Scoping Summary for Mackerel Amendment 26 - January/February 2015
South Atlantic Mackerel Committee
St Simons, GA, March 2015

The South Atlantic Council approved Mackerel Amendment 26 for scoping in December 2014. One in-person scoping meeting was held on January 21, 2015, in Cocoa Beach, FL, with 16 individuals providing public comment on the record. A scoping webinar for Amendment 26 was held on February 4, 2015. There were 12 individuals (plus staff) logged onto the webinar but only one individual provided comments on the record. Additionally, three written comments were received. The minutes from the Cocoa Beach meeting and the webinar and the written comments are included in this PDF Portfolio.

This summary includes written comments, and comments on the record at the in-person and webinar scoping meetings, in addition to input during presentation and discussion in Cocoa Beach. The summary below includes only comments about Mackerel Amendment 26 and other mackerel-related topics.
Public input about snapper grouper topics can be found under the Snapper Grouper Committee tab.

OVERALL MACKEREL TOPICS:
- Support for ABCs under high recruitment or medium recruitment scenarios
- ACL set at ABC
- Support for updating the stock boundary
- Do not create endorsements for the Florida East Coast subzone or any other zone/subzone.
- Reconsider allowing bag limit sales of fish from for-hire trips on dually permitted vessels (like the Gulf)
- Support for bag limit sales for the shark gillnet fishery.
- Review or reconsider the 33% allocation of the commercial ACL of Atlantic king mackerel to the Northern Zone

Coastal Migratory Pelagics Amendment 26
- Six commenters noted the abundance of small fish and high recruitment, and supported setting the ACL at the highest level possible (high recruitment ABC).
- Two commenters supported the medium recruitment ABC.
- One commenter felt that the OFL should be much higher due to high recruitment during several non-hurricane years.
- One commenter recommended allowing unused quota to be rolled over to the next year.
- One commenter was concerned about how lack of information about the dynamics of stock mixing in SEDAR 38
- Five commenters supported updating the stock boundary and mixing zone.
- Nine commenters and several discussion participants were concerned with how the Northern and Southern Zone quotas (set up in Amendment 20B) would work with the new stock boundary and ACLs for king mackerel. Some individuals did not support a separate Northern Zone quota.
- Several commenters and discussion participants were concerned that the Florida East Coast subzone quota would be moved to the other Gulf zones or be allocated to the Northern Zone quota.

- One commenter felt that the Gulf Eastern Zone/Northern Subzone should have the largest proportion of the Gulf ACL, because it has the largest number of participants and potential new entrants. There should be split seasons with a 500-ln trip limit from Apr 1- Sept 30, and a 1250-lb trip limit with a step-down in November for Oct 1- Mar 31.
- Six commenters supported allowing bag limit sales of king mackerel in the shark gillnet fishery. One commenter recommended that this should only be allowed if it can be strictly enforced so that only a small number (bag limit) can be sold.
- Twelve commenters were opposed to an endorsement to fish king mackerel in the Florida East Coast subzone, because if endorsements are set up in other zones/subzones, this would affect the traveling fishermen. Some commenters also felt that an endorsement would be a step toward catch shares and they were opposed to catch shares.
- One commenter supported a subquota for the Florida East Coast subzone.
- One commenter recommended moving the Florida East Coast subzone boundary south of the Flagler/Volusia line.
- One commenter recommended waiting until the new ACLs are in place before addressing management in the Florida East Coast subzone.
- One commenter recommended changing the fishing year for the Florida East Coast subzone to March 1.

<u>Other items</u>

Bag limit sales

- Several commenters, including the chair of the South Atlantic Mackerel AP, recommended that the Councils reconsider allowing bag limit sales of king and Spanish mackerel caught on for-hire trips on dually permitted vessels (as in the Gulf). This would give the charter crew much-needed income supplement, and would reduce waste in the fishery. Additionally, this would be consistent with the action to allow shark gillnetters to sell king mackerel caught under the bag limit.
- Commenters recommended moving part of the recreational ACL to the commercial ACL to cover bag limit sales (e.g., 2%) or creating a quota within\ the recreational ACL for bag limit sales.
- One commenter noted that if a commercial king mackerel permit is not allowed to be used for bag limit sales from a for-hire trip on a dually permitted vessel, the fisherman must make use of the permit somehow through commercial trips, in which s/he will catch the commercial trip limit. If the permit is only being used to cover bag limit sales, this could reduce removals of king mackerel (conservation of stock).
- One commenter noted that bag limit sales for charter fishermen keeps a small amount of fish on the market even if commercial harvest is slow, to sustain supply for fish houses.
- One commenter pointed out that income from bag limit sales for charter fishermen is important to the area (around Cape Canaveral).

Amendment 20B Zones

- Several commenters were opposed to the 33% allocation of the commercial king mackerel ACL to the Northern Zone through Amendment 20B and recommended that the Councils re-calculate the landings ratio for the selected time period (2002/03 through 2011/12).
- Several commenters also recommended that there be a specified date for a quota transfer if North Carolina [Northern Zone] has not reached that quota

Other
- Several discussion participants did not support splitting permits because they want access to both regions.
- One commenter supported separating permits or the FMP.
- Several commenters supported a two-for-one requirement for commercial king mackerel permits (same as the snapper grouper permit) to reduce the number of king mackerel permits over time.
- Comments about 3-person limit for commercial trips for mackerel (compared to 4-person for snapper grouper).
- Several commenters opposed catch shares.