

SOUTH ATLANTIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

MACKEREL COBIA COMMITTEE

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

September 12, 2023

Transcript

Mackerel Cobia Committee

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Spud Woodward, Vice Chair
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Mel Bell
Gary Borland
Tim Griner

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Jessica McCawley
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Observers and Participants

Other observers and participants attached.

The Mackerel Cobia Committee of the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council convened at the Town and Country Inn, Charleston, South Carolina, on Tuesday, September 12, 2023, and was called to order by Chairman Tom Roller.

MR. ROLLER: My name is Tom Roller, and I'm a council member from North Carolina, and, in my day-to-day life, I'm a full-time for-hire operator. We're going to start here with the Mackerel Committee, and so the first thing I'm looking for is an approval of the agenda, unless anyone has any modifications, and I would entertain a motion. Jessica, are you making the motion?

MS. MCCAWLEY: I move that we approve the agenda for the Mackerel Cobia Committee.

MR. ROLLER: Thank you. Do I have second? Spud. Do I have anyone that disagrees with that? Seeing nothing, the motion is approved. The next thing I'm looking for is an approval of the minutes. Unless anyone has any modifications, I'm looking for a motion. Thank you, Trish. Do we have a second? Thank you, Laurilee. Does anyone disagree? Seeing none, the motion passes. The first order of business is to go into CMP Framework Amendment 13.

MS. WIEGAND: I am going to pull up the questions from yesterday. If you guys will remember, you were talking about sort of these three questions that you wanted to discuss before diving into any discussion on an amendment that utilizes the MRIP-FES data, and so I've pulled up those questions for discussion.

MR. ROLLER: I assume that we want to look at Item Number 1 on the elements for discussion, the amendment's dependency on MRIP-FES data, and is there anybody that would like to have anything to say? Spud.

MR. WOODWARD: Well, I guess this is our first attempt to actually put this into practice, and so I'm certainly not the subject matter expert on this, but I do believe, from all our previous discussions, and the briefings and our presentations from the SSC and all, that we could certainly say that this is an amendment where MRIP-FES data is very important, and I think we've got roughly almost a 50/50 allocation, in this stock, between commercial and recreational, and so I think -- I don't know we exactly intend to answer that question, a numerical scale or a yes or no or what, but I can say that, yes, it is certainly dependent, at least from my perspective, and I would appreciate anybody else, you know, staff or whatever, that would opine about that.

MR. ROLLER: Mel.

MR. BELL: Spud mentioned it, but recall that there was a lot of discussion of the FES data related to the stock assessment, and the SSC spent a lot of time thinking about that, and so I would say this is one where FES, MRIP-FES, data are very important, and so a dependency on MRIP-FES data, yes, and, I mean, I would agree with that.

MR. ROLLER: Thank you, Mel. Jessica.

MS. MCCAWLEY: I agree, and Mel said part of what I was going to say, and I guess I would also ask -- I can't remember, because I think that the SSC came up with another way of determining maybe what the -- It's not even an ABC, but whatever numbers we're going to use, and I can't

remember, in the methodology that they used to give us these numbers, how dependent that is on MRIP-FES, and so didn't they use a different technique? I can't recall all the specifics.

MR. ROLLER: Chip is going to come and --

MS. WIEGAND: Chip can provide more details, but, essentially, they determined that the stock assessment was fine for providing stock status and then used 75 percent MSY for catch level projections.

MR. ROLLER: Trish.

MS. MURPHEY: So my recollection on all this, and all the discussions that we had over Spanish mackerel, was, you know, at the very beginning, everybody was concerned about those FES numbers, the fact that they were mostly -- That they really didn't believe the shore-based numbers, and I think, because of all those concerns, the SSC went back and forth, and I think this recommendation -- The final recommendation, even after hearing from NMFS that this was BSIA -- I felt like there was a good comfort level now with Spanish mackerel, after this determination, that they agreed with the stock status, but they were not willing to provide -- There were no projections, right, and they were not going to be able to provide projections. In my mind, they kind of more or less addressed those issues at the time, before we even knew all of this, but there was a lot of concern about the shore-based numbers.

MR. ROLLER: Thank you, Trish. I mean, that was one of the big debates that we had here, was the discomfort we all had with the shore-based estimates, which seemed a little high in most of our regards, and so, Judd, did you want to provide something?

DR. CURTIS: Yes, and so the deliberation from the SSC there was large concern with the projections, and that's where the FES numbers really seemed to influence the projections, and so, instead of going with the projections from the assessment, they looked at just the output, at MSY, for serving as the OFL, and then 75 percent of that serves as your ABC, and so they did accept the assessment as for stock status criteria determinations, but it was the projections that were very suspect, because of those shore landings.

MR. ROLLER: Thank you, Judd. I'm looking for more discussion on this. Jessica.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Can you go back to the questions one more time? Are there deadlines on this?

MS. WIEGAND: The stock is not considered overfished or undergoing overfishing, and so there's no two-year statutory deadline, but the council is, of course, still obligated by Magnuson to update catch levels based on best scientific information available.

MR. ROLLER: So what is the pleasure of the committee? Do we want to keep debating the first question, or do we want to move on? Well, we're potentially on the second question now. Jessica.

MS. MCCAWLEY: I was kind of debating all three questions at once, and I guess my question is when is the next stock assessment, and what happens if we stop work on this and then go do the port meetings, although we talked about our reluctance to do the port meetings until after the stock

assessment was complete, because people wouldn't know what the status of the stock was and that they couldn't give us good recommendations about what to do until we had a stock status from an assessment, but I'm just throwing out some questions there to think about.

MR. ROLLER: Tim.

MR. GRINER: In answering all three of these questions, we're so early in this amendment, and we're only talking about approving this for scoping, and letting it go to the AP in November, and I don't -- I think, at this point, we keep rolling here, and we really don't have any information that says anything any different than what the SSC has given us, and they really thoroughly went through this thing, and it was a tough one for them. If they're comfortable with it, and we're not going to get anything new, and all we're doing is trying to get this thing scoped, get it to the AP, do our port meetings, and then we'll have plenty of time to, you know, get through this thing. I mean, we're not looking at finishing this thing until mid-2024. Thank you.

MR. ROLLER: Which it's important to point out that that would still be before we got any updated information from the new MRIP survey. Judd.

DR. CURTIS: To the next assessment, the SEDAR Committee will be looking at a scope of work for Spanish mackerel for a 2026 benchmark assessment.

MR. ROLLER: Trish.

MS. MURPHEY: I guess my thought is that, if it's not overfished, and overfishing is not occurring, and I think it does increase our ABC, this one, and it gets more fish on the table. We are going to be looking at a full amendment after the port meetings, and I would suggest that we move forward with this and then, in the meantime, do the port meetings, and then we'll get into the full-blown amendment, but I think, you know, the SSC basically -- They handled this even before we knew this, that there were issues, and they addressed it, and I think we should just go ahead and move forward and get those fish on the table.

MR. ROLLER: Christina, did you have a point of clarification?

MS. WIEGAND: I just want to clarify that this is, again, one of those situations where we're switching from CHTS to FES, and so, if you're looking at just base numbers, it seems like this is an increase in ABC, and then associated ACL, but it actually isn't, because it's now in FES currency, and the new number actually represents a bit of a reduction in available catch.

MR. ROLLER: Spud.

MR. WOODWARD: I am glad that Christina clarified that, because I think that's -- We need to have some context for, if we don't do anything, things will stay at status quo, and you would have FES catch estimates have to be back-calculated to Coastal Household Telephone Survey numbers, and is that correct, or determine compliance with ACLs, and that's right?

MS. WIEGAND: So if the ACL remains in CHTS, then they do back-calculate FES to CHTS, so that it is comparable with the current ACL. In this situation, if you all were to move forward with

the amendment, the new ACL would be in FES, and we would also be tracking in FES, and there would be no conversion back and forth, and it would just be straight FES to FES.

MR. ROLLER: Tim.

MR. GRINER: This is problematic, and we have got to stop flip-flopping between these two currencies. This is our chance to get this -- To get this stock up to the current FES, and we're sitting here talking about how dependent it is on MRIP-FES, and yet we want to turn around and say, oh, well, maybe we should talk about the old currency, and so Question Number 1 even goes away if we're going to get this stock and track it in FES, and so I think we -- Really and truly, that is even more reason to move this forward and put it to scoping. Regardless of how you track it, and it doesn't matter. The pounds that we have out there are the pounds that we have out there, and it's a stock that is not in trouble, and, quite frankly, I think the fishermen have been waiting on this for long enough, and so I really think that we need to move forward with this.

MR. ROLLER: I've got Trish and then Mel.

MS. MURPHEY: I guess I'm confused too, and, I mean, I understand the telephone survey versus the FES, but I thought net result, regardless of whether -- So it basically stays the same or -- I mean, I thought there was a slight increase, and I know not some big increase, but maybe I'm just messing up in my math, but, even between the two currencies, I thought this was an increase, or at least on the commercial side, or -- I am just confused.

MS. WIEGAND: Whether or not -- I am going to try and explain this as best I can. Whether or not it ends up being an increase on the commercial side ultimately sort of depends on what happens with allocation, because there has been no change in how we're accounting for commercial catch. There has been a change in our perception of recreational catch, and so we've updated this assessment based on that new currency, and now we're tracking in that new currency as well, and so they're increasing sort of at the same amount, and, because we don't sort of -- Unlike the Gulf Council, we don't go back and rerun old assessments with FES numbers, I'm not sure the exact sort of percentage change between the prior ABC and this new ABC in FES, because we only have them in apples-to-oranges and not apples-to-apples.

MR. ROLLER: On that note, I just have a question, before I go to Mel. If we move forward with this framework with the new catch levels, how will that adjust sort of allocations between the sectors?

MS. WIEGAND: So right now, because it's a framework amendment, we're not looking at allocations. Allocations for Spanish mackerel are not set based on a landings stream. Unlike a lot of species we manage, they are set sort of based on the council's rationale at the time.

MR. ROLLER: Well, let me -- I think I asked that question poorly, but doesn't moving forward like this end up with a slight commercial reallocation, being that we're changing the currency? That's what I meant to ask.

MS. WIEGAND: Yes.

MR. ROLLER: Mel.

MR. BELL: So this is our first exercise with the three questions, and, obviously, this is going to be different every time, because each situation is uniquely different. In this case, we've got a stock that is not overfished, and overfishing is not occurring, and, to me, I'm kind of agreeing with Tim that maybe one very positive thing out of just continuing to move forward with this is to blow through this CHTS/FES conundrum that we're kind of stuck in, and then get ourselves through and on the FES currency. The only thing that we sort of have a mandate to do, or a deadline, if you will, I guess, is that we do need to adopt the new ABC and ACL, and so, I mean, I think, if we were to just continue to move forward with it, I think there's more positive in that, plus public perception.

I mean, we're sitting here struggling with this, and is it more fish, or is it not more fish, that sort of thing, and I think it's perceived as, the numbers anyway, as something beneficial that the public, you know, would like, and so I think there are more positive aspects to moving forward with it than negative, and so I would be inclined to -- If nothing else, if it really does help us push through this and over into the proper currency, that might be worth its weight in gold there, and so I would be kind of in favor, I think, based on the discussion we've had of just continuing to move on it.

MR. ROLLER: Thank you, Mel. That's a great point. I'm going to go to Spud and then Trish.

MR. WOODWARD: I think Mel did a good job of describing what would be some benefits of moving forward, and I think another thing that's probably important for us to consider is, okay, we're concerned because of an unknown, but suspected, bias. Well, that bias existed in the data that was used to generate the catch level specifications, and that bias will exist in the data used to determine what catches are, at least for the near future, and so it's not the optimum thing to do, but I think, in this circumstance, since we're aren't dealing with restrictions and rebuilding and that sort of thing, that my comfort with moving forward with this is probably enough to say yes, to go forward with it, and I think what we need to also consider is what do we want to do in the future.

You know, when is our next assessment going to be, make sure that we have the data necessary to understand that bias, and make sure that that bias is addressed in future stock status determinations, as best that can be done, and so that would be my recommendation, is let's move forward with this to the next step in the process.

MR. ROLLER: Thank you, Spud. Trish.

MS. MURPHEY: Yes, and I'm in agreement. I would like to see this move forward.

MR. ROLLER: I am not seeing any hands, and what is the pleasure of the committee here? Any other comments or discussion? Seeing none, I'm assuming that we're moving forward with the framework.

MS. WIEGAND: All right, and so I'm not going to belabor the background of this amendment, since we just had a pretty good discussion about why we're here and how we're moving forward, but, just again, this amendment is meant to update catch level recommendations based on SEDAR 78, and the intent is to do simply that, to update catch level recommendations only and wait to take any other management actions until after the mackerel port meetings have been completed at the beginning of 2025, and we'll talk about those port meetings in a little bit.

I will go ahead and scroll right down, and there are two actions that would be in this amendment. The first would be to revise the acceptable biological catch, annual optimum yield, total ACL, and the associated sector annual catch limits and commercial zone quotas. The second action would be to revise the recreational annual catch target, and, again, the reason we need to revise that is because it is utilized in the accountability measures for recreational Spanish mackerel.

What we're looking to have you guys do at this meeting is review the draft purpose and need statements, the draft actions and alternatives, and then consider approving this amendment for scoping. Here is your tentative timeline, and it's looking like this amendment would take about a year to complete. We would start with this options paper, bring it to the Mackerel Cobia AP in November, and then bring you everything back to finally approve actions and alternatives in December, moving forward to final approval sometime in June of 2024. If there aren't any questions on that, I will start with the purpose and need statement.

The purpose of this amendment is to revise the acceptable biological catch, annual catch limits, annual optimum yield, and recreational annual catch target for Atlantic migratory group Spanish mackerel, based on the results of the latest stock assessment. The need for this amendment is to ensure that catch limits are based on the best scientific information available and to ensure that overfishing does not occur in the Atlantic migratory group Spanish mackerel fishery.

MR. ROLLER: Thank you, Christina. Do we have any comments or questions to the purpose and need statement? I'm seeing a big thumbs-up from Spud. Do we want to keep going? Do we need to draft a motion to approve it? Then if someone would like to. Spud.

MR. WOODWARD: **I move that we approve the purpose and need statements as presented.**

MR. ROLLER: Mel seconds. Any discussion? **Anybody disagree with this? Seeing none, the motion passes.**

MS. WIEGEND: All right. Moving into the meat, the first action here is the revised acceptable biological catch, annual optimum yield, total annual catch limit, sector annual catch limits, and commercial zone quotas for Atlantic migratory group Spanish mackerel, and so there's a lot happening here. Of course, you've got your usual no action alternative, which would leave things in CHTS currency and based on the previous stock assessment.

Alternative 2 would update all of those sort of catch levels that I just mentioned, based on the most recent stock assessment, which includes MRIP-FES, and so here you can how all of that would work out. You've got an ABC of right around eight-million pounds, setting the annual OY and total ACL equal to that. As one option, using current allocations, that results in a recreational ACL of about 3.6 million and a commercial ACL of about 4.4 million, and then, if you will remember, the commercial ACL is broken up into two zone quotas, the Northern Zone, which runs from North Carolina north to the New York/Connecticut/Rhode Island, and that would be about 882,000, and then Southern Zone quota would be about 3.5 million, and, again, that runs from South Carolina all the way down to the Miami-Dade/Monroe County line in Florida.

Just a little bit of background about those sector allocations, and so sector allocations for Spanish mackerel were originally established back in Amendment 2, and they were based on sort of the

average proportion of landings from 1979 to 1985, which resulted in an allocation of about 76 percent to the commercial sector and 24 percent to the recreational sector. However, in Amendment 4, the council ultimately decided to revise sector allocations to be a 50/50 split, and there was concern that the resource had been overfished sort of during that 1979 to 1985 time period and that the recreational sector had experienced some pretty low catch rates as a result.

Additionally, qualitative information noted that recreational catch may have been affected by an increase in commercial effort, and, ultimately, the council, at the time, felt that, because the capacity and demand of both sectors would have been able to harvest the ACL in its entirety, the most equitable allocation was a 50/50 allocation.

Then, in 1998, the council decided to do a 5 percent shift towards the commercial sector, and so 55 percent commercial and 45 percent recreational, which is what we've see now, and they did this because the commercial sector was regularly sort of bumping up against their ACL, whereas the recreational sector remains well below their ACL, and so that's how we ended up with a sector allocation. Then, again, for the commercial zones, those are based on a landings stream, and it's the proportion of the landings between those two zones from the 2002-2003 fishing season through the 2011-2012 fishing season, and so that's how we got those current allocations.

With that, the big question here is whether or not the council would like to see a buffer between ABC and ACL, and, right now, we just sort of have one alternative under this action, keeping it pretty simple and setting ABC equal to ACL, but, if the council would like to consider a buffer, we can add additional alternatives to this amendment to allow for that.

MR. ROLLER: Thank you, Christina. I'm going to open the floor for discussion and see if there's any hands, if anyone wants to discuss whether or not we want to put a buffer in place, and that's really the only question here. Jessica.

MS. MCCAWLEY: I didn't want to suggest a buffer, but, in the decision document, I don't see a table or anything. With this result, with this new number, would this result in early recreational closures?

MS. WIEGAND: I can pull up the fishery overview that Chip put together a couple of meetings ago, when you first got the assessment result, and, you know, I haven't looked in detail, to know exactly how early, or perhaps how often, but, looking at the numbers and sort of the trend in recreational landings over the last few years, it is certainly possible that there could be a recreational closure, as well as a commercial closure, with these numbers.

MR. ROLLER: Tim.

MR. GRINER: Currently, the five-year average for recreational is 51 percent of their ACL, and so I don't see that, you know, we could really get close to -- It seems to me that we already have a buffer, and I don't think there's a worry, a fear, of the recreational bumping up against the ACL. Commercial, I do think they're going to bump up against the ACL.

MR. ROLLER: Thank you, Tim. Chip, did you have something to provide?

DR. COLLIER: You have to remember, when you're looking at the values that are in the monitoring, the current ACL monitoring, that is CHTS units, and that is not FES units, and so recreational landings are much higher for this, and they are going to be bumping up against the landings. If you go to the recreational page, or tab, on that fishery overview, and I haven't updated this with the accepted values for the stock assessment, and so I will get those in there soon, but they're around about a pound apiece, and so you can look at these, and you can see, over the past few years, it's been over five-million fish being landed, going up to over eight-million fish being landed in some years, and so, in the recent timeframe, you are going to be approaching the ACL, and exceeding it.

MR. ROLLER: Thank you, Chip. Tim.

MR. GRINER: So, in the overview, that's converted?

DR. COLLIER: The overview is FES units, and that's the exact same coming out from the stock assessment.

MR. ROLLER: Spud.

MR. WOODWARD: I think, also, just to remind ourselves that those latter years is where those shore mode catches were generating a lot of concern about whether those were real or whether those were artifacts, but, until this FES conundrum is resolved, that's going to persist, and so that's just something we're going to have to deal with.

MR. ROLLER: I've got Andy and then Tim.

MR. STRELCHECK: I guess I'm a little concerned with talking on the fly about whether we're going to exceed the recreational catch limit or not, and, I mean, the data certainly has different units, and, you know, I'm looking at the SERO-maintained ACL webpages, and they're at 50 percent landings for the 2022-2023 season, and so I think we just need to be thoughtful, and careful, about looking at this more thoroughly and recognizing that there's a potential for this.

In terms of the question earlier that was posed about a buffer, there is only a small difference between the overfishing limit and ABC, and I think it's been standard practice that the council has considered buffers for catch limits, and I think it's reasonable to have that as a range for alternatives in this action.

MR. ROLLER: I have two questions. Is this possible to do an analysis to look at potential recreational closures, and, going off of Andy's comment, how does everybody else feel about looking at buffers? Jessica.

MS. MCCAWLEY: I agree that it's a reasonable range, and so, if that's something that we feel like we need to add as part of this range of the alternatives, and I wouldn't want to pick it at this stage, but I think it's a reasonable option.

MR. ROLLER: Thank you, Jessica. Tim.

MR. GRINER: I agree with Andy and Jessica. I think I would like for it to be in there, so that the AP could look at as an option.

MR. ROLLER: Thank you, Tim. Shep.

MR. GRIMES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Well, I would just add that, legally, you should be looking at buffers, and so, I mean, you don't have to pick one, but I would strongly encourage you to --

MR. ROLLER: I don't have any other hands in the queue. Do we need a motion for this?

MS. WIEGAND: I've got it up there as direction to staff, and, as a note to your question, Tom, yes, staff will go and do analysis to look at, you know, potential recreational and commercial closures under sort of the suite of possible ACLs, based on whatever buffer you would select. Typically, you consider, you know, 95, 90, 85, and are these the sort of similar buffers you would be looking to consider for Spanish mackerel?

MR. ROLLER: Is the committee comfortable with this range of potential buffer percentages? I'm seeing a lot of heads nodding. Any other discussion on this? Going once, going twice.

MS. WIEGAND: All right. Then, continuing on to Action 2, this looks at revising the recreational annual catch target for Atlantic migratory group Spanish mackerel. This would tier off of that first action, and so we would have sort of the new recreational ACL, based on Action 1, and then we could consider sort of the no action alternative would be keeping the current equation in place, and so, based on that updated catch recommendation from Action 1, we would then use the same equation to set the recreational ACT, and that's based on ACL times one minus the PSE, or 0.5, whichever is greater. In this case, the five-year average PSE, which is what's been used historically for Atlantic Spanish mackerel, would be about 13.8, which would result in an ACT of approximately 3.1 million pounds.

Just as sort of a reminder on how that ACT is used in accountability measures, the recreational post-season accountability measures are, if those recreational landings exceed the recreational ACL, and the sum of the commercial and recreational landings exceeds the stock ACL, the RA has the option to reduce the bag limit, following the fishing year, by the amount necessary to achieve the recreational ACT, but not exceed the recreational ACL.

Additionally, if the sum of the commercial and recreational landings exceed the stock ACL, and Atlantic Spanish mackerel are overfished, which is not the case right now, but, in the case that it was, the RA does have the authority to reduce the recreational ACT, in the following year, by the amount of any overage, and so that's how that ACT works into the accountability measures for recreational Spanish mackerel.

Again, we could keep this standard equation, and this is also what's used for king mackerel, what's historically been used for Atlantic Spanish mackerel, and you could also choose to set say a 10 percent buffer, or a 15 percent buffer, or a 20 percent buffer between the two, and it's sort of up to the council, but we can add additional alternatives under here, if you would like to move away from the current method of setting the recreational ACT.

MR. ROLLER: Thank you, Christina. I'm going to open the floor for discussion. How do we want to proceed with this? Tim.

MR. GRINER: I am not a big fan of double buffers, but I do think this needs to stay in there, and I think the way that it's been done in the past is as good as any, and that seems like -- If you want to have an ACT, that seems like a good way to do it. I don't know that you really need a whole lot of different ways to come up with an ACT from an ACL, and I think, if that's the way that we've been doing it, then it seems good enough, and, you know, I think it's something that is always good to get input from the AP on, and I'm happy with the way it is, and I don't know that you need another alternative.

MR. ROLLER: Thank you, Tim. Jessica.

MS. MCCAWLEY: I feel like this is one of our only fisheries left with an ACT in there, and I'm fine with this alternative. I was listening to Christina, and wasn't that you reading the accountability measure, and so, in the Gulf, there was an accountability measure, I believe, on red grouper that dropped the recreational bag limit, kind of like this one is suggesting, and I think, ultimately, the Gulf got rid of it, because it was too challenging to do this drop the bag limit, and it was very confusing, et cetera, and so maybe, at some point, we can look at the -- I would like to look at the accountability measure, but that's not exactly this particular action.

MS. WIEGAND: Well, and so there is -- You know, if it was something important for the council to address right now, we could add that into this amendment, and there's also the amendment that will come after port meetings that could also address accountability measures.

MR. ROLLER: Andy.

MS. MCCAWLEY: I was just going to say that I'm hoping that, at the port meetings, you're going to explain that accountability measure to folks, so that we can get some comments on it. I don't necessarily know that it needs to be in this document, but I would like for, at the port meetings, fishermen to understand that accountability measure and provide some feedback on it.

MR. ROLLER: Andy.

MR. STRELCHECK: I agree with that, and I think, you know, benefit from getting feedback during the port meetings. With regard to red grouper, I appreciate Jessica reminding me about that. When we implemented that, it was very confusing, and fishermen weren't aware of the change, and it was hard to get the word out mid-season and let them know that the bag limit had changed. Now, we do have technology now in their hands that gives us the regulations every trip we go out on, if we're paying attention to it, and so there is some differences, but, ultimately, I would recommend steering away from an accountability measure like that.

MR. ROLLER: Thank you, Andy. Any more comments? Is the committee comfortable with this option? I'm seeing nodding heads. Okay.

MS. WIEGAND: All right, and so the very last thing for Framework Amendment 13 would be a discussion of whether or not you guys are comfortable taking this amendment out to scoping.

MR. ROLLER: Thank you, Christina. How does the committee feel about that? Jessica.

MS. MCCAWLEY: So would the scoping be in conjunction with the port meetings, or does the scoping happen separately from the port meetings?

MS. WIEGAND: So the scoping would happen separately from the port meetings, given sort of the timeline those two things are on, and this is sort of moving separately, and rapidly, to get these catch levels in place, whereas the port meetings is a much more drawn-out process, and so we would be looking to hold scoping for this before we even started holding port meetings, and so we would hold, say, if you guys were to approve it, scoping for this in between now and December, and port meetings wouldn't be getting started until, you know, March or April of next year.

MR. ROLLER: So do we need a motion, or I'm looking for a motion, I meant to say. Jessica.

MS. MCCAWLEY: **I move that we approve CMP Framework Amendment 13 for scoping.**

MR. ROLLER: Thank you, Jessica. Do I have a second? Spud. Is there any discussion? **Seeing none, does anybody disagree with this motion? Seeing no dissent, the motion passes.** Shep.

MR. GRIMES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We discussed why allocation for Spanish mackerel doesn't need to be revisited, because it's not catch-based, the same way, but I was thinking, after looking at the allocation review guidelines yesterday, that you have had a stock assessment, and you have triggered an allocation review under your guidelines. Do you want to incorporate that review in this document? You couldn't change allocation, mind you, because it's not an amendment, but you could conduct a review, and I guess, if you concluded that you needed to change allocation, that might be a little wonky, because we would have to put it off, but, anyway, I think, given the discussion yesterday of your allocation guidelines, and that this would trigger a review, you ought to have something in the record of either conducting that review or explaining why that review will be postponed to a later time. Thank you.

MR. ROLLER: Thank you, Shep. Tim.

MR. GRINER: I think that comes after the port meetings. I think that's the whole purpose of port meetings, really, or one of the main purposes of the port meetings, and so, yes, I think that is the logical next step, but I think that's going to be a result of the port meetings. Thank you.

MR. ROLLER: Jessica.

MS. MCCAWLEY: I was going to say the same thing that Tim said, and I think it's our intent that that's part of what we're getting feedback on at the port meetings, and we would consider it in whatever follow-up amendment comes after the port meetings.

MR. ROLLER: Spud.

MR. WOODWARD: Hopefully we will have a better understanding of this FES bias before we engage in those discussions, too.

MR. ROLLER: That's a good point, Spud. Thank you. Mel.

MR. BELL: I think Jessica is right, and I recall, back in June, when we were discussing all of that, and I think that was our thinking back then, and so we've got record and rationale.

MS. MURPHEY: I agree as well, and, I mean, I thought that was the whole point of breaking it up into two FMPs, so we would have the opportunity to fully vet everything with these port meetings.

MR. ROLLER: That was always my understanding too, particularly when we chose the framework. Do I have any other comments on this, or is it time to move on? Let's go forward. The next item is the mackerel port meetings update.

MS. WIEGAND: All right, and so this will just be a quicker discussion about port meetings, and I wanted to give you guys an update on recent discussions we've had with the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission as well as the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council. Again, just as a refresher, these port meetings are going to focus on Gulf and Atlantic king and Spanish mackerel, and they're going to be open to all members of the public, and they're going to be held from the Gulf of Mexico all the way along and up to the southern end of Massachusetts, and so a pretty big undertaking.

I'm not going to go over them again, for the sake of time, but just, as a note, in this document, you do have the goals and objectives that you all approved at your last meeting, as well as the list of discussion topics that you feel like you sort of needed information on these topics to inform those goals and objectives.

In August, John Carmichael presented to the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission, sort of about everything that was going on with the SEDAR 78 assessment, as well as plans for port meetings, and the commission members were very willing to participate in development and implementation of port meetings for the mackerel fishery, and so we'll be working very closely with them, especially as we move up into that Mid-Atlantic/New England region, where they have sort of significantly more knowledge about key communities and individuals that would need to participate in these meetings.

There was sort of wide agreement that this was sort of essentially like a giant pre-scoping for the forthcoming plan amendment that will address Atlantic Spanish mackerel, and then, finally, they recommended to try to sort of work through and with the Atlantic Spanish Mackerel Technical Committee in the planning process, to make sure sort of states further north than those that are within our council were aware and involved in the planning. Then, of course, their staff will participate on the port meetings planning team.

The Gulf Council also gave an overview of port meetings to their council in August, and they're going to participate in the planning team, but they're going to hold port meetings in their area in a little bit of a different way, and they noted that sort of participation in public hearings for mackerel fishermen has typically been pretty low, but they have gotten decent responses using virtual tools, like their Fishermen Feedback, video views, and webinars, and so, given that difference, they're going to move forward with a virtual format and hold a series of webinars to solicit this information, as well as sort of work to encourage CMP fishermen and anglers to participate during

the normally-scheduled council meeting public comment process, and so that's how they will be gathering information in the Gulf, but they are going to have staff participate on the port meetings planning team.

Sort of our next steps is we'll be looking to schedule the first meeting of the planning team, and I will be sending out an email later today to the state reps, but I will be looking, if you have interest in having someone from your staff sit on this planning team, and I'll be looking for names, so we can go ahead and get our first meeting scheduled, and, preferably, it will be sometime in August, before the Mackerel Cobia AP meets.

That group will then discuss specifically how we want to structure and facilitate these port meetings to gather the information you have requested and then sort of look to start identifying and confirming key cities and locations where would like to hold port meetings sometime next year. Then we'll be bringing all that information to the AP in November, to get their input, and then, of course, back to you all in December for a bit lengthier of a discussion than we're having today.

Then here is an updated timeline, and we've sort of extended this timeline a little bit, given that we're not going to be trying to work on a full plan amendment while also holding port meetings at the same time, and you guys went with the framework and then amendment after the port meetings structure, which provides us a bit more flexibility, and so we would be looking to tentatively finalize the plan for port meetings in March of next year, hold port meetings the rest of the year, so we can get them done for 2025, and then have a summary report to you all by March of 2025. It's pretty ambitious, but this is the tentative plan we've got scheduled now, and so that is your briefest of updates on where port meetings stand, and more details to come in December, but, if there are any questions about sort of how we're progressing forward, I'm happy to answer those.

MR. ROLLER: Thank you so much, Christina. I know this is a huge lift for you and staff and everybody who is involved, but, as a former AP member, I can't tell you how long the mackerel fishing community has been asking for something like this, a comprehensive review, and so do we have any questions for Christina, or any comments to make? Trish.

MS. MURPHEY: I think this all looks great, and I just had a question on the timeline. You've got -- What's the anticipated timeline for the Gulf to do theirs? Do we know yet?

MS. WIEGAND: I don't know what exact timeline they will operate under, but my understanding is that they will try to be sort of holding webinars throughout 2024, similar to how we're holding our in-person meetings.

MS. MURPHEY: Okay, and I can talk to you more offline, and not to take time, but I was looking at goals and objectives and the discussion topics, and I know how we talked about kind of meshing them together, to, you know, cue people to address -- The one thing that jumped out at me is I didn't really see -- We've got an objective of identification of underserved communities and EEJ, and I didn't really see any question, as far as a discussion topic to address that, and I kind of -- I can share this with you, where the questions seemed to link to the objectives, but that was just one thing that jumped out at me that you might want to consider, as far as just how to get that as a discussion topic, and that's all, and I think everything looks great, and I know this is a huge endeavor, and North Carolina DMF will happily help with all this, and so thank you.

MR. ROLLER: Thank you, Trish. Does anybody else have any questions? Jessica.

MS. MCCAWLEY: No questions, but we're really excited about these port meetings as well, and we're happy to provide an FWC person to sit on this team.

MR. ROLLER: Thank you, Jessica. Any other questions or comments? Seeing none, I guess we can conclude that discussion. The last order of business is topics for the Mackerel Cobia Advisory Panel meeting.

MS. WIEGAND: Right now on the list, we have them talking about Framework Amendment 13 and the mackerel port meetings, like you guys just did, and also having a discussion on king mackerel tournament landings, completing a king mackerel fishery performance report, and then, of course, receiving a citizen science update.

MR. ROLLER: Jessica.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Maybe you're already planning on doing this, but could you ask the AP members for some locations for where we could hold the port meetings?

MS. WIEGAND: Absolutely. I will say that we talked to AP members a little bit about that when they met virtually this April, and many of the AP members expressed willingness to sort of help participate and gather participants to have port meetings in their communities.

MR. ROLLER: You know, as a North Carolina fisherman, we have good representation on the AP, and I would really like to hear from our members of where they think North Carolina meetings would be most pertinent, because we really have three regions in our state, and it's really kind of hard to figure out where the best place, and, particularly if we're going to do two, how to do those. Any other topics or anything that anyone would like to bring up? Go ahead, Christina.

MS. WIEGAND: All right. I did just want to note sort of one other thing, and you guys, on Thursday, will be getting a presentation from Ashley Oliver about a new initiative called What It Means to Me. If you all do decide to move forward, it might be good for sort of a quick five to ten-minute presentation on that program with this AP, since some of them also participate in the snapper grouper fishery, and so it can be added later on, once you've had that presentation, but I just wanted to note that we'll likely want to add that to this agenda as well.

MR. ROLLER: Is the committee comfortable with that? Okay. I see some thumbs-up. I have one thing that, just for an issue of transparency, moving forward with Framework Amendment 13, and, essentially, this is a slight reallocation, given all this discussion with currency and going from CHTS to FES, and I just think that it's important that we have the AP just do that, discuss that a little bit, and I'm curious if anybody has any other comments on that. Andy.

MR. STRELCHECK: I think that's appropriate, and I think that's what Shep was also getting at, is building some record and rationale with regard to the decision of, if we're not going to reallocate, why, right, and explaining that, and certainly having the AP members weigh-in on that as well.

MR. ROLLER: Thank you, Andy. That's kind of where I was going with my comments, and I just think that's important, that there be just some discussion on that. I am seeing some heads nodding. Any other comments? Andy.

MR. STRELCHECK: Just going back to Spanish mackerel, 13, one, I guess, thought that I had is, when we looked at the calendar schedule for the council, it surprised me that we're going to take essentially four meetings for a pretty straightforward, simple action, and so I recognize that we're going to get some AP input, and we're going to get scoping comments, and that might inform, obviously, the complexity of our decision, but if council staff could be kind of looking at the schedule, and maybe there's an opportunity where we could cut out a meeting for Spanish mackerel, either skip a meeting or move it up a meeting, and I just feel like we spend a lot of time on these fairly simple framework actions that we probably could get completed faster and save some time on our schedule.

MR. ROLLER: Good point, Andy. Thank you. Any other topics for discussion or anything anyone else wants to bring up? Seeing none, that's it, and so do we have any other business to bring before the Mackerel Committee? No other business, and so I will conclude this meeting of the Mackerel Committee.

(Whereupon, the meeting adjourned on September 12, 2023.)

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Certified By: _____ Date: _____

Transcribed By
Amanda Thomas
November 1, 2023

Attendee Report: SAFMC September 2023 Council Meeting (9/11/23 - 9/15/23)

Report Generated:
09/18/2023 08:56 AM EDT

Webinar ID	Actual Start Date/Time	Duration	# Registered	# Attended	Clicked Registration Link
284-120-835	09/12/2023 07:30 AM EDT	9 hours 13 minutes	178	115	284

Staff Details

Attended	Interest Rating	Last Name	First Name	Email Address	Role
Yes	Not applicable for staff	Council	South Atlantic	administrator@safmc.net	Organizer

Attendee Details

Attended	Interest Rating	Last Name	First Name	Email Address	Registration Date/Time
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Yes	41	Bailey	Adam	adam.bailey@noaa.gov	09/11/2023 08:30 AM EDT
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Yes	86	Crowe	Stacie	crowes@dnr.sc.gov	09/10/2023 08:13 AM EDT
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Yes	55	Glazier	Edward	Edward.Glazier@noaa.gov	09/11/2023 03:18 PM EDT
Yes	50	Gloekner	David	david.gloekner@noaa.gov	09/11/2023 09:07 AM EDT
Yes	54	Gore	Karla	karla.gore@noaa.gov	09/11/2023 08:35 AM EDT
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Yes	49	Hadley	John	john.hadley@safmc.net	09/11/2023 11:38 AM EDT
Yes	95	Harrison	Alana	alanaharrison22@gmail.com	09/12/2023 08:59 AM EDT
Yes	40	Helies	Frank	frank.helies@noaa.gov	09/11/2023 08:07 AM EDT
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No	0	Baker	Scott	bakers@uncw.edu	09/11/2023 02:27 PM EDT
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No	0	Griffin	Aimee	aimee.griffin@myfwc.com	09/11/2023 01:42 PM EDT
No	0	Haymans	Doug	doug.haymans@dnr.ga.gov	09/11/2023 03:11 PM EDT
No	0	Heffernan	Katie	katie.heffernan@mail.house.gov	09/05/2023 04:41 PM EDT
No	0	Horn	Calusa	Calusa.horn@noaa.gov	09/11/2023 01:54 PM EDT
No	0	Hugo	David	david.hugo@safmc.net	09/11/2023 09:39 AM EDT
No	0	Juliano	Jocelyn	jocelyn.juliano@scseagrant.org	09/11/2023 08:40 AM EDT
No	0	Kalinowsky	Chris	chris.kalinowsky@dnr.ga.gov	09/11/2023 12:02 PM EDT
No	0	Kappos	Maria	maria.kappos@myfwc.com	09/06/2023 03:32 PM EDT
No	0	Kean	Samantha	samantha.kean@myfwc.com	09/11/2023 02:18 PM EDT
No	0	Kittle	Christine	christine.kittle@myfwc.com	09/11/2023 01:11 PM EDT
No	0	Knowlton	Kathy	kathy.knowlton@dnr.ga.gov	09/11/2023 08:26 AM EDT
No	0	Kumar Ghosh	Bijoy	bkgghoshbuet7@gmail.com	09/05/2023 04:39 PM EDT
No	0	Mackesey	Brendan	brendan.mackesey@gmail.com	09/11/2023 03:38 PM EDT
No	0	Masi	Michelle	michelle.masi@noaa.gov	09/11/2023 08:38 AM EDT
No	0	Menzel	Terri	terri.menzel@myfwc.com	09/11/2023 03:49 PM EDT
No	0	Moore	Jeff	Jeffrey.N.Moore@ncdenr.gov	09/11/2023 03:53 PM EDT
No	0	Muffley	Brandon	bmuffley@mafmc.org	09/11/2023 10:44 AM EDT
No	0	O'Malley	Rachel	rachel.o'malley@noaa.gov	09/10/2023 09:43 PM EDT
No	0	Pierce	Brett	Brett.pierce@bluefindata.com	09/11/2023 11:04 AM EDT
No	0	Pikula	Kyle	bkpikula@yahoo.com	09/11/2023 01:23 PM EDT
No	0	Privoznik	Sarah	sarah.privoznik@noaa.gov	09/07/2023 02:44 PM EDT
No	0	Rainey	Dan	rainmand63@gmail.com	09/11/2023 06:48 PM EDT
No	0	Ralston	Kellie	kellie@bonefishhtarpontrust.org	09/11/2023 10:06 AM EDT
No	0	Ramsay	Chloe	chloe.ramsay@myfwc.com	09/04/2023 09:12 AM EDT
No	0	Reding	Brandon	redingb@dnr.sc.gov	09/11/2023 02:04 PM EDT
No	0	Reichert	Marcel	mreichert2022@gmail.com	09/11/2023 02:31 PM EDT
No	0	Sabo	Mary	msabo@mafmc.org	09/11/2023 02:59 PM EDT
No	0	Salmon	Brandi	brandi.salmon@deq.nc.gov	08/31/2023 08:34 AM EDT
No	0	Sartwell	Tim	tim.sartwell@noaa.gov	09/11/2023 02:58 PM EDT
No	0	Sauls	Beverly	bevsauls1@gmail.com	08/31/2023 09:42 AM EDT
No	0	Schwaab	Alexandra	aschwaab@fishwildlife.org	09/06/2023 09:02 AM EDT
No	0	Seramur	Mark	mark.seramur@saltwaterinc.com	09/11/2023 01:41 PM EDT
No	0	Spanik	Kevin	spanikk@dnr.sc.gov	09/11/2023 01:07 PM EDT
No	0	Stewart	Mark	mstewart@gmail.com	08/31/2023 10:22 AM EDT
No	0	Sweeney Tookes	Jennifer	jtookes@georgiasouthern.edu	09/11/2023 02:42 PM EDT
No	0	Turner	Steve	scturner160@gmail.com	09/11/2023 02:35 PM EDT
No	0	Vecchio	Julie	vecchioj@dnr.sc.gov	09/11/2023 10:51 AM EDT
No	0	Wagner	Warren	whwagner@southernco.com	09/01/2023 08:31 AM EDT
No	0	Waine	Mike	mwaine@asafishing.org	09/11/2023 02:31 PM EDT
No	0	White	Shelby	shelby.white@nc.deq.gov	09/06/2023 09:58 AM EDT
No	0	mroch	ray	ray.mroch@noaa.gov	09/11/2023 09:21 AM EDT
No	0	white	geoff	Geoff.Kir.white@gmail.com	09/11/2023 03:13 PM EDT