



GULF OF MEXICO FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

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February 5, 2009

Mr. Bob Mahood
Executive Director
South Atlantic Fishery Management Council
4055 Faber Place Drive, Suite 201
North Charleston, SC 29405

Dear Mr. ^{Bob}Mahood:

At the January 26-29, 2009 meeting, the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council (Council) received a presentation of the SEDAR 16 stock assessment for king mackerel and the Southeast Fisheries Science Center's response to our request for additional analyses of catch levels under various benchmarks and based on the geographic separations previously recommended by both of our councils. The Council also reviewed the recommendations of our Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC) which were to set the interim Overfishing Limit (OFL) for Gulf group king mackerel based on the yield at $F_{30\%SPR}$ in the annual projections of yield shown in Table 2.4.2 of Annex 2 to the stock assessment. The SSC also recommended that the interim Acceptable Biological Catch (ABC) be based on 85% of the $F_{30\%SPR}$ yield in the same table. These recommendations were based on the assumption of a 50/50 mix of Atlantic and Gulf group king mackerel in the existing mixing zone. The Council considered this information in conjunction with our councils' previous positions and the need to move forward with setting ABC and Annual Catch Limits (ACL) and modifying the framework to incorporate OFL, ABC, and ACL. We also discussed whether to do an amendment to the Coastal Migratory Pelagics Fishery Management Plan (FMP) or in a generic amendment to meet the requirement of setting ACLs by 2011. Following discussion, the Council voted to approve convening a joint meeting of the mackerel management committees of the SAFMC and the GMFMC. The Council felt that this would be the best way to address all of these issues, and then the councils could act on the joint committee's recommendations.

Perhaps the South Atlantic Council could review the SEDAR 16 recommendations and subsequent analyses, as well as previous actions at your March meeting and determine whether you feel that this would be a workable approach. If so, we would be happy to schedule a joint meeting working with you and your staff.

Thank you for your consideration, and if you have any questions, please advise us. Best regards.

Sincerely,

Richard L. Leard, Ph.D.
Interim Executive Director

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