NMFS Highly Migratory Species (HMS) Division to address the problems.

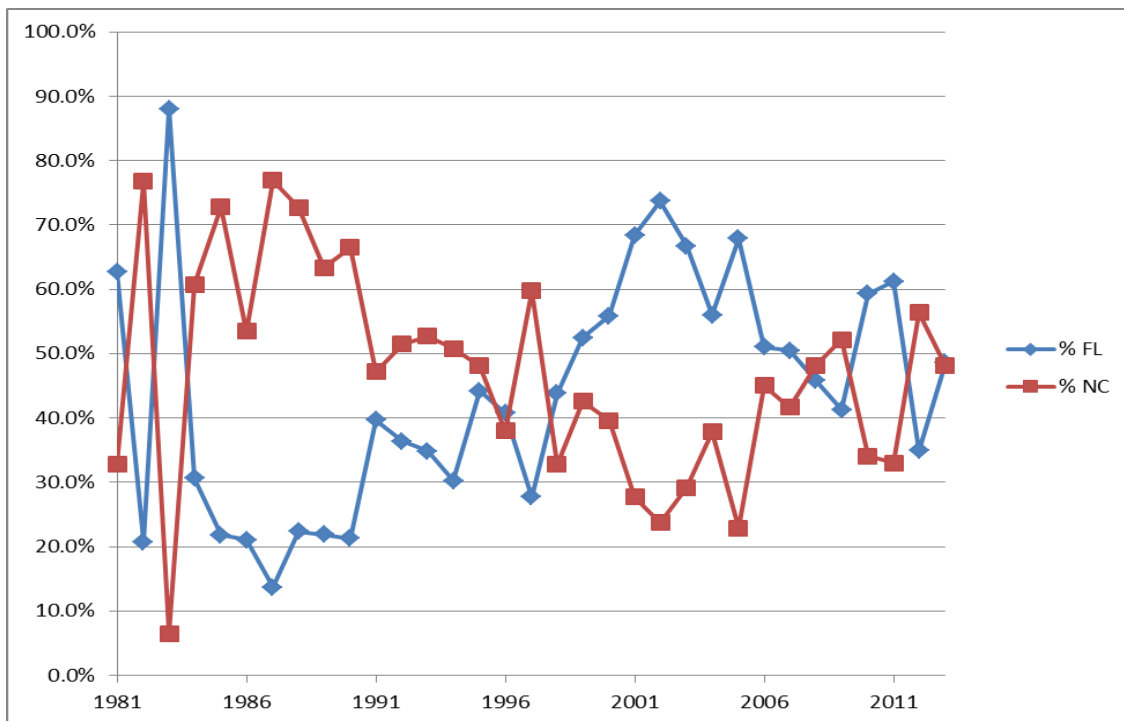
**Figures**



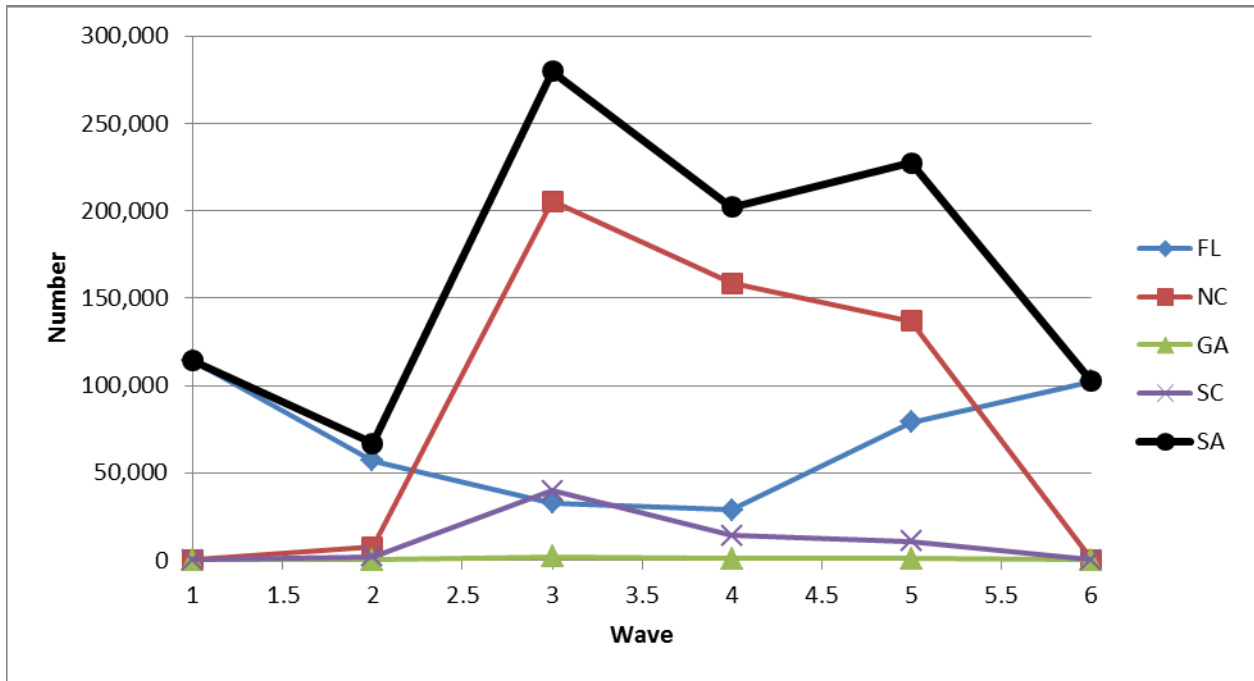
**Figure 1.** Estimated percentage of Spanish mackerel landings (by number of fish) in the South Atlantic, within three miles of shore (blue) and more than three miles from shore (red). Source: MRIP. These data do not include landings from the Florida Keys or headboat data.



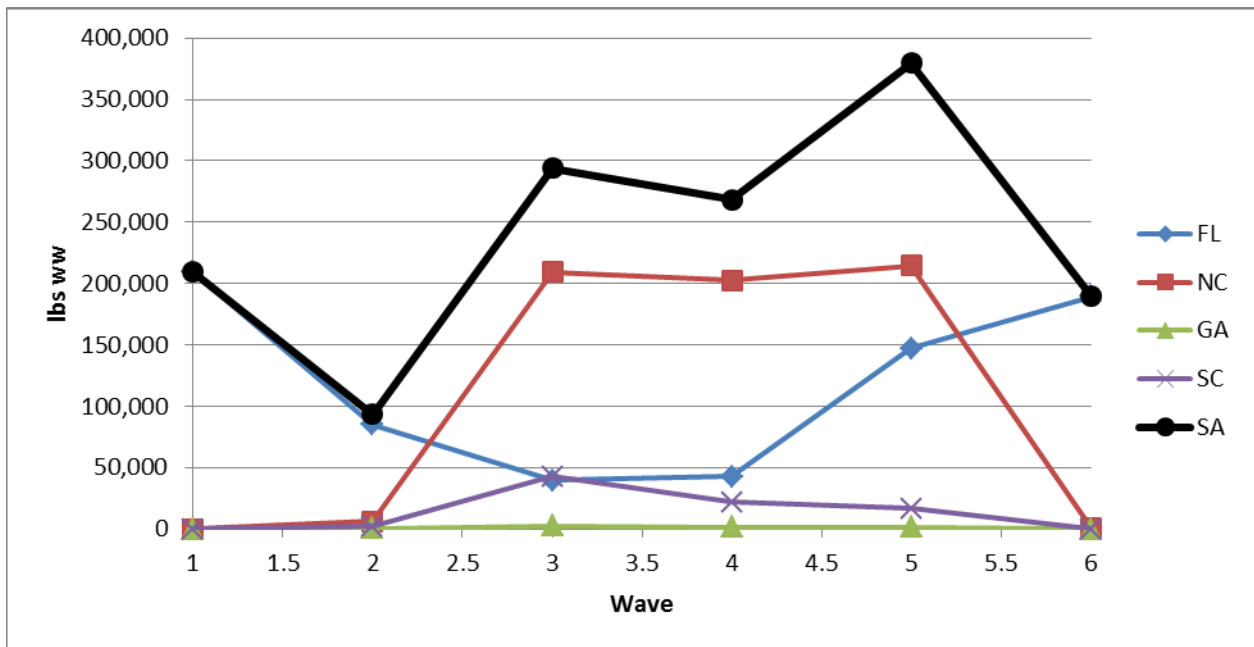
**Figure 2.** Estimated percentage of Spanish mackerel landings (in pounds whole weight) in the South Atlantic, within three miles of shore (blue) and more than three miles from shore (red). Source: MRIP. These data do not include landings from the Florida Keys or headboat data.



**Figure 3.** Estimate percentage of Spanish mackerel landings (in pounds whole weight) in the South Atlantic, in Florida (blue) and in North Carolina (red). Source: MRIP. These data do not include landings from the Florida Keys or headboat data.



**Figure 4.** Average for each MRIP Wave of recreational Spanish mackerel landings (in numbers of fish) for each South Atlantic state, and for the whole South Atlantic region (black) from 2008-2013 (note: 2013 data are preliminary). Source: MRIP. These data do not include landings from the Florida Keys or headboat data.



**Figure 5.** Average for each MRIP Wave of recreational Spanish mackerel landings (in pounds whole weight) for each South Atlantic state, and for the whole South Atlantic region (black) from 2008-2013 (note: 2013 data are preliminary). Source: MRIP. These data do not include landings from the Florida Keys or headboat data.