

**SUMMARY REPORT
FROM THE SAFMC MACKEREL COMMITTEE MEETING
Charleston, SC
September 13, 2011**

The Mackerel Committee met on September 13, 2011 in Charleston, SC. The committee received status reports on (1) commercial and recreational catches versus quotas for king and Spanish mackerel, (2) Mackerel Amendment 18/EA , (3) Terms of Reference and Appointments for SEDAR 28, and (4) items pending for future mackerel amendments.

The Committee directed staff to move forward with updating the data in Amendment 18, particularly the data in Table 2.16.4.1; the issue of alternative allocations for cobia will be evaluated in the future after MRIP numbers are available. The Committee expressed their intent to have the document submitted for formal review and implementation as soon as feasible.

The Committee discussed the TOR and Appointments but did not provide any specific recommendations. In evaluating items pending for future mackerel amendments, the Committee was provided a list of suggestions from Ben Hartig who could not attend the meeting; these suggestions come from the Decision Document (Attachment 5).

The committee approved the following motions:

MOTION #1: DIRECT STAFF TO CONTINUE DEVELOPMENT OF AMENDMENT 19 TO EVALUATE A PROHIBITION ON SALE OF COASTAL MIGRATORY PELAGICS AND PERMIT ISSUES

APPROVED BY COMMITTEE

MOTION #2: DO NOT CONTINUE WITH LAPP IN AMENDMENT 20 AND DIRECT STAFF TO WORK WITH COUNCIL TO EVALUATE ALLOCATING THE COMMERCIAL KING MACKEREL QUOTA AND OTHER ISSUES IN THE LIST PROVIDED

APPROVED BY COMMITTEE

[Note: The list from Ben Hartig is shown below. In addition, the issue of undersized Spanish mackerel in the NC pound net fishery will be evaluated to determine whether a regional and/or seasonal exemption may prevent discards.]

List of options from Ben Hartig for items that have been removed from other amendments; they track the same order as they come occur in the decision document (Attachment 5).

1. AP Motion #8: Change the king mackerel size limit.

- A) 23 inches
- B) 22 inches
- C) Status Quo (24 inches)

Rationale: In the late winter and early spring we catch predominately smaller kings, a number of which are under size. 23 inches will solve most of the discard problem. 22 inches will virtually eliminate all discards. Lowering the size limit substantially reduces discard mortality as the smaller kings are more susceptible to hook mortality.

2. AP motion: Retention of 1 king mackerel greater than 50 inches.

Rationale: This was a motion from a recreational fisherman. My concern is how does the average recreational fisherman get a large king in the boat and measured without significantly reducing its chance of survival?

[4.2) 60 Spanish mackerel recreational boat limit. Was discussed in Amendment 18.]

3. Commercial Trip limits; Spanish Mackerel:

1) April 1st- March 31st, Monday-Friday, 3500 pounds; Weekends 1500 pounds Reduce trip limit to 1500 pounds when 75% of quota is landed. 500 pound trip limit after quota is caught. This is an adjusted allocation which compensates for estimated catches of 500 pounds per vessel per day to end of season. Based on previous 3 year average landings?

Option 2) April 1st- September 30, 3500 pounds. October 1st-November 30, 5000 pounds (Monday-Friday, 1500 pounds weekend) Dec 1-March 31 1500 pounds. 500 pound set aside.

Option 3) April 1-November 30, 3000 pounds, December 1, 2000 pounds until 80% of quota is landed. 500 pounds until quota is caught.

Rationale: The unlimited season is no longer needed. Most fish houses have limited their gillnet vessels to 3500-5000 pounds due to quality and marketing concerns. The above options are designed to generate discussion at the scoping level. The seasonal fall gillnet fishery in FL is usually over by mid-November.

4. King Mackerel Trip Limit:

Increase trip limit for the shark driftnet fishery. This option was designed to coincide with a limited access plan for the shark fishery. This option is not appropriate until the number of vessels in the shark driftnet fishery are limited.

4.1.1.5 State King and Spanish Mackerel Commercial Allocations:

- 1) Allocations by individual states.
- 2) Split the king and spanish mackerel commercial allocations into a combined NC/SC and GA/FL State commercial quotas.

5. Spanish Mackerel Gillnet Endorsement:

Qualifying Poundages For a Commercial Gillnet Endorsement Based on the New Control Date (? 2010)

- 1) 30,000 pounds,
- 2) 20,000 pounds
- 3) 10,000 pounds

Rationale: The fishing power of gillnets is substantially higher than cast net and hook and line gears. In the past there was an equitable ballance among the gears. In recent years there have been additional vessels entering the gillnet fishery and this will negatively impact hook and line and cast net fishermen as the gillnets catch occurs earlier in the season, than the other gears.

6. Permits:

Should be separated by council jurisdictions for cobia, king and Spanish mackerel. May want to have some limited landings qualifications to obtain the different permits as there are a number of fishermen from the SE coast that have had significant landings of Gulf king mackerel in the Gulf for a number of years. This effort is unidirectional. Very few Gulf vessels fish on the SE coast.

7. Future Participation for King and Spanish:

- 1) No catch shares.
- 2) Use the 2010 control date.
- 3) Include a two for one permit option definitely for kings. For Spanish you will have to wait for the permit to be mandatory before the permit numbers are known.
- 4) Address Latent Permits in the king mackerel fishery with landings qualifer options based on the 2010 control date.
- 5) Require the Federal Spanish mackerel permit to harvest Spanish mackerel in state waters.
Rationale: Consistent with legal requirements for king mackerel and S/G. 2012 quota was exceeded in 8 of the past 10 years.
- 6) To qualify for a king or Spanish mackerel permit the applicant must prove that 75% of their current income comes from commercial fishing in one of three years. Same for renewals.
- 7) Spanish mackerel permit qualifiers based on level of landings using 2010 control date. In one of past 3 years. 30,000 lbs, 20,000 lbs, 10,000 lbs.
- 8) Allow a bycatch of 50, 100, 200 pounds of Spanish mackerel for commercial vessels that do not qualify for a permit.