

**Summary of the Mackerel Committee
February 5, 2014
Westin Galleria Hotel
Houston, TX**

Committee members present:

Pam Dana, *Chair*
Roy Williams, *V. Chair*
Kevin Anson
Roy Crabtree
Myron Fischer
Corky Perret
Robin Riechers
John Sanchez
Bob Shipp
Martha Bademan

Dr. Dana opened the meeting. The agenda (**Tab C, No. 1**) and the minutes (**Tab C, No. 2**) from the October 28, 2013, meeting were approved as written.

CMP Amendment 20B

Staff reviewed the Council's preferred actions and alternatives in Joint CMP Amendment 20B (**Tab C, No. 4**) using the CMP 20B Actions and Alternatives sheet (**Tab C, No. 4a**). The committee did not make changes to actions 1, 3, 5, and 6 for which the Councils already have mutually preferred alternatives.

Action 2

In December 2013, the South Atlantic Council deselected Alternative 2, Option a as preferred because they thought changing the fishing season in the Western Zone would have undesirable economic effects on the king mackerel fishery. South Atlantic Council Chairman Ben Hartig explained the rationale behind the South Atlantic Council's decision. Having the Western Zone and the North Carolina king mackerel fisheries open simultaneously could flood the market with product, and could cause the price per pound to decrease. NOAA staff agreed that the potential effects detailed by Mr. Hartig were in fact possible, and indicated that changing the start date of the fishing year for the Western Zone from July 1 to September 1 could do more harm than good. Some committee members spoke against the motion, noting the desire of some fishermen in the Western Zone to push the start date of the fishing year back to September 1. Those speaking against the motion did so because they thought the fishing community would benefit from fish

being in larger numbers closer to shore in September, allowing fishermen to catch more fish in less time.

The Committee recommends, and I so move, to deselect Alternative 2, Option a as the preferred alternative.

**Alternative 2: Change the fishing year for Gulf group king mackerel season to September 1 – August 31.
Gulf Preferred Option a: For the Western Zone**

Motion carried 5 to 4.

Action 4

Staff noted the necessity to address the language used in Action 4. In parts 4.1 and 4.2 of the action, the action titles and the language in Alternative 4 refer to changing or transferring “annual catch limits”, when they should refer to changing or transferring “quotas”. Transferring ACLs between zones would result in the receiving zone exceeding its ACL, while transferring quotas would not. Additionally, transferring quotas can be done by the Councils through the closed framework procedure. Staff provided IPT-recommended language which would address the aforementioned concerns.

The Committee recommends, and I so move, to adopt the recommended language in Action 4.1 and 4.2.

Motion carried with no opposition.

NOTE: Verbiage not provided here due to length (5 pages). Staff will provide verbiage upon request.

NOAA General Counsel noted that the current version of the codified text (Tab C, No. 4b) did not reflect the changes proposed in Action 4, but would be updated prior to the South Atlantic Council meeting in March.

Motion: In Action 1, to select Alternative 2, Option C as preferred.

Motion failed 7-9.

Motion: To recommend to the Council that Amendment 20B be submitted to the Secretary of Commerce for implementation and that the regulations be deemed as necessary and appropriate, and that staff be given editorial license to make the necessary changes in the document and codified text. The Council Chair is given the authority to deem any changes to the document and codified text as necessary and appropriate.

Motion carried 7 to 2.

Joint CMP Framework Amendment 1 (Spanish Mackerel ACLs)

Staff reviewed the Joint CMP Framework Amendment 1 (**Tab C, No. 5**) using the Actions and Alternatives document (**Tab C, No. 5a**). The Councils are currently only considering two alternatives for each action, since it is not necessary under the current circumstances to consider additional actions (precedent in CMP Amendment 18, low risk of overfishing). The SEDAR 28 stock assessments of Gulf and South Atlantic Spanish Mackerel, upon which the amendment is based, indicated both stocks were not overfished or experiencing overfishing.

The Committee recommends, and I so move, that in Action 1, that Alternative 2 be the preferred alternative.

South Atlantic Preferred Alternative 2. Revise the ACL (including sector ACLs), OY, and ACT for Atlantic migratory group Spanish mackerel for 2014 and 2015. The ABC recommended by the SSC is 6.063 mp ww. Set $ACL = OY = ABC$, and the recreational $ACT = ACL[(1-PSE) \text{ or } 0.5]$, whichever is greater. The ABC, ACL, and recreational ACT values are based on landed catch only; discards are accounted for in specifying the ABC in terms of landed catch and not total kill. The average PSE from MRIP for 2005-2009 is 13.34. The values would remain until modified.

ACL = OY = ABC = 6.063 mp ww
 Commercial ACL (55%) = 3,334,650 lbs ww
 Recreational ACL (45%) = 2,728,350 lbs ww
 Recreational ACT = 2,363,218 lbs ww

Motion carried with no opposition.

The Committee recommends, and I so move, that in Action 2, that the preferred alternative be Alternative 2.

Alternative 2. Revise ACL for Gulf migratory group Spanish mackerel for 2014 through 2016 as shown below, and set $ACL = ABC$.

ABCs and ACLs for 2014-2016 from the SEDAR 28 Gulf Spanish mackerel stock assessment and the Gulf Council/SSC-approved projections for Gulf migratory group Spanish mackerel. ‘ww’ = whole weight, and ‘mp’ = million pounds.

Year	ABC ww	Total ACL ww
2014	12.7 mp	12.7 mp
2015	11.8 mp	11.8 mp

Year	ABC ww	Total ACL ww
2016	11.3 mp	11.3 mp

Motion carried with no opposition.

Discussion of CMP Amendment 24

Staff briefed the Committee on the current status of Amendment 24 (**Tab C, No. 6**), specifically noting how the changes to the mixing zone proposed in the ongoing SEDAR 38 stock assessment of Gulf and South Atlantic king mackerel may directly influence future allocation decisions. Committee members expressed an interest in conducting a net benefit analysis to determine how any shifts in allocation would affect the economics of the fishery.

The Committee recommends, and I so move, to request the SEFSC perform a net benefits analysis of reallocating up to 10% of the TAC of the Gulf migratory group king mackerel from the recreational sector to the commercial sector.

Motion carried with no opposition.

Further committee discussions concurred with staff guidance that progress on Amendment 24 should be postponed until they can be made using the data from the ongoing SEDAR 38 stock assessment.

Motion: To defer further action on Amendment 24 until after the assessment is complete and reviewed by the SSC.

Motion carried with no opposition.

Discussion of CMP Amendment 26

Staff reminded the Committee that the Gulf Council had not yet formally agreed to pursue CMP Amendment 26 (**Tab C, No. 7**). South Atlantic Council Chairman Ben Hartig provided input to the Committee as to why the South Atlantic Council wished to proceed with this amendment. Mr. Hartig elaborated on the condition of the Spanish mackerel fishery, noting that the South Atlantic Council was interested in reducing the number of permits and/or making that fishery limited access. Splitting the permits between the Gulf and the South Atlantic would allow each Council to address their own permit situations individually. The Committee was reminded of the potential changes to the mixing zone as a result of the SEDAR 38 stock assessment for king mackerel. Changes to the mixing zone may result in fishermen fishing around South Florida being required to possess two permits instead of one.

Motion: To postpone action on Amendment 26 until after the stock assessment is reviewed by the SSC.

Motion carried 6 to 2.

Other Business: SEDAR 38

Staff briefly reviewed the biological justification for the changes in the spatial coverage and temporal duration of the king mackerel winter mixing zone, the addition of long-term Mexican landings data, and otherwise positive progress in the assessment process.

Mr. Chairman, this concludes my report.