

# **SOUTH ATLANTIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL**

## **MACKEREL COMMITTEE**

**Doubletree by Hilton New Bern/Riverfront  
New Bern, North Carolina**

**December 4, 2014**

### **SUMMARY MINUTES**

#### **Mackerel Committee:**

Ben Hartig, Chairman  
Mel Bell  
Dr. Roy Crabtree  
Jessica McCawley  
Doug Haymans  
Anna Beckwith

Mark Brown  
Jack Cox  
Dr. Michelle Duval  
Charlie Phillips  
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#### **Council Members:**

Chester Brewer

Dr. Wilson Laney  
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#### **Council Staff:**

Bob Mahood  
Mike Collins  
Dr. Kari MacLauchlin  
Kim Iverson  
Julie O'Dell  
Chip Collier

Gregg Waugh  
John Carmichael  
Amber Von Harten  
Dr. Mike Errigo  
Myra Brouwer  
Dr. Brian Chevront

#### **Observers/Participants:**

Monica Smit-Brunello  
Phil Steele  
Dr. Jack McGovern  
Dr. Marcel Reichart  
Amy Dukes

Dr. Bonnie Ponwith  
Kevin Anson  
Joey Ballenger  
Tracey Smart

Additional Observers Attached

The Mackerel Committee of the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council convened in the Doubletree by Hilton New Bern/Riverfront Hotel, New Bern, North Carolina, December 4, 2014, and was called to order at 10:40 o'clock a.m. by Chairman Ben Hartig.

MR. HARTIG: We're going to go ahead and bring the Mackerel Committee to order. The first item of business is the agenda. Are there any changes or additions to the agenda? Kari, did you have anything? Is there an objection to approving the agenda? Seeing none; the agenda is approved.

All right that brings us to the minutes. Are there any corrections, deletions or additions to the minutes? Seeing none; the minutes are approved. That brings us to status of commercial catches versus ACL, and that is behind Attachment 1. Jack.

MS. MacLAUHLIN: There are actually updated documents that Mike Collins sent to you. The subject line says from Jack McGovern, and it is updated Attachment 1 and Attachment 2 for this committee.

MR. HARTIG: Yes; and I would like to thank Jack for making the effort to give us the most updated numbers you can give us at this meeting. Thank you.

DR. McGOVERN: Actually, Sue Gerhart is the one to thank for the updated commercial landings. These show the cumulative landings for king mackerel through November 26; and they are cumulative for the fishing years of 2009 through 2012; and then in fishing years 2013 and 2014, they are both monthly and cumulative.

For king mackerel; we see that through November the landings are a little bit less than a million pounds. They are a little bit more this year, and so thus far in this fishing year about 31 percent of the quota has been met. Going down to Spanish mackerel, we're going to have a new increase in the quota to about 3.3 million pounds from 3.1 million pounds for Spanish.

What Sue has done is she shows the – and it is presented the same way as king mackerel – she shows the percentage of the current quota as 50 percent; and then of the increase quota – and that is the adjusted quota – 47 percent; and then for the total quota, 46 of the current and 43 of the new increased quota.

We see through November about 1.4 million pounds had been landed and is a little bit less than where we were last time through November. Then for cobia, as I mentioned Monday, we are at 96 percent of the quota right now. Landings are a little bit higher than they were last year; and we're going to close cobia next week on December 11th. That concludes that, Mr. Chairman.

MR. HARTIG: Any questions of Jack? I would just like to thank Sue for the way she has put together the different percentages on the different quotas, because she didn't have to do that and I appreciate that extra effort. All right, recreational catches.

DR. McGOVERN: Okay, these are recreational landings put together by Mike Larkin in our office and also by Bonnie's people at the Science Center. It is presented the same way as what Nick showed you for snapper grouper. We have different years of landings. For the 2012/2013

fishing year, cobia was at 73 percent; recreational king mackerel, 26 percent; and Spanish at 54 percent.

For the 2013 fishing year, 79 percent of the cobia quota was met; 15 percent of king mackerel; and 72 percent. Then I added this slide here, which shows landings through August of 2013 and August of 2014. Those are the most recent landings we have recreationally for these species. It shows that through that time period we are a little bit less on cobia. We've met about 72 percent of the recreational ACL this year.

For king mackerel it is a little bit less, a couple hundred thousand pounds less than last year; and for Spanish mackerel it is almost half of what it was last year. Again, this shows you where we are with the current ACL. It is about 18 percent of the current ACL and then 17 percent of the increased ACL, which will be 2,727.

We show king mackerel recreational landings by sector. The private sector dominates the king mackerel recreational landings; headboats, a fairly minor component; and it shows the trends over time and where we are with the recreational ACLs. Then for Spanish, again by sector; headboat makes a small component of that and there was an increase in the landings last year; and shore mode makes a good portion of the overall landings. Then we're well below the recreational ACLs for Spanish. That is it.

MR. HARTIG: Questions for Jack? I would just like to reiterate what I said and bring the Center into this. I certainly appreciate, Bonnie, the work that you all do. That is very valuable, what you give us at all of our meetings. I appreciate you doing that and the detail that you do. All right, no other questions of Jack; we will go to status of amendments under formal review.

DR. McGOVERN: Amendment 20B I will talk about first. This would modify the commercial hook-and-line trip limits for Gulf migratory king mackerel. It changes the fishing year for Gulf king mackerel in the eastern and western zones and established transit provisions for travel through areas that are closed to king mackerel fishing. It also has regional ACLs for Atlantic migratory group king mackerel and Spanish mackerel.

The Notice of Availability for the amendment published on Amendment 20B on October 17; and the proposed rule published on October 31st. We're accepting comments through December 16th. Mackerel Framework 2013, the second amendment, this allows for Atlantic migratory group Spanish mackerel harvested with gillnet in the South Atlantic in excess of the trip limit to be transferred to another federally permitted vessel that has not yet harvested the trip limit.

The proposed rule for this amendment published on March 19th, and the final rule published on November 19th. It will be effective on December 19th. Mackerel Framework 1 increases the ACLs for Spanish mackerel in the Gulf of Mexico and South Atlantic. It increases the overall ACL in the South Atlantic from 5.69 million pounds to 6.063 million pounds.

The proposed rule published on July 31st with the comment period ending September 2nd. The final rule published on November 20th, and will be effective on December 22nd. In Mackerel Framework 2, which modifies the system of trip limits for Spanish mackerel in the southern zone that is being proposed in Amendment 20B, the southern zone of South Carolina, Georgia, and Eastern Florida – Mackerel Framework 2 was approved by the council in September and was

submitted for secretarial review on November 5th. The proposed rule package is under review in the region.

MR. HARTIG: Are there any questions of Jack about status of the amendments under review? I appreciate that detailed report; we always do. All right, the next item of business is report on the Gulf Council meeting. I am going to make this short. I attended the Gulf Council meeting in Mobile.

The Gulf Council Mackerel Committee took up our Framework Amendment 2 action, and it was approved at full council to be submitted to the secretary. That amendment has been approved by the Gulf. The other item of business that we talked about at the Gulf Council meeting was the item that Bill Kelly's group has brought up before our council and the Gulf Council concerning increasing the trip limits for the gillnet fishery from 25,000 to 45,000 pounds.

There was quite a bit of discussion at the Gulf meeting about looking at different avenues, maybe to keep the fishermen within their allocation, but in the end the Gulf decided and made a motion that we convene a public workshop in the Keys – in the area where these guys are – hopefully to coincide with the South Florida meeting, it may or may not; but their motion was to coordinate it with the South Florida meeting.

We will have representatives from our council there and their council and we'll meet with their fishermen and see if we can work out what they want. There was some consideration that with the 45,000 pound trip limit, that the ACL could be met within one day, and that there was no way that SERO could shut the fishery down before an overage occurred.

That was one of the main stumbling blocks. Not all fishermen are in agreement. We will have the workshop and we'll see what comes out of that. I think that is a good way to proceed, get more detailed information from the fishermen involved, and we'll work that one out. Are there any questions about the Gulf? Kevin, is that pretty much it?

MR. ANSON: That is great, Mr. Chair, good summary.

MR. HARTIG: All right, if there aren't any questions about how we'll proceed with that, the next is SEDAR 38, king mackerel stock assessment. That is going to be presented by Marcel Reichert. It is enclosed in your SSC report as well as your summary stock assessment attachment.

DR. REICHERT: These are the last couple of slides in the presentation that I forwarded to the Snapper Grouper Committee earlier. The SSC reviewed the king mackerel stock assessment at their October meeting. The committee received the presentation by Dr. John Walters, which was very thorough and we much appreciated his report.

In particular, the SSC acknowledged that the smaller mixing zone that was used in this assessment constituted a significant improvement over the previous assessment. The SSC also discussed some uncertainties and some concerns in this stock assessment. There was some discussion about geographical coverage of the SEAMAP Trawl Survey, which covers an area to Cape Canaveral; and as such does not cover the full range of the stock.

Specifically, it doesn't extend as far south as might be needed to capture some of the juvenile abundance trends over the entire stock. However, it is the only fishery-independent index that was available for this assessment. The SSC also realized a strong retrospective pattern that systematically overestimates recruitment in the terminal year.

I will come back to that a little bit later. The way the review panel and the SSC looked at that was that they recommended using various levels of recruitment for projections. Also, they were making the request to see if there was additional information available within the SEAMAP Trawl Survey; and as I said, I will come back to that in a little bit.

The SSC also discussed that bootstraps did not represent the full uncertainty and that it may underestimate the overall model uncertainty. The result of the probability density function might lead to a smaller buffer between OFL and ABC, and that may increase uncertainty. The review panel and the SSC also note that the low contrast in abundance and the lack of a good stock-recruitment relationship are probably the reason that the steepness could not be estimated in the model.

Therefore, MSY could not be estimated; and as such, the MSY is a proxy. The SSC accepted the SPR 30 as a proxy for the MSY. That had some implications for the ABC Control Rule. Then the steepness was fixed at 0.99 for the projections. With that, the SSC accepted the assessment as the best available information; and the good news is that the stock status was not overfished and not overfishing.

However, the SSC recommended that the council exercises a degree of caution in setting the ACL given the uncertainties that I mentioned earlier and in particular related to some recent recruitment and the overall productivity. Since this assessment falls under Tier 1 of our ABC Control Rule, the ABC was obtained according to P-star value.

Just to remind you, the figure on the lower right-hand side is the so-called stop light graph. The current stock status is where my pointer is at the moment. That just gives you an overview of the stock status. The P-star was determined to be 32.5 percent and the details are in the SSC report; and I can give you some of that information if you are interested.

In terms of the projections, the SSC recommended that given the uncertainty, projections should be for no more than five years. Also, the SSC recommended that the next assessment be conducted as an update, ideally before the end of those five-year projections. The SSC also recommended a review updated indices and input data sources every three years in order to track the progress of the stock.

I think that is in the SSC currently referred to as a rumble-strip approach, looking at landings and some of the indices and see if there are any red flags that may warrant potential updates or a change in recommendations. The SSC also recommended that the council be provided with a summary of the 2013 and possibly 2014 SEAMAP Juvenile Index; and I will have a graph for you guys later to look at. We were able to provide that.

In terms of the projections, as I indicated earlier, given the considerable recruitment uncertainty, the SSC recommended that the council consider a range of alternative projection scenarios for

the OFL and ABC. Dr. Walters provided a slide in his presentation looking at projections at a high, medium, or low recruitment.

The high was the long-term average between 1990 and 2012; the medium was at 50 percent of the average of 2008 and 2012; and low was looking at the average deviation of the 2008 through 2012 period. In this graph you can see the various projections listed with the different colors. Red is the OFL, green is the ABC high, purple is the ABC medium, and blue is the ABC low.

Those are different recruitment levels that the council could consider. However, both the SSC and the review panel recommended that the council use projections at the long-term equilibrium yield of 30 percent SPR as the ACL. That would help to reduce the risk of overfishing given the high uncertainty in future recruitment.

Before I open the floor to any questions, I would like to present the SEAMAP index. This is a slide of the SSC recommendations that I mentioned earlier. This is the updated SEAMAP Coastal Trawl Survey Data. I have to acknowledge Pearse Webster, Jeanne Boylan and Jon Richardson and other staff of the Coastal Trawl Survey and Tracy Smart, who is here in the room, who have been working really hard.

The 2014 data is an update and the trawl survey was completed about a month ago. This is really very recent information. The red arrow shows the terminal year 2012 of the stock assessment. The dotted line is the nominal CPUE; the solid line is the standardized Delta GLM CPUE value; and the vertical error bars are plus or minus one standard error; and I only put them around the normalized index. We also have the data for the nominal CPUE, but that would clutter up the picture quite a bit.

As you can see, there was a slight uptick in the most recent year in the coastal trawl survey index. I need to remind you that is mostly a juvenile index, because the vast majority of the fish that are caught in the trawl survey are the zero year olds. This should be considered as a juvenile index. I hope that may help the council with determining the projections.

With that, I open the floor for questions. I do have an extra slide, which is the table that is in the SSC report with the various scenarios for the recommended ABC and ACL, so I can pull that up if you guys are interested. That is basically part of Table 3 on Page 16 in the SSC report. With that, I open the floor for any questions, if there are any.

MR. HARTIG: Questions of Marcel? I very much appreciate your report, Marcel. It was very good. I do have a couple of things that I might add. I think this is the first attempt – and Bonnie will probably be interested in some of this – where we actually got the analyst to look at the last years of the projections in a different way than just using the last three years.

I think for king mackerel in particular, if you look back on the time series, you have valleys and peaks; and if you just focus on that specific time frame, it could be problematic in trying to figure out what your catch level recommendations could be, because the next year you could have a significant increase in recruitment. Having said that, there still is concern about the low recruitment.

It has gone on a couple of years longer than most of the average time series show. There is concern about that low recruitment. We have seen some recruitment in areas lower than Cape Canaveral, which really in my history is the first time we've seen that. I appreciate Marcel saying that SEAMAP only occurs to the Cape. The recruitment level is a little bit higher this year, which means those are fish that aren't even in the fishery.

What we know now is there are fish entering the fishery that is a higher recruitment level than we've seen previously. This is all up and down the coast; and I've talked to fishermen in North Carolina, South Carolina, North Florida, and Central Florida. It hasn't shown up in the area I am in yet, because the fish aren't old enough.

Our area is a spawning area and fish are age four and older before they really start getting into the spawning migratory area. But in the other areas, we're seeing a lot of – not a lot, but we're seeing recruitment; and it doesn't look to be as low as a low-level recruitment. It is just something that we'll talk about it more when we get into how we want to set the catch level recommendations.

I very much appreciate the analyst doing that. I appreciate the SSC also supporting that kind of analysis. I think this is a step in the first direction where we go to actually maybe – the rumble analysis is the other thing. You look at it every three years, you bring in a number of different things, you may run the projections again.

It might get us away from having to do an assessment on king mackerel. We may be able to not do the assessment on that – if we see good recruitment, we may get into a situation where we don't have to do that many assessments on king mackerel. We can keep it on a longer time frame than probably some of other species if we get into the situation where we have some good recruitment again.

I think it is all evolving in a way that we can look at different species in different context and either move them along or shorten or lengthen their time series between assessments. I think this will help long term for some of the species we really need to get through the assessment process.

DR. PONWITH: Thank you for that comment. I am eager to go back to the Center, have a conversation with Center scientists, and then also have a conversation with the SSC. Intuitively the notion of a rumble-strip approach as a leading indicator of good news or bad is intuitively attractive.

The thing that I would want to do is some sensitivity analyses to see how robust your selected rumble strip is; because there are times where it is conceivable that you would have an index that would have a behavior, but that behavior would be muted or augmented by behavior of other components in the stock assessment.

It would be interesting to do some sensitivity analyses so that if we did opt to do the rumble-strip approach, we understood very well how a standalone index behaves relative to its compadres in an assessment. But that said, it is an interesting approach and I think that would be worth doing.

DR. REICHERT: To that point; I think it was Dr. Boreman who initiated that conversation. John, maybe you can help me; but I think that is an approach that is developed or already used by

the Mid-Atlantic SSC, so there may be some precedent there that may be helpful in terms of how to approach that.

To your earlier comment, Ben, I do want to caution – you mentioned the interval of assessments. I do want to remind you that the SSC mentioned that there still was a considerable amount of uncertainty and the SSC felt that the recommended time frame for an update was given the considerable uncertainty in the model. I just wanted to mention that.

MR. HARTIG: I appreciate that; and it wasn't in the context of current conditions in the fishery. I appreciate you reminding me of that.

MR. PHILLIPS: Well, for the sake of me and maybe some of the newer members; could I get a better explanation on what the rumble strip is and how it would affect possibly time slots in our assessments and stuff?

MR. HARTIG: I think we can give you what a rumble strip was. How it would affect the slots, I don't think we can tell you yet.

DR. REICHERT: Yes; and the way we have discussed this within the SSC is more looking at one or a number of indices and see if there are any potential red flags that may warrant an update or may warrant a more in-depth investigation of what is happening with the stock. It is not a different method of adjusting fishing level recommendations or the SSC providing additional recommendations. It is more of a red flag type of method. Michelle, you were at that meeting.

DR. DUVAL: Yes; and the only thing I was going to add to that is, as Marcel indicated, John Boreman, who is Chair of the Mid-Atlantic SSC, offered to kind of bring back some information to the SSC. If you look in the SSC report, it is under other business. I think we would certainly have other information on how that approach could be applied down here once Dr. Boreman has had a chance to bring some stuff back to the SSC.

DR. REICHERT: Thanks for reminding me. That is true; we did discuss that.

MR. HARTIG: Bonnie, thank you for your willingness to go forward with that. I appreciate that; and just one more evolving part of our process and thank you. Without any other questions about the assessment, I would like to say that the assessment did go into some of the environmental variables in detail.

They looked at sea surface water temperature, because the fishermen are seeing some impacts from cold water eddies. Unfortunately, we could not get significance out of those analyses; they weren't significant to a level they could be used in the assessment. That does not mean that the assessment group still isn't trying to look at something.

Unfortunately, you set Miami loose on something, they are like bulldogs, they don't want to let go. John continues looking at Gulf Stream influence, he's looking at eddies, he's looking at the influence of those on recruitment. We need to take it a little further and look at those impacts on the fishery itself so we can look at some of these decreases in landings. I will tell you that even though landings have declined and the stock has declined and F has declined substantially – F is



lower than it has been since the mid-sixties; so the F on the stock is very, very, very low. Those are all good news for a stock that has been in decline.

MR. COX: I would just like to say that the last month and a half or so we had an abundance of king mackerel in our area that we hadn't seen in the last four or five years. That has been very encouraging. They were 17 to 25, 30 pound fish, but it was really nice to have those fish there. They are still fishing on them at Hatteras.

MR. HARTIG: That is good news.

MR. BROWN: They had the same thing here off of Charleston. We saw the fish show up really well, about probably the end of September and beginning of October, in large amounts; but the smaller fish, the 10-pound range fish. But throughout the summer we had some pretty good catches of the bigger fish. Live bait fishermen were catching the big ones pretty regular.

MR. HARTIG: The interesting thing about this stock is that there is a relatively high spawning stock biomass, which has dome-shaped selectivity. Most of the fisheries, the recreational trolling fishery cannot access large numbers of those fish; and the commercial trolling industry where most of the catch occurs cannot access some of those larger fish; so we have a number of large animals with a lot of eggs in the population.

What we're missing is the middle, the middle so far. We've got some little fish to fill into the middle now, which is great news. It seems to be throughout the jurisdiction. I am pretty happy now with what I've heard throughout the region about at least recruitment coming into the fishery. At least for this year, it looks finally better.

And that was one of the reasons why I tried to get the analysts to bite on something about that recruitment scenario; because if we had got painted into that situation with this declining recruitment, it could have been really, really bad. If you can inform these things as you go along, especially with coastal pelagics who have these spikes, we can possibly have some information to plug in as we go.

We're moving in that direction and that is great. Marcel, thank you very much. That was a very good report. That brings us to decision document for Amendment 26, Kari MacLauchlin. There are a lot of decisions to be made, new zones; new catch levels; and each of those all have to be recalculated. Kari will explain it all. That is behind Attachment 5.

DR. MacLAUHLIN: I think it is Attachment 5. I sent you an e-mail this morning with a slightly revised version of the decision document for Amendment 26. There are just a few questions I put at the end that I wanted to make sure I clarified with you guys. That should be in your e-mail.

I guess we will go ahead and get started here. I am going to go through a little background and then a preliminary schedule hopefully for this amendment and then potential actions. Then we are also going to have a little bit of a discussion about Amendment 28, and I will remind you guys what all these mean. Amendment 26; when we scoped it last January, we scoped it as potentially splitting up the commercial permits into the separate jurisdictions. Now we are going to use Amendment 26 for the king mackerel ACL updates and also to address the stock boundary

change, and then any other actions for king mackerel; and then the permit split or any other type of split that you would want to think about would go into 28.

I have the table in here with the projections and the recommended ABCs and OFLs that came from the SSC report. When we start talking about alternatives, you can see how we are going to set these up. There are going to be a range of alternatives to consider. I also have in here from the assessment report about the change in the mixing zone.

If you look at Figure 2, you can see the mixing zone in there, which is called the Florida East Coast Subzone. The boundaries change at different parts of the year. At some point it was considered that they were fishing on Gulf stock and then other parts of the year they were fishing on the Atlantic stock.

I forgot to put the picture in here of what this new mixing zone would look like. This is actually in Attachment 4, which is the SEDAR 38 document. It is Figure 4.2; it is on PDF Page 35. If you want to take a look. It would change what the SEDAR 38 used for the stock boundary; and the mixing zone is this purple area.

The line is at the Miami-Dade/Monroe County line, and then south of that through the Tortugas. Then on the west side is the Gulf stock, and then on the north and the east side is the Atlantic stock. Going back to our decision document, on Page 5 we have a preliminary schedule. At this meeting, we've got the SSC recommendations and then you are going to provide direction to staff on the alternatives that you want in actions and alternatives.

In early January 2015, the Gulf SSC will review the Gulf SEDAR 38 results; and then the Gulf Council will review those recommendations from the Gulf SSC. In January we are planning to have some South Atlantic scoping. We are going to do these primarily webinar-based; and then one in person, a scoping meeting in the Cocoa Beach/Canaveral area.

That is more just to talk to them about some potential actions to address effort there. That may or may not go into this document. Then you guys will get this back again in March, 2015. I will let you know what the public comments were. Then in April the AP and the SSC can review this document. Then in June you will have a joint meeting in Key West with the Gulf Council and we will see where we go from there.

We are going to update the ACL for both stocks, change the stock boundary; the management boundary based on the stock boundary used in SEDAR 38. Then the Gulf Council has some actions they may be interested in to look at sector allocations and quotas for their zones and subzones to adjust those.

The first action that would be in here would be the one to adjust the Atlantic group king mackerel ABC, OY, and ACL based on those. There is the table again from the SSC report with their recommendations. We have in the highlighted Alternative 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6. You guys can decide that you want all of these in there; you can take out the ones that you know you would not be interested in. We will put those into the action for this one. Remember, this will apply to north of the Miami-Dade/Monroe County Line, because that is what the SEDAR considered the stock boundary.

MR. HARTIG: Kari, the SSC's recommendation is the deterministic equilibrium yield at F 30 percent; is that correct? I think it is. We have another one that we've used for another species, which brings it down about 800,000 pounds – deterministic yield, equilibrium yield set at 75 percent of SPR 30. The question I had of Mike is usually we do 75 percent of Fmsy; and I asked him if 75 percent of SPR 30 is equivalent to SPR 75 percent of Fmsy. I think the question I got was yes or no?

DR. ERRIGO: Usually, yes. Fmsy cannot be determined for this stock because of what is going on; so they had to estimate F at spawning potential ratio; but because of the way H was set, or steepness, I mean; but, yes, this would be the equivalent of Fmsy. When we determined if it was overfishing or overfishing was occurring, it was for this SPR value, Fspr 30 percent. That would be the equivalent of Fmsy for this particular assessment.

MR. HARTIG: Are there any questions of Mike on that? The one thing I had, Mike, is the high, medium and low recruitment scenarios. Are they applicable to the 75 percent of SPR 30? Could you figure out projections for each of those as well as the equilibrium projection? I am a little lost in that one.

DR. ERRIGO: Yes; so the different recruitment levels; that is for the probabilistic projections using the P-star values and they put in the recruitment. When they did the equilibrium values, they used equilibrium recruitment, which was the recruitment in the long term estimated at – if the stock was at the spawning stock biomass at Fspr 30 percent.

That was if the stock was at equilibrium in the long term, what would the yield be? The other projections at the different recruitment levels; that is currently right now at the stock's current estimated spawning stock biomass; what could you take? But there is a lot of uncertainty in those estimates, because the assessment was unable to estimate a steepness value for the stock-recruitment relationship.

MR. HARTIG: That helps; I appreciate that. I guess the only question I had is we've had a whole new way to look at this fishery. Now we've got new boundaries, we'll have new catch; catches will be apportioned to the areas differently than they have been in the past. The only question I have is that we really don't have the numbers that would equate to compare to what your equilibrium value would be.

Do you understand what I am trying to get at, Michelle? If you know what your landings are and just as a reference looking at what your catch levels – you know, your recommendation is going to be; at least it would inform your judgment somewhat on that. What I'm trying to get at is that we will have a recreational allocation and a commercial allocation. Now we're adding a million pounds of commercial catch into the new area. How is that going to figure out between the split that we have now? Is there going to be enough fish and things of that nature?

DR. DUVAL: Right, now I understand what you're getting at. Right, because those zones that we set up; the northern zone and the southern zone in Amendment 20B were really kind of predicated on the harvest that occurred under the old mixing zone approach. We don't actually have the information in front of us or at least I don't have the mental capacity at this point to figure out what the new catch-level recommendations might mean under each of these alternatives for that split.

MR. HARTIG: The only think I'm asking is at least the public should know and we should know before we go forward what the potential impacts of the new catch levels are going to have on the stock to some degree – or on the fishermen. When we go out to scoping, we can have all this information included; so the fishermen can look at the different levels. But you could just say right now that we're going to use a deterministic yield – equilibrium yield at 75 percent of Fspr 30 and then whatever shakes out of that will make the management decisions we need to do to deal with it.

DR. DUVAL: I guess I am going to have to study this a little bit and come back, because I don't have a clear sense of what those impacts would be. I'm thinking about things like if you retroactively applied this new mixing zone area to the past catches, what would that do, kind of like what we had to do with snowy grouper with the updated assessment.

You have the new MRIP catches that we used the same formula for commercial/recreational allocation; but because of the way the data changed, it ended up shifting that allocation when you applied those updated numbers, as well as the whole Monroe County thing. I am thinking about it in a similar fashion like that.

MR. HARTIG: That is how exactly I had thought about it the same way was the snowy in Monroe County and how that worked out, because it is going to be different.

DR. ERRIGO: I am also trying to wrap my mind around it. In the assessment they do have the landings broken out the way the new mixing zone is now. I do think that they are still below even the equilibrium – these projected equilibrium yields, if I am not mistaken. Because, when they switched from the MSY estimates and the estimated steepness to the steepness of 0.99 and using SPR values, the projected yields shot up quite a lot just because of the way all that works in the model and how those spawner-recruit relationships was working in the model.

Then when they made H 0.99, how that was, and used SPR instead, so the yields went way up. I still think that all the landings are under that. I don't think anyone is going to be capped if the landings stay around their average where they've been in the last several years. But, of course, if landings start to go up and they start hitting quotas, then that is different. Management-wise, of course, and social and economic effects will be quite different, I think.

MS. BECKWITH: Just for my own understanding, so you guys could figure out the buffer between ABC and OFL for the high, medium and low, but not for the equilibrium yields? Can you just kind of work me through that?

DR. ERRIGO: The high, medium and low; those are what we call probabilistic projections, which means they are done based on the Monte Carlos bootstrapping. You take all this different uncertainty and you run the model like 10,000 different times and you come up with distributions.

Then you look at the P-star value is – okay we only want a 32.5 percent chance that we're going to be overfishing and then you come up with the level that – okay, 32.5 percent of the distribution is above the OFL level. Then here is the median and that's where – okay. The long-term MSY projections, those are deterministic, which means there is no distribution.

You take the base run estimates and you run them out based on the estimated recruitment levels and thises and thats, and that is what you come up with in terms of yields and whatnot over the long term, if the population were to stabilize at spawning stock biomass MSY; so you just assume that, okay, the population hits this and stays there.

You fish at this level perfectly and here is what you should be taking out. You can see that the yield is exactly the same every year, because the assumption is your biomass stays exactly the same, you are taking out exactly the same amount. The F stays exactly the same and everything is perfect. There is no variability; there is no distribution.

You are not re-sampling anything to see where is the error; what is the uncertainty? That is the difference. Also the other ones; those three different levels of recruitment, that is what is happening right now, so right now the model estimates that the biomass is above the spawning stock biomass at MSY. The deterministic at SPR 30 percent assumes what happens when your population hits the MSY level, what you can take out. That is what that is.

MR. HARTIG: I see this as one stock that we could actually do adaptive management with as we move forward. We could look at the landings level we have now. We can't, because we don't have them; but at the next meeting we could look at our landing levels, make an informed decision about what kind of recruitment there will be.

The landings are probably going to be smaller than the 75 percent SPR 30 levels. We could be conservative, and then we could change – without another assessment, we could change our management strategies as we move forward. I see it as a balancing act now. Right now we've got a relatively high spawning stock biomass that is going to decay over time.

The animals that are usually poised to fill that void aren't there; but we have more fish coming in to do that. We're probably going to have to be a little bit careful on the front end and allow some of these fish to get into that mid-section, to be able to get back into that spawning stock. They are going to do that naturally, anyway, because of the selectivity of the stock; but we need to get some of these smaller animals into that middle portion – at least that is the way I see it – of the stock.

DR. ERRIGO: That was my take on how the assessment is looking at it. Because of dome-shaped selectivity, the fishery is taking out fish in the middle. They are not selecting for the small, young fish; but they are also for some reason not selecting the large, older fish. There is right now a surplus of really big fish that are reproducing, putting in a good amount of fish to the fishery to catch in those middle sizes, but they are being caught up.

Each year when they come in the fishery is catching them, which is why the level of landings has been going down, because they are pretty much catching what is coming in, kind of like recruitment overfishing. You are fishing out everything that is recruiting in. You have a good standing spawning stock biomass; but if you have nothing that gets through the fishery, eventually your spawning stock biomass will decay.

That is what the model is saying; that is what it is showing. There is a lot of uncertainty, so whether that is truly happening or not – you know, based on all the information we have, that is what it looks like is happening, because there was a lot of uncertainty in that.

MR. HARTIG: That is a great explanation, a really good way to put it, because I hadn't even thought of it exactly in that context. Yes, I see how it should go, but you put the nail on the head about what is really happening.

MR. BELL: That size selectivity, is that a factor of the animals not being sort of available for the fishery or is it selectivity of the fishery itself where you don't want the larger; or do we know?

DR. ERRIGO: According to what we've heard, it seems that as the fish get bigger and older, they just become much, much more difficult to catch. Then depending on the type of gear and the type of bait used or the method of fishing, you just don't catch the bigger, larger fish.

Then there are also market considerations in the commercial fishery where there is a certain size range in some areas that fetches a better price. It seems that the fish just don't bite when they get to a certain size very easily, so it is more difficult to catch them.

MR. BELL: That would be selectivity of the commercial fishery or not being able to; but then the recreational fishery or tournament fishery would really focus on those big fish, right?

DR. ERRIGO: Which is why they jump through quite a lot of hoops to include the tournament information in as a separate fleet in this model. Instead of just lumping them in with the recreational catch, they included the tournament information as a separate fleet to look at the older fish.

I think that is one of the reasons why the model saw this, what we call, cryptic biomass of large fish. That is just not really being selected very much. There are some places where they pop up, but not a lot. That is where a lot of the biomass is accumulating, which is why the yield is so high, which is why it said, gee, there are lots of fish there, and you should be able to catch a whole bunch; but the landings are so low, because you are selecting here but all the fish are over here.

MR. HARTIG: There isn't any problem catching the fish for people who go to the extraordinary measure to catch them. In a normal king mackerel tournament, people are using all these live baits; they are fishing real shy gear. They are fishing stuff that most recreational fishermen who catch most of the king mackerel that are caught don't fish.

It is the same thing with us. We can catch some of those big animals; but in order for us to catch any number of them where I am, you have to have the middle. You have to have the competition for the big ones to get involved in the fishery that we're in, chumming with live bait, getting everything going. When that happens, it works.

When you don't have the middle, the big fish eat all the bait that you throw to them pretty much. We're seeing good numbers of fish on the machine. It is just those fish are harder to catch than they normally are because the middle is not there. It is a couple of different things. And most of the commercial fishery is trolling, so they target that middle part of the fishery. It is not there right now, so that is why the landings have declined.

MR. BOWEN: I was just going to go on record, you mentioned that there was some uncertainty in the model, but what you've explained is what we're hearing from all the fishermen up and down the coast as well. I don't know that the uncertainty of the model is that uncertain.

MR. HARTIG: That is a good point. It has been grounded somewhat by anecdotal information as well.

MR. COX: I was just going to say in the late seventies you guys in Florida developed the live bait king mackerel fishery and pretty much taught the guys in the Carolinas how to do that. I'm just curious; do you not have a commercial live bait fishery that targets those bigger fish in the fall?

MR. HARTIG: It is still there. We target that spawning group fish, and we target some of the bigger animals. We try and catch a mix of fish; but if the mix isn't there, we catch the big ones. It is kind of like in the first three weeks of the season there are great big fish and then it tails out to average ten pounders.

It is three waves of fish that move through; but, yes, we were still catching some of them, but the effort has declined because they have gotten so hard to catch is another reason why the landings are down. When the fish are easy to catch, fishermen jump into king mackerel. It is just the way it happens; and Spanish as well.

When they are easy to catch, the fishermen jump in, the permits are there to allow that to happen, and they jump in and we have high landings. When the fishery gets hard to catch, there are those of us who are core king mackerel fishermen that are left. We still catch fish, we still make money; but it is extraordinary circumstances we have to do to catch these fish. We are committed. We are all in, the ones of us that are fulltime. We do what we have to do to catch the animals, which some people don't take the time and effort to do.

DR. MacLAUHLIN: I think Gregg wants to talk about the boundary, the mixing zone, how the landings that are in this table apply; it is so wonderfully complicated.

MR. WAUGH: John can come up, if we need to, to get into some more of the details. One thing we need to be clear on is that we now have an ABC for the Atlantic and an ABC for the Gulf. These values that you see on the screen are the ones obviously for the Atlantic. They incorporate the portion of the fish in the mixing zone that are Atlantic stock.

These ABC values apply for our council jurisdiction from the southern boundary with the Gulf Council up through the Mid-Atlantic. Now, it is going to be tricky when these ACLs are tracked; that they are going to have to partition the catches during certain times of the year in that mixing zone as 50 percent Gulf and 50 percent Atlantic. But from our perspective, these numbers that we're looking at and when we look at setting an ACL; that ACL value will apply for our jurisdiction that we manage, including the Mid-Atlantic and all of our area.

DR. MacLAUHLIN: Chatting with Sue, we were talking about the boundary would shift, like it does now, where the boundary is up around Cape Canaveral. It is just a different mixing zone. The way that it is applied now in that Florida East Coast Subzone, it would still be the way that it

is applied. At certain parts it is Atlantic. That gets counted towards the Atlantic and then at certain parts of the year it gets counted towards the Gulf.

DR. DUVAL: It would still be that same, whatever it is, like November 1st through March 15th time frame that the mixing zone landings would be considered to be part of the Atlantic?

DR. MacLAUCHLIN: No, November 1st through March 31st, in the purple mixing zone here; in the winter that would be Gulf; and then April 1st through October 31st would be counted towards the Atlantic. In the next document you will have all of this laid out and all of the issues with 20B and everything.

MR. HARTIG: To look at it even a little bit differently, there are biological differences between the wintertime fish and the summertime fish in Florida. In Florida you have this springtime migration of the spawning fish, which are bigger fish, age four and up. In the mixing zone it is predominantly smaller animals.

I think it is even two to four is what most of the catch is in that area. I think what I would like to probably see us do – and I'll just put this up to think about; and we won't probably do it today, but to think about keeping the mixing zone as a separate biological entity of the stock and the rest of the Atlantic as another part of the stock.

I know in the Carolinas everybody will be present. You will have recruitment all the way through; but in that South Florida area where a lot of fish are caught, a significant portion of the landings, you are not going to have that recruitment part of the fish in that fishery until they get to be age four, so until they are fully recruited to the fishery.

It is just something to think about, something to think about a way – when I talked about it before to look at these different ages in the fishery and maybe being more careful at some time initially. And then on the other hand of that, if we see a big year class in the fishery, we could be more liberal with landings in that area. You could have it go both ways depending on what your recruitment looked like.

I know it gets complicated; but to me looking at it biologically it does make some sense. Are we ready at this point to pick which of these landings scenarios we are comfortable with; that is my question. The SSC, their deterministic equilibrium at  $F_{spr} 30$ ; and that is saying to be concerning the uncertainties in the assessment, Marcel, is 12.702. If you use the thing that we've done before, 75 percent of  $F_{msy}$ , which it is not, it is 75 percent of  $SPR 30$ ; it is 11.58 million pounds. Do you want to make a decision now?

DR. DUVAL: I am not sure I want to make a decision now. This is the kind of flexibility that Roy has mentioned in the past that we have to set an ACL based on a range of alternatives that the SSC gives to us. I like the equilibrium yield approach just because looking at the graph that Marcel provided in his overview, you are not going to have a huge spike in potential ACLs followed by a rapid decrease.

I know constant-harvest approaches can be less than ideal sometimes, as we've learned with sea bass; but I think in this instance that might be a little better, especially if we're able to use the rumble-strip approach to help ourselves out a little bit and provide some triggers that might



indicate; well, maybe we need to bump this up in the SEDAR schedule a little bit or something like that.

I like the idea of exploring adaptive management. This is something we do at the ASMFC level where for some of the fishery management plans there are annual trigger exercises. Like for striped bass; we look at an annual JAI trigger exercise. I think that is something that if we have the information to do so would certainly be useful.

MR. HARTIG: Would you like to see like the no action and then determine its yield at Fspr 30, which the SSC gave us, and then deterministic equilibrium yield at 75 of SPR 30 for alternatives?

DR. DUVAL: I think those would be good to include as alternatives definitely. I would like to hear some input from other committee members if there is a sense of whether or not they would want to include any of the other probabilistic catch-level recommendations based on the different recruitment scenarios.

There is not a whole lot of difference between most of them. Probably ABC high would certainly not be recommended. I am just speaking personally that I feel like a more constant approach would be better at this point.

MR. BOWEN: I tend to agree with Dr. Duval, more consistency, more constant seems to be much better.

DR. DUVAL: I don't think we have to make any hard-and-fast decisions today. I think it is good discussion. I don't think there is anything wrong with including one or two of the probabilistic projections in there, so that people could see what that looks like. I think if the spikiness wasn't so great, I would probably have less hesitancy about going with a probabilistic approach.

MS. BECKWITH: I like the idea of analyzing the probabilistic. It is the first time since I've been on this council that we've been presented with this option, so it is interesting to go through that experience. We certainly don't have to set the ABC at the highest point of the probabilistic if we went down that road.

We can always be more conservative in one particular year, average out the first two years or something like that. I think this offers us more flexibility. As we've had previous experiences with some of our recent stock assessments, we have been asking to see some more flexibility in how we are able to choose our ACLs. This is an opportunity; and would like to explore it a bit.

DR. MacLAUHLIN: Just to remind everybody, we're going to scope this in January. You may want to for now include all of these in the scoping document in the preliminary analysis.

DR. DUVAL: It just all depends on how much preliminary analysis you want to do. I am fine with leaving them all in.

MR. HARTIG: All right, direction to staff, we will keep all those in for the scoping. That is one down.

DR. MacLAUCHLIN: Well, I think that maybe if you wouldn't mind doing a motion to add the action and all of the alternatives.

MR. HARTIG: Okay, we'll get the motion on the board. If somebody would like to make it after we do, that would be great.

DR. REICHERT: Two points to your point, Michelle; that was one of the recommendations of both the review panel and the SSC. The other point is I want to remind you that the SSC cautioned against using the current assessment for longer than five years because of the uncertainty. I just want to bring that up, because the table I think runs for six years. I just want to bring that up in terms of potentially some reduction in effort there.

MR. HARTIG: Thanks, Marcel. We've got a motion on the screen.

**DR. DUVAL: I move that we add an action to revise the king mackerel ACLs with all six alternatives to the document.**

**MR. HARTIG: Motion by Michelle; second by Charlie. Is there any discussion on this? Is there any objection? This motion is approved.**

MR. HAYMANS: Can I go back to something you said much earlier, and that was about ten pounders. Is there a size at which the markets refuse the fish?

MR. HARTIG: No; there is not, but primarily the fish caught by the trolling fleet are smaller animals. It is just really in our area where there is no price break for those great big fish. In the Carolinas I think, Jack, there is; and, Charlie, I think maybe there is, but in our area there is not.

MR. COX: When you get over 20 pounds, you look at a pretty substantial less value in the fish.

MR. HAYMANS: I'm just curious as to what percentage are immature fish that are hitting the market.

MR. COX: We're not seeing very many fish under the 24-inch size, not very many at all.

MR. HAYMANS: Size at maturity is somewhere between 28 and 30 or 32 inches, so if you have a lot of 24s –

MR. COX: I mean 28; I'm sorry, I meant 28.

MR. HARTIG: Normally we don't have a lot of that. Fishermen actually leave those fish to catch what we have in the middle; but the unfortunate thing about it now is that is what we have for that portion of the fishery that targets those animals. There is still a mix, but it is primarily smaller animals currently.

MR. HAYMANS: As much as I want to see us move away from minimum size limits; is there some need for discussion about helping fishermen leave those fish?

MR. HARTIG: I don't know that right now is the time to do that. Yes, well, it is, because we're right in the middle of the assessment results so possibly making it known to the fishermen that it is important. If we do the different area mixing zones where most of those fish are captured; where the area of the mixing zone is or was before is where most of those animals are caught and as well as some in North Carolina and South Carolina and Georgia – not so much off of Georgia, but some.

MR. HAYMANS: The South Atlantic.

MR. HARTIG: Well, that is true; it just depends on the time of the year in Florida. You split it based on the wintertime versus the summertime animals. That is something we could certainly look at and you could also do it by your catch specifications. You could do it by trip limits, having only ex-amount of fish. If you went to numbers of fish – well, we do it that way now.

But if you went to pounds instead of numbers of fish, you could actually decrease the number of small fish in the catch by going to pounds, or increase it. There is one way there. I am not thinking quite straight, but there is a way that you could set the trip limits up that you could lower the mortality on small fish; I'll say it that way.

That is something we may want to look at. I don't think we can look at it today. I think that is something that Kari could bring back to us. I can work with her. There was already a recommendation for that; and it actually took care of the little fish and the big fish at the same time. I can't explain it to you now, but there is a way to do that; believe it or not. We could do that. We had a motion and we passed that one; correct?

MS. MacLAUCHLIN: Yes; and I just want to be sure to clarify that because the SSC had recommended just for five years; that these alternatives that you will see will only be for 2015 through 2019, correct, Mr. Chair?

MR. HARTIG: Correct. Go ahead, Doug.

MR. HAYMANS: One more question about that; do we stand a chance of getting this potential amendment passed and in effect in 2015 if it is going to public scoping?

MR. HARTIG: It is going to scoping now.

MR. HAYMANS: To scoping in January/February, right? We'll see it again in March, make some decision and go to public hearing. There is no way it is going to become effective in 2015, so why through 2015; why not start with '16 and go an extra year on the far end?

MR. HARTIG: What was the last part?

DR. MacLAUCHLIN: I guess the question is maybe for Marcel; was the SSC recommendation for not more than five years; to not use more than five years of the projections; does that mean that you don't want them to use the current 2020 ABC recommendation in here?

DR. DUVAL: The language in the SSC report is the SSC recommended that the next assessment be conducted as an update ideally before the end of the five-year projections.

DR. MacLAUCHLIN: The IPT can clarify all of this and when we bring it back to you in March make sure that we have exactly the number of years that the SSC is recommending; and then we'll have all of that clarified for you in March.

MR. HARTIG: Yes; we should be able to implement it in early 2016, I would think, but stranger things have happened.

MR. PHILLIPS: Well, Mr. Chairman, just thinking down the road again and remembering how often we were trying to get slots for assessments and the emergencies that we end up having to deal with; I am just curious what happens if we do not get the assessment in the time frame.

MR. HARTIG: Well, I think the SSC in Spanish, when that happened, we went and used the data-poor approaches for Spanish. We used average landings in order to calculate – that is why we went from 7.04 to 5.69 in Spanish when they didn't have the assessment in the time that they needed it. I don't know how Gregg remembers that, but that is how I remember that happening.

MR. WAUGH: We did do that for Spanish; but usually when we specify these ABC and ACL values, we say it increase or decrease until ex-year, which here I guess would be 2019, and then that value would stay in place until modified. That is where it would stay. Now if it goes a long period and we're not getting an assessment update; then we would need to come in and look at it. You can always, if something happens in the interim, change it. But using that series of numbers, if you choose it to – well, if you pick one of the equilibrium values, then that would just stay until modified.

MR. HARTIG: Yes; and the other thing was we could put king mackerel – we could recommend to the Steering Committee to put king mackerel in the year that the SSC wants that assessed. We could put that in now. We don't have that schedule for that year yet, but we could pencil that in tentatively for that year.

Hopefully, we wouldn't get into a situation where we are going to bump king mackerel to do something else. That is something we could do at full council. All right, it is twelve o'clock and I am going to send you to lunch. All right, let's get back by 1:15 so we can get some more of this done. Hopefully, some of this will go a little bit quicker.

We'll get started back with mackerel. We'll get as far as we can. I am not going to take a whole lot more time with mackerel, maybe an extra half an hour, but that is it. We'll get how far we get. We got Action 1 out of the way, Kari, and we're going on to Action 2. All this is; do we want to add an action to change the stock boundary for king mackerel? Kari's got a draft motion and that one is to add an action to adjust the stock boundary for king mackerel.

DR. DUVAL: **I would make that motion that we add an action to adjust the stock boundary for king mackerel.** This is the most recent, best information available coming out of the assessment, so it seems like we should act accordingly.

MR. HARTIG: Second by Anna. Any more discussion? I certainly agree with Michelle; we're going to be counting the fish as who they actually are for some of the first time in this, and that is a very important biological and long-term management, so I think it is a great thing to do it that way.

A lot of uncertainty drops out of the assessment at least for as far as stock identification goes. That is another good thing. Is there any objection to that motion? Seeing none; that motion is approved. All right Action 3. Do you want any other actions for Atlantic group king mackerel? Did you have anything?

DR. MacLAUCHLIN: Okay, in the document that I sent you this morning, the revised version of this, I did add a few more. I did put in the reminder about the 20B zones and how those would work with the northern zone/southern zone. At your last meeting you had a discussion about the shark gillnetters and a provision for them to be able to sell their bag-limit-caught king mackerel that they catch on those shark gillnet trips.

That may be something you may want to add that action. We have some draft language is there is basically continue to not allow that in Alternative 1; and then an Alternative 2 is just a way to allow that with a maximum that is just based on the bag limit per crew member there. We can get more specific if you want to just direct staff to do that; but really all I need is a motion to include that action in this amendment.

We will bring it back in March and we will also scope that in January very broadly. Then I also want to note, because the bag limit sales came up, that your AP recommended in April 2014 that you reconsider those bag limit sales for the duly permitted charter vessels like the Gulf Council did in 20A; so just to make note of that if you want to consider that. Then anything else if you guys want to – you can just direct us to add the action, tell us what kind of alternatives you would want to consider, and we'll put those in the scoping document and in the document that you will see in March.

MR. COX: I'll make that motion if we're ready for it. **I move that we allow the sale of king mackerel bycatch in the drift gillnet small coastal shark fishery.**

MR. HARTIG: When we get it up on the board, I'll have him read it. That captures it. I might not put sale in the same place, but that is okay.

MS. MacLAUCHLIN: I'll put allowing sale of.

MR. HARTIG: Okay, that is good. The motion that Jack made would add an action for allowing sale of king mackerel bycatch in the shark gillnet fishery. Is there any more discussion on that? Second by Charlie. Discussion. Any objection? Seeing none; that motion is approved.

Are there any other actions we would want to see in this? I talked earlier about possibly keeping the mixing zone as a different biological boundary that we may consider. Do you want to leave that in here or do you want to do that later? To me, I think it makes sense if we're going to do it, to leave it in here now probably.

DR. DUVAL: Yes; I would agree with that. If you wanted to consider – so are you thinking like establish that mixing zone as its own sort of area that would have a sub-quota? Yes; then let's go ahead and add an action to consider establishing a sub-quota specific for the mixing zone.

MR. HARTIG: **Motion by Michelle; second by Charlie, and the motion is to add an action to consider establishing a sub-quota specific for the new mixing zone. Discussion. Any**

**objection? Seeing none; that motion is approved.** Kari, would it be appropriate to say if someone comes up with some another alternative or another action that they would like to see; that we could get in contact with you and possibly add it so the council could consider it in March, or not?

DR. MacLAUCHLIN: Well, we are going to scope it in January; and we are going to do that virtually. I guess if there are some later actions that you would want to add in –

MR. HARTIG: I don't know of any right now; I was just asking the question.

DR. MacLAUCHLIN: If there are different actions, very new actions that you want to add in March, we are planning on doing a lot of the scoping online now. It is a little easier to set up things like that.

MR. HARTIG: All right, what else do you need? What information do you want to see in March? We've given you quite a bit so far.

DR. MacLAUCHLIN: I have been jotting down things that you've talked about to make sure that we all understand how the 20B zone allocations could work. If you want to revisit how that is set up, we'll have kind of an explanation about that. Landings; this is something Ben had talked about in case you want to look at breaking up into some different zones, so landings by county so we can see where the landings are coming from if you want to do some smaller quotas inside those zones.

Some examples of the ASMFC's triggers for striped bass that you were talking about; just in case you want to bring that up, we'll go ahead and have those examples so everybody can see how they work. Then some explanations of the different trip limits that everybody is wondering how those changed.

Is there anything in particular you can think of that you guys would need at this time? We want to be able to show you the different ACLs – I've used the ABC equal to ACL – how they compare to the landings for the different areas. We'll have that information. That is why we're going to pull it by county, so we can hopefully give you an idea of how this is going to affect everybody's access.

MR. HAYMANS: How will you show Georgia's; how will you show the council Georgia's landings?

DR. MacLAUCHLIN: If there is confidentiality, we always combine them and let you know.

MR. HAYMANS: There is actually two Charlie's that have federal permits and the second Charlie I know will not let us divulge it. There is no way you are going to talk Rousseau into doing that.

MR. HARTIG: We have dealt with that in the past. That is really why we usually keep a lot of places, Georgia and Florida joined to the hip because of that problem, but I appreciate the question. Anything else?

**DR. DUVAL: I move that we approve Joint Amendment 26 for scoping.**

**MR. HARTIG: Thanks, Michelle; second by Doug. Discussion? Is there any objection to that motion? Seeing none; that motion is approved.** All right, that brings us to Amendment 24. I think what I want to do with 24, given the time constraints we have; we have kind of been bouncing this one along without too much – I'm going to back up a little.

MS. MacLAUHLIN: Really quickly, before we really leave 26 completely, just a little discussion. Amendment 28; we had talked about that being one where you guys would look at splitting the permits or something like that; but there has also been the discussion about splitting the FMPs since the stock boundary has changed and there is not going to be as much overlap.

I will let Ben continue that discussion. This will be down the road. It is just you will have a joint meeting with the Gulf in June, and I'm sure this will be something that you guys can talk about if you want to move forward with that. There will be a lot of parts of that. You would have to talk about all the permits and everything like that.

MR. HARTIG: Yes; we've talked a little bit about this and given the small size of the mixing zone now, I don't really see an overarching need to have a joint plan anymore for king mackerel. That is just my opinion. I just wondered if there were any other opinions about how we would do this, if you think we ought to do this, if you think it would be more efficient to do this.

MS. McCAWLEY: I just have a question. Is it something more than just creating joint amendments; is there more to it; is there something that I am not thinking about?

MR. HARTIG: Yes; that sounds like a Monica question. How would we go about splitting plans; is it more complex than what we may be thinking about it? Is it an onerous task?

MS. SMIT-BRUNELLO: It has been a couple of years since I've talked to the council about the different options that you have for splitting. I would be glad to discuss that with you again at the next meeting and all the different nuances. In fact, I will dust off that folder, I still have it, and I'll bring it out again; and then we can maybe have a more robust discussion. Obviously, there is going to be kind of involved to split permits and we are going to have to attack that. That is going to be the most involved thing that I can think of. But if we want to put it on the agenda for the next meeting, maybe we can have more of a robust discussion.

MR. HARTIG: Jessica, did you want to follow up on that?

MS. McCAWLEY: Yes; I would certainly like to hear more information from Monica before I form any kind of opinion about it.

MR. HARTIG: That is absolutely reasonable.

DR. DUVAL: I'm with Jessica; but I am biased towards the idea.

MR. HARTIG: Do we need a motion, Kari, to have some for information; actually give direction to staff to figure out how this would go; Monica, our staff. We'll work on it and then we'll bring more information back to you in March. That sounds fine; no motion needed.

That brings us to 24, and in the interest of time, like I said, this amendment has been around for a while. We haven't made much substantive progress on it. There was a question brought to me whether or not the committee really wanted to move ahead. In the interest of that; I think if someone would make a motion about if we want to move ahead with 24, I think that would be appropriate. Then we'll find out if we do; and if we do, at the next meeting we'll have a longer discussion about 24. I know it is kind of a different kind of a motion.

DR. DUVAL: Before I make any kind of motion; I would just say that I think there is value in continuing to examine this kind of approach given some of the things we heard from visioning. I think it allows potentially for flexibility for both sectors.

But without going through a long protracted "give me a piece of your pie kind of argument", like give me a piece of your pie forever kind of thing; I think it is worth continuing the discussion whether or not we decide we would want it to apply to mackerel down the road. I don't know; it is the most logical species at this point. I'm not sure; just looking through the paper given some of the advisory panel input; have we actually answered some of those information requests that they brought before us?

MR. HARTIG: I'm not so sure; I don't think we have brought everything before them.

DR. DUVAL: I just know that they had some questions and direction to look at a few different things before they were willing to offer any kind of opinion on that. I am happy to go ahead and just put it to a vote and make a motion that we continue discussion of Amendment 24 at the next council meeting.

MS. MacLAUHLIN: The AP, those last things; the following information that would be useful; actually Mike did put that together at the meeting. After they had asked for it, he put it together and I did include that in the AP report. When I sent it out to them or we showed it to them at the meeting, I think, because you pulled those together pretty quickly, they were really more wanting some more specific things to comment on.

They had a scoping document that had some very broad what do you think about this, and they weren't quite there where they wanted to talk about it. They didn't even seem like they could – there were lots of different opinions about whether or not you should even be looking at this and concerns about recreational data and all those other things.

We actually did send them all of that stuff. It was in their AP report; and they will meet again in April with a lot of new folks also on top of that. Also, it depends on what you want to keep in and move forward with, but there are some new ideas that they haven't seen like the common pool alternative.

MR. HARTIG: We've moved down this path of mackerel because the Gulf was looking at king mackerel in the same way and it kind of got attached to that in a way. We had visioning going on and we've got an allocation. Anna has talked a lot about different ways to kind of do this. I saw it as a way to set up a template to do it later. If you all would rather do it all in one and move it back, it is not going to be that big a problem. If you would rather back off this one, include it in a whole suite amendment where we do this for all species – no, okay.



DR. DUVAL: No; my comments were really more about I am not seeing this – it would not be my intent to continue the discussion with the goal of applying it to a whole suite of species. I think it is useful to continue the discussion as a tool for potential use, Spanish mackerel making the most sense to apply it to right now.

MR. HAYMANS: The rationale behind doing it for one of these species is that we would then apply that same thinking to other species. We're not going to have separate reasons for reallocating for any species, right? If we look at Spanish, kings, dolphin or any of the snapper grouper species, we're going to have the same set of rationale, which I hope will wind up coming out of visioning for reallocating between the two sectors.

DR. DUVAL: Right; I guess I misunderstood what you were saying and implying that we were going to just reallocate everything. I think we committed to looking at allocation as part of visioning. I think examining allocations is not the same as reallocating.

MR. HAYMENTS: Right; and that is what I am saying is that the discussion about Spanish is where we begin to develop that.

MR. BREWER: It seems to me that visioning is the way to go with this, because this temporary allocation, reallocation if you want to call it that, is something that might be a very good tool as opposed to getting in the long, drawn-out, nasty, permanent allocation fights that seem to drag on for an awfully long time. From what I'm hearing, it sounds like visioning might be the place to do that to have – not necessarily to reallocate, but to develop some sort of a template of how you would do that temporarily, which might be good. Economically it might be a really good thing to do and easier to do than, as I said, a permanent reallocation.

MR. PHILLIPS: If we take this out to scoping, by the time we start getting any feedback on it, we're going to be far enough along in our visioning to kind of know where we want to go. Do we want to make this a king mackerel/Spanish mackerel species and then use this for a possible template to use on other species or do we want to just go through the scoping of this?

Just because we've added species as possibilities does not by any way, shape or means mean we're going to do those species; so I would be inclined to look at the broader picture. But if we need to do this as a template, so we make sure we get it right, fine; but I think this is going to get plenty of scrutiny. I'm not really inclined to just keep doing the same thing. I would just rather do it as a broader group, if possible.

MR. MAHOOD: I think the staff question involved here is do we want to reallocate Spanish mackerel now in Amendment 24 or do we want to wait at some point in the future? We're spending a lot of staff time on it. If we're not going to move ahead, we would rather have you all say, well, let's wait and do this later; let's not do this or let's do this.

Then we can use the staff time to move ahead, and we can reallocate Spanish mackerel. What I'm hearing, though, is people are interested in the concept but not necessarily specifically to Spanish mackerel at this point, although that is a legitimate species to look at. I think we just ask, Ben, give us some conclusion; do we want to move ahead and do this or do we want to wait right now and use our resources somewhere else?

MS. BECKWITH: Just my personal feelings, based on our discussion yesterday on gag, I can tell you that if we were having this discussion on grouper species, this would be a non-starter for me.

MS. McCAWLEY: My vote is to wait.

MR. BELL: We don't have as big a dog in the fight here, but I think it would make more sense perhaps to wait on this and free up a little staff time on some other things that need to move along; but we'll come back to it at the appropriate time, it makes sense.

MR. HARTIG: Okay, I've got two opinions. Do you want to vote or do you want to nod?

DR. DUVAL: I am fine with waiting. I think there is enough work that has been done here in terms of different types of approaches that can be folded into whatever allocation discussions we have as a result of visioning. There are other types of allocation decision approaches out there that have been employed in other countries as well that we could bring into the mix that appear to be less – what is the word I'm looking for – that result in less controversy than what has occurred here in this country. I think it is great fodder for what might come out of visioning.

MR. HARTIG: I agree with Michelle that we have got enough information. Anna has put the common pool forward. We've talked about a number of other ways to do it over time. I think we need a vote, we really do, based on a motion.

DR. DUVAL: You would like a motion to perhaps halt work on Amendment 24 at this time; postpone work on Amendment 24 at this time.

MR. HARTIG: Motion by Michelle; second by Mel. Anymore discussion?

MR. PHILLIPS: Let's lay out exactly what we're going to do. If we vote to postpone it, then what is the other plan? I would like to know what the two roads are that we will be going down.

MR. WAUGH: What we are going to be looking at in Executive Finance is what amendments you want us working on. That draft list that you have, you will be given a hard copy during Executive Finance, too. We've got the three mackerel amendments and, as Bob indicated, it presents a bit of a workload issue, which is why we asked Ben to surface it here.

We've also got on that list Snapper Grouper Amendment 38 to deal with allocations from visioning. It sounds from your discussions that if we were to stop work on Amendment 24, the products that had been developed could be utilized when we pick up Snapper Grouper Amendment 38, looking at the broader visioning; and that Spanish mackerel work could be a component of that.

That is where it could surface again, Charlie. If your intent is to just suspend work on Amendment 24, then I guess that would be taking it off the table for 2015, so that it could be moved below the line on this sheet so it could resurface in 2016. Those, to me, are your two alternatives.

MR. HARTIG: It is kind of tough. We talk about visioning, but mackerel was not in visioning. That is the other thing. We talk about we were going to do all this after visioning and mackerel is not part of it. That is another consideration that we need to look at, because we haven't had a visioning process for mackerel.

I hadn't even thought of it that way. This is one thing you may want to move forward with mackerel and then have it a template to look at down the line for other species possibly. I agree 100 percent with Anna about other species, and I'm sure a number of people do around the table, with grouper in particular when we talked yesterday.

I made that same point that for some species it is not going to be appropriate to do this with based on their rebuilding schedules and things of that nature; and I wouldn't even entertain it. For other species we may; we may look at it depending on the health of each individual fishery, the recreational component, if they have had a chance to catch their bag limit and things of that nature. But that is another discussion for another time; so within the context of the visioning comment it is not really pertinent. We've got a motion.

MS. BECKWITH: If we're going to keep it to within the mackerel; I understand the workload concern, and I guess as a way forward I would say rather than just postpone; do we want to set a time period; postpone it for two meetings; bring it back up in six months? I think it is more of a workload issue at the moment; so clear out maybe some of the stuff that we've got in the pipe right now and then bring this back and give it some more attention.

MR. HARTIG: Gregg, we will give you basically a priority today in Executive Finance and this would fall into that priority if we continue to keep it, correct?

MR. WAUGH: That is correct. What you've got now for mackerel is 24; 26 that is the boundaries; and then 28 that is the FMP split. If we were to work on 28 and indeed separate the FMP and then pick this Atlantic Spanish mackerel back up in 2016, we might have a separate plan and it would make it a lot easier. Then it wouldn't need to be a joint plan.

MR. HARTIG: That is a good point as well.

MR. PHILLIPS: Gregg, I am trying to think workload. If we back this up a couple of meetings or so and we're going to be through visioning – and I understand mackerel is not in visioning – we start work on this amendment and then we get into visioning; and a couple of meetings after visioning is done, we decide we want to do a snapper grouper, some kind of allocation; then we've got two allocation amendments going instead of potentially one that would start a couple of meetings behind whenever we might start this. To me, it sounds like we may end up doing more work or you all would end up doing more work – not us, because we watch – but it may be – tell me what you think.

MR. WAUGH: Joint amendments are a challenge, anyway, and to work on three of them at the same time; that is a lot; and that is why we were looking to perhaps delay Spanish mackerel to where we would pick that up in 2016.

MR. HARTIG: All right, do you want to put 2016 on there? That would at least give us a time certain. Then we are going to be picking it up based on what you have said. I just don't want to let it go forever and ever and ever. That is a long year.

DR. DUVAL: That means that it this time next year we're prioritizing where in the workload it goes; so it is not – I mean, a council year flies by; it is not that much longer. I think we'll hopefully have some informative fodder from visioning; and I think the CCC Allocation Workgroup, which Kevin and I are both on, is supposed to be finishing something up that would help inform some of this discussion. I know it sounds like a long time, but in reality it probably isn't going to be all that long and it might actually go quicker after that.

MR. PHILLIPS: I guess I am getting old; I wasn't thinking. I realize that if we do a snapper grouper allocation; that is not joint. This is going to be joint, so we are going to have to do two amendments, anyway, I think.

MR. BELL: I was just going to say, as Michelle was getting at, in a little bit of time we're going to know a little bit more about allocation processes, because we'll have gone through that. Sure, we won't have done visioning for this particular species and all; but I think we'll be in a better position to maybe feel more comfortable with just dealing with allocation stuff in a little bit of time. I don't sense a real imperative to something's got to happen right now or something is going to break or something is going to go bad. It makes sense to me to wait until 2016.

MR. HARTIG: Well the last three years Spanish mackerel has been over their allocation, so there is a pressing need to do this. I am sensitive to the staff's argument very much so. Based on that, I am willing to wait at least a year, so that is not a problem. We have a motion. **The motion is postpone work on Amendment 24 until 2016. Is there any objection to that motion? The motion passes with one objection.** Is there any other business to come before the mackerel committee? Seeing none; we are done.

(Whereupon, the meeting was adjourned at 1:55 o'clock p.m., December 4, 2014.)

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

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December 29, 2014

# South Atlantic Fishery Management Council

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South Atlantic Fishery Management Council  
King & Spanish Mackerel Committee Meeting  
Thursday, December 4, 2014

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