

# **SOUTH ATLANTIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL**

## **MACKEREL COBIA COMMITTEE**

**Town & Country Inn  
Charleston, South Carolina**

**October 3, 2018**

### **Summary Minutes**

#### **Mackerel Cobia Committee Members**

Doug Haymans	Steve Poland
Anna Beckwith`	Mel Bell
Roy Crabtree	Tim Griner
Jessica McCawley	Spud Woodward

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Chris Conklin	LCDR Jeremy Montes
Art Sapp	

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Kimberly Cole	Dr. Chip Collier
Mike Collins	Kelsey Dick
Dr. Mike Errigo	John Hadley
Kathleen Howington	Kim Iverson
Roger Pugliese	Cameron Rhodes
Amber Von Harten	Christina Wiegand
Julia Byrd	

#### **Observers and Participants**

Dr. Jack McGovern	Monica Smit-Brunello
Shep Grimes	Dr. Erik Williams
Dr. Tom Frazer	Rick DeVictor
Erika Burgess	Frank Helies
Dr. Marcel Reichert	Dr. George Sedberry

Other observers and participants attached.

The Mackerel Cobia Committee of the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council convened at the Town & Country Inn, Charleston, South Carolina, Wednesday afternoon, October 3, 2018, and was called to order by Chairman Doug Haymans.

MR. HAYMANS: Hello, everyone. Welcome to a new era in the Mackerel Cobia Committee. Ben, are you listening, son? We do miss you. Charlie showed up, just in case you're listening, and why aren't you here? Okay, and so you have an agenda in front of you. Are there any -- I guess I will call to order the Mackerel Cobia Committee. Are there any additions or changes to the agenda? Seeing none, we will accept the agenda as submitted. You've got a copy of the minutes from the June meeting. Are there any changes or additions to the minutes of the June meeting? Seeing none, we will accept the minutes.

A reminder of the committee, it's myself, and Steve Poland as the Vice Chair. Then Robert Beal, Anna Beckwith, Mel Bell, Roy Crabtree, Tim Griner, Jessica McCawley, Spud Woodward, Rob O'Reilly, Dewey Hemilright, and Tony DiLernia, the rocket man himself. We're going to begin by having a status of the commercial catches versus the ACLs, and I believe that is Mr. DeVictor.

MR. DEVICTOR: Thank you. This is Tab A, Attachment 1. Christina has it on the screen there. The one that was in your briefing book is a little bit dated, and so we have updated it, and so we have updated landings through October 2. In terms of king mackerel, the fishing year begins on March 1, and the ACL is 5.2 million pounds. You can see in the table where we're at with the Northern Zone, and that's 6.6 percent of the ACL. In the Southern, there is two seasons, a March 1 through September 30 and then October 1 through the end of February, and that is just under 60 percent. Your total percent of the ACL is 29.4 percent.

Scrolling down to Spanish mackerel, again, that fishing year also begins on March 1. The ACL for that is 3.3 million pounds, just over that, and you can see where we're at with the Northern and Southern Zone quotas, and so the Northern is 72.6 percent, and the Southern is 15.5, and your total is 26.9 percent. Finally, the third species is cobia, and that Atlantic group quota is 50,000 pounds, and we're at 50.1 percent of the ACL, and that's a January 1 start date.

MR. HAYMANS: Any questions on the commercial landings? Thank you. Do you want to roll on into status of amendments?

MR. DEVICTOR: This will be quick. This will be one amendment, CMP 31. As you know, this would remove Atlantic cobia from federal management under the Magnuson-Stevens Act, and so this is up in Headquarters, the proposed rule and amendment package. We have sent it up to Headquarters, and so, hopefully, by December, we can report that the proposed rule did publish.

MR. HAYMANS: Very good, and the commission is rolling right along with its plans to take up management, and so working along. Any questions for Rick? Okay. Then let's move into the main item of the day, and that's Framework Amendment Volusia County, I mean Amendment 6. I will turn that over to Christina.

MS. WIEGAND: All right, and so I'm going to give you guys a brief overview of what we've currently got in this amendment. In June, you guys approved it for public hearings, and those are set to occur at the public comment period that will happen shortly after this. Here is your amendment timing. The hope was to get this amendment in place by the start of the next king

mackerel fishing year in March, and I'm not sure how possible that is at this point, but that's sort of the timeline we've been working with, and so, at this meeting, you guys are going to review the amendment, and then you'll be voting whether to submit it to the Secretary of Commerce for approval.

Here are the alternatives, and, again, we're going to through these one more time and hope that I don't get too tongue-tied talking about these different lines. This is what was established in Amendment 26 and is currently in place. North of Flagler/Volusia, you've got a 3,500-pound trip limit year-round. South of the Flagler/Volusia line, in March the trip limit is fifty fish. From April through September, you've got a seventy-five-fish trip limit with a step-down to fifty fish when 75 percent of the Season 1 quota has been landed, and then, for Season 2, which is October 1 through the end of February, you've got a fifty-fish limit, which then bumps up to seventy-five fish if on February 1 less than 70 percent of the Season 2 quota has been landed, and so that's where things are currently.

This is Alternative 2 for this one, and so, for the month of March, north of Flagler/Volusia, you've still got 3,500-pound trip limit and south of it is fifty fish. For the second part of Season 1, April 1 through September 30, that line is going to shift down to Volusia/Brevard, and those guys in Volusia County are going to have access to that 3,500-pound trip limit. South of Volusia/Brevard, it is still that seventy-five-fish trip limit with the step-down. Then we move into Season 2, and that line moves back up to Flagler/Volusia, and it's 3,500 pounds north of that, and south of that is your fifty-fish limit with a step-up in February.

Your current preferred alternative is exactly the same as Alternative 2 with the exception of the March trip limit south of the Flagler/Volusia line. That's been bumped up to seventy-five fish under Preferred Alternative 3. Then, last, but not least, Alternative 4 would shift the boundary to Volusia/Brevard for the entirety of Season 1, and so, for all of Season 1, March through September 30, north of that Volusia/Brevard line, it would be a 3,500-pound trip limit. In March, south of that line is fifty fish. April to September, south of that line, it's seventy-five with the step-down, and then we're back to the same Season 2 trip limits, with 3,500 pounds north of Flagler/Volusia and fifty fish south of Flagler/Volusia, with a step-up.

Just as a reference, a lot of the reason we've been moving forward with this amendment is because the Mackerel AP, as well as stakeholders, have expressed concerns about the changes that were made in Amendment 26, because there are guys that operate out of Volusia County that are making multiday trips, and the fifty-fish and seventy-five-fish trip limits aren't sufficient for them to be able to pay for the cost of making a trip in that case, and so we've been working on this idea of getting back to where we were prior to Amendment 26, and these were the trip limits prior to implementation of Amendment 26. From April 1 to October 31, it was 3,500 pounds north of Volusia/Brevard, and south of that line was seventy-five fish. Then, from November 1 to March 31, north of Flagler/Volusia, it was 3,500 pounds, and there was no trip limit south of that, and so that's just for reference.

I will jump into the document. Here is the current purpose and need that you guys have approved. The purpose is to modify the commercial trip limit for Atlantic king mackerel in the Atlantic Southern Zone, and the need is to provide a commercial trip limit sufficient to support fishing activity and revenue opportunity while constraining harvest to the annual catch limit and providing for year-round access.

MR. HAYMANS: Thank you. For you newbies, don't worry if you're confused. Us oldies are still confused too, and so this action really is making a very small change to roughly one small group of fishermen. You see the purpose and need, and there is no IPT recommendations for changing that. Is there any desire amongst the committee to change the purpose and need? Thank you.

MS. WIEGAND: Then I will move on to the first action, and I went over all of the different alternatives, and your current preferred alternative is Alternative 3, and the analysis anticipated that this would result in about a 2 percent increase in overall landings, and it isn't expected to result in a shortened season or getting anywhere close to the ACL. This preferred alternative matches the preferred alternative of the Mackerel Advisory Panel.

MR. HAYMANS: That 2 percent is very important for those guys during the time of year that they're looking for it, and so any desire to change the preferred? Thank you. Seeing none, that's the only action in this amendment.

MS. WIEGAND: That's the only action in this amendment, and so, again, we're looking for the motion to approve to send to the Secretary of Commerce, but, like a couple of the other ones, since we're having public comment on this amendment today, if it's the pleasure of the committee, we could wait to vote on this until Full Council.

MS. MCCAWLEY: I just wanted to point out, and I can give you these references, but there is a couple of places in the document where it talks about gillnet gear, and that's not an allowable gear in the Atlantic Southern Zone, and so I saw that in the document, and so I will point them out to you in the document, in a couple of different places.

MR. HAYMANS: You do realize, of course, that if we approve this document that you will be given the authority to make any changes you so desire?

MS. MCCAWLEY: I was trying to be transparent.

MR. HAYMANS: All right, and so I see no desire to change the preferred, and so it will stay. We're going to hold on that then until we get to Full Council, after we hear public comment. Anybody have any additional comments on Framework Amendment 6? All right.

I will say, under Other Business, that I've been approached by a couple of members of the public here, the fishing public here, to begin to look at some of the limits south of the line that we're already in the middle of, and, if you've been around, at least the way I have operated with Habitat and others, it's that I just -- I have a general issue with back-to-back-to-back changing things, and so I probably won't be at the first half of the December meeting anyway, and so I've requested that we not have a December Mackerel Committee meeting, unless there's just some reason to have it, and I have asked those gentlemen to present the things that they wanted us to look at next during public comment, and so we'll try to take that public comment and address it in March and let the AP then hear it in April and give us some opinion, and we'll try to maybe get things rolling after we hear about it from the AP, and so does that sound appropriate?

MS. WIEGAND: Yes, and the advisory panel has commented, at their last meeting, on some of these trip limits for the winter months and concerns that, with Amendment 26, they're now competing with the guys in the Gulf for price, and so you've got sporadic fish in the winter and a lower price, and it's making it harder for them to make a trip, and they didn't want it attached to Framework 6, because they're trying to get Framework 6 through to get relief for those guys in Volusia County, but they do want some of those issues for the second season addressed as well.

MR. HAYMANS: Okay. Anything else? For my second committee in a row, I'm finishing before I ever got started.

(Whereupon, the meeting adjourned on October 3, 2018.)

Certified By: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Transcribed By:  
Amanda Thomas  
October 18, 2018

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Wednesday sign in sheet - 10/3/18

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Walter	Bubley					SCDNR
Dean	Foster				NGO	
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