

# **SOUTH ATLANTIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL**

## **MACKEREL COMMITTEE**

**Westin Jekyll Island  
Jekyll Island, GA**

**March 9-10, 2016**

### **SUMMARY MINUTES**

#### **Mackerel Committee:**

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

Dr. Michelle Duval, Vice-Chair  
Dewey Hemilright  
Chris Conklin  
Charlie Phillips  
Zack Bowen

#### **Council Members:**

Chester Brewer  
LTJG Tara Pray  
Jack Cox

Dr. Wilson Laney  
Mark Brown  
Jessica McCawley

#### **Council Staff:**

Gregg Waugh  
Mike Collins  
Dr. Kari MacLauchlin  
Kim Iverson  
Julie O'Dell

John Carmichael  
Dr. Brian Chevront  
Amber Von Harten  
Chip Collier  
Myra Brouwer

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

Monica Smit-Brunello  
Dr. Mike Larkin  
Dr. Jack McGovern  
Dr. Marcel Reichert  
Erika Burgess  
Robert Boyles

Dr. Bonnie Ponwith  
Karla Gore  
Leann Bosarge  
Ira Laks  
Dr. George Sedberry  
Amy Dukes

Additional Observers Attached



The Mackerel Committee of the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council convened at the Westin Jekyll Island, Jekyll Island, Georgia, Wednesday afternoon, March 9, 2016, and was called to order by Chairman Ben Hartig.

MR. HARTIG: I would like to bring the Mackerel Committee to order. The first item of business is Approval of the Agenda. Are there any changes to the agenda or additions? Is there any objection to approving the agenda? Seeing none, the agenda is approved.

The next item of business is Approval of the Minutes. Are there any corrections or deletions to the minutes? Seeing none, the minutes are approved. That brings us to Status of Commercial Catches of Coastal Pelagic Species, and that takes us to Jack.

DR. MCGOVERN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. These are landings for king mackerel, Spanish mackerel, and cobia. Landings are provided by the Science Center, and Sue Gerhart put this together. It shows, in this case, landings for king mackerel for the fishing year of March through February, and the fishing years from 2011 to 2014 are shown in a cumulative fashion. Last year, we went to a Northern Zone and a Southern Zone, and so the monthly and the cumulative landings are shown for those two zones, but she also has the two zones combined here in the total, so you can compare the total to the previous years when those zones weren't established.

For the Northern Zone, for the 2015 fishing year, king mackerel was at about 31 percent of the commercial ACL. For the Southern Zone, it was about 36 percent. Looking at the total, we see that landings were a little bit higher than the 2013 and 2014 fishing years, but lower than 2011 and 2012.

These are Spanish landings. It's set up the same way as king is, and, for the Northern Zone, we're at 85 percent for the fishing year. For the Southern Zone, it's 66 percent, and the total is at 70 percent. Moving down to cobia, we have an Atlantic Group cobia that was established through Amendment 20B, and then there's an East Coast Zone that's part of the Gulf stock, and the Atlantic group was at 90 percent of its ACL. The East Coast Zone is at 76 percent, and we have landings through March 4. For the Atlantic Group, the landings through March 4 are about 8 percent of the ACL. For the East Coast Zone, the landings are also about 8 percent.

MR. HARTIG: Are there any questions of Jack? I appreciate that, Jack. Thank you. Are you going to do the recreational or is Mike going to do it?

DR. MCGOVERN: No, Mike is going to do that.

DR. LARKIN: I am going to talk about the recreational landings for the coastal migratory pelagics. The landings were summarized using MRIP or MRFSS, depending on how the ACL was calculated. Landings estimates were updated by NMFS SERO with how we do our ACL monitoring, including post-stratification, and there are the landings up to Wave 5 of 2015. The 2015 landings are preliminary.

In this case, cobia is actually January to December, but since this also falls in that CMP category, I included it here, but the king mackerel and the Spanish mackerel are in a split season. You see both of them going from March to February, but the 2013/2014 landings, in this case the 2014



cobia landings, you see them listed here, under the landings, and then the ACL. Cobia was about 82 percent, king mackerel was 15 percent, Spanish mackerel was 73 percent.

I am going to move on to the 2014/2015 for the king mackerel and Spanish. In cobia, these are actually the 2015 landings. Also, I want to point out for cobia in 2015 that the stock was split, and so now there's a, starting in 2015, a New York to Georgia stock and also an East Florida stock. You can see that the New York to Georgia stock exceeded the ACL. It was 245 percent.

Then the South Atlantic king mackerel recreational landings, this is a similar format that I had yesterday, with the years over the left column and then broken down by mode, and then the total in the far-right column. Then the same format I had yesterday with the figure. The landings are broken up by the split season there, and then the Y-axis, over on the left is the landings and the effort is over on the right. Each color on this bar graph represents a mode. If you want to look at the different colors and what they represent, whether it's the mode, or the ACL is the dot, or the MRIP effort is in the red, or the headboat effort is the orange line there.

Moving on to Spanish mackerel, a similar format with the landings broken down by mode, and then, again, the same format with the landings provided. You can see they're below the ACL when it was implemented, starting in the 2012/2013 season. That's it. That's a short presentation.

DR. DUVAL: Mike, how come we don't have a similar graph for cobia the way we do for king mackerel and Spanish mackerel, the graphs that show both the effort and the landings?

DR. LARKIN: I can certainly add to that. Cobia seems to be much more of a hot topic in recent months. Before that, it was not, and so I can certainly -- I guess it's just the standard format. That's what we've always had, but that doesn't mean I can't change it. I know Zack wanted scamp for the other one in Snapper Grouper, and so I could also add cobia to there as well for future presentations.

DR. DUVAL: Thank you so much.

MR. HAYMANS: Remind me of the angler trips. Are these directed trips, or are they trips overall?

DR. LARKIN: Trips overall.

MR. HAYMANS: Why are they different than what's reported in the snapper grouper recreational?

DR. LARKIN: For example, when those angler trips were summarized, were they summarized between March to February for the mackerel as well as the region? Was it summarized just South Atlantic, or is it also included -- For example, if we were doing a new one for cobia, it would be from New York to Georgia, and then by state, and do another summary for just the East Coast of Florida. It really depends on what months you choose and also what states are included.

MR. HAYMANS: For the mackerel, I mean we're only going to North Carolina, or do we go to Virginia for mackerel?



DR. DUVAL: The management unit for mackerel, for coastal migratory pelagics, extends through New York.

DR. LARKIN: You have a little footnote at the bottom there too that it's New York to East Florida, if that helps.

MR. HARTIG: Any other questions of Mike? I would say one observation is at least some of the landings are bumping up somewhat in king mackerel. It stops the bleeding from what we've seen for a few years anyway, and hopefully some of that year class strength is being reflected in some of the increased landings, hopefully. Thank you, Mike. I appreciate the presentation. The next item on the agenda is Gulf Council Meeting Report. Kari is going to go through that.

DR. MACLAUHLIN: I am not going to go through all of the motions and actions that were taken at the Gulf meeting in January, because that's incorporated into the Amendment 26 decision document, but they did go through Amendment 26 and made a few changes. The Gulf Coastal Migratory Pelagics AP met in November, and so this was the first time that they Gulf Council received their Gulf AP report.

They made a few changes, which we'll talk about when we get to our decision document, but one thing I did want to point out was under Other Business. The Gulf Mackerel AP had made a recommendation to the Gulf Council to start a framework amendment. The South Atlantic Council does not have to approve that amendment, but they're going to start work on that, to allow the recreational bag limit of king and Spanish mackerel to be kept if there is a vessel that has a commercial license on a private recreational trip.

This was something that the Gulf AP had brought up, that when one of the Gulf zones was closed if they wanted to take their family out on their vessel and they had a commercial king or Spanish mackerel permit, and it specifically says this in the regulations, because of Amendment 20A, that if that commercial zone is closed and if you're on a vessel with a federal permit, that federal commercial permit, you cannot keep the bag limit, even if you're not on a commercial trip, if you're just out with your family on a recreational trip. They are going to look at changing that, and that would apply just for the Gulf, just to let you guys know about that.

MR. HARTIG: Okay, and we'll get into more of the discussion as we go through the different items in 26. The next order of business, I believe, is the AP Report. Is Ira going to give a formal presentation or is he going to be here to answer questions as we go through it?

DR. MACLAUHLIN: Ira is here, and we talked about this. For today, I am not going to go through every detail of the meeting report, because, again, it's incorporated into the decision document and we'll get into that as we go through those actions, but Ira is here to clarify and elaborate on any questions that anyone has specifically, and he will be here tomorrow also, if we do some of those actions tomorrow, which I think is the plan.

You do have an attachment, Attachment 4a. That's the South Atlantic AP Report. We met in Cocoa Beach on February 3, and it was right before the public hearing that was scheduled in Cocoa Beach. We went through Amendment 26, and then also the charter boat and headboat reporting amendment, and they gave some recommendations.



I am not going to go through each of the recommendations on 26, because we'll get into those when we get into the decision document, but we can talk a little bit about -- Just to be sure, these are probably also in the for-hire reporting amendment, but the AP -- They reviewed that information and the preferred alternatives for the reporting requirements and they did approve a motion, Motion Number 12, to not make any recommendations until after the public hearings. They felt like there needed to be more input from the public about the for-hire reporting requirements. Some of them were not in support of it. They felt like it was an additional burden for the for-hire businesses.

Then we just had one AP member who requested to add Atlantic Spanish mackerel to the agenda and nothing specific about that, and we were running a little bit over time and had to get rolling right into the public hearing right after, and so that's another reason why Ira is here, in case you guys have some more questions to ask him about that, to elaborate a little more.

MR. HARTIG: All right, and so we'll get, again, into more discussion when we get into 26, but that does take us to an overview of 26 right now in the decision document, correct?

DR. MACLAUHLIN: I was going to run through the public hearing comment summary quickly. You have Attachment 5, which is a PDF portfolio, and so it has three different files inside there. Again, all of this is incorporated in the decision document that we'll get into, and so I'm not going to go through each thing. We did receive some public comments at the hearing in Cocoa Beach, and then we had a webinar on February 8. We did receive one written comment.

Overall, most of the comments supported setting the ACL for Atlantic king mackerel equal to the ABC under the high-recruitment scenario, and a lot of comments about that there are lots of small fish in all age classes and it's a high-recruitment period, and that would be to support setting that ACL equal to ABC at the high-recruitment.

We heard a lot of support for a March 1 opening with a seventy-five-fish trip limit for the Southern Zone, and support for the split season in the Southern Zone, and an increased allocation for the Gulf Northern Zone. Then there were concerns about the king mackerel gillnet sector in the Keys.

I have it broken down by each action in Amendment 26, but I'm not going to go through all of those, because we'll do that when we get into those actions in the decision document, but we did have a few other comments that were not specific to Amendment 26. One was that NOAA Fisheries should work with the fishermen to get the data about the small fish, the small king mackerel, or let them bring back some small fish under an EFP.

We did have some comments to allow bag limit sales for the king and Spanish mackerel caught on charter trips and to allow electronic reporting for the commercial sector. We had a comment to not separate the fishery management plan and that each council serves as a check-and-balance for the other, and then some comments that expressed concerns about environmental factors that affect king mackerel, including upwellings and pollution. You also have in the PDF portfolio the written comments and then the minutes from the webinar and the Cocoa Beach hearing.

MR. HARTIG: Are there any questions about what Kari covered on the public comments? Seeing none, that moves us into the overview of 26, I believe.



DR. MACLAUCHLIN: We had talked with Michelle and Ben and Gregg about maybe just focusing on a couple of actions in 26 until after public comment tonight, and so these are the actions I proposed to do. I have them up on the screen for 26, and so the boundary action, the incidental catch allowance for shark gillnets, and then the Gulf actions. Then we will postpone the other three actions until tomorrow, and we'll see what we can get through.

MR. HARTIG: Is everybody clear on that? It looks like it. All right, Kari, forge ahead.

DR. MACLAUCHLIN: We have Attachment 6b is the decision document for CMP Amendment 26. This one has several actions that are coming after the stock assessment for Gulf and Atlantic king mackerel and then a couple other actions for the Atlantic king mackerel incidental catch allowance and then some specific actions for the Atlantic Southern Zone. Then we have Gulf actions to update their ACL, update their commercial zone quotas, consider recreational/commercial allocation changes, and then the recreational bag limit for Gulf king mackerel.

Here is the timeline that we were expecting. We are here. In January, and just a week or two ago, the South Atlantic and Gulf finished all their public hearings. In February, we had our AP meet. Then you guys are reviewing this, and we had expected that the South Atlantic would take final action in March and then the Gulf would take final action in April. However, because this is a joint plan amendment, all the preferreds have to be the same, and, right now, the Gulf and South Atlantic Councils have different preferreds on a couple of actions.

The first thing, and this is why you received a second version in your second briefing book of Attachment 6b, is that we realized that after we made some changes in December to one of the actions that we needed to specify in the purpose and need -- It currently mentioned the Florida East Coast Subzone, but you made some changes in December where it would apply to the Atlantic Southern Zone, and so the IPT is just proposing that you strike "Florida East Coast Subzone" from the purpose statement and replace that with "Atlantic Southern Zone". The committee action would just be to review and approve that recommended change to the purpose.

MR. CONKLIN: **Sure, I will make a motion to approve the IPT's suggested wording to the purpose and need.**

MR. HARTIG: Motion by Chris, second by Zack. Is there any discussion? It seems, to me, that makes a lot of sense, given what it is now. **Is there any objection? Seeing none, that motion is approved.**

DR. MACLAUCHLIN: We are going to go through Action 1. This is to adjust the management boundary for Gulf and Atlantic king mackerel. In the stock assessment, in SEDAR 38, new information indicated that the mixing zone was actually south of the Florida Keys in a smaller area, and so this would align the management boundary with that stock boundary that was used in SEDAR 38.

We have our no action alternative, which uses the shifting boundary. You had an Alternative 2, which would set the boundary at the regulatory boundary between the Gulf and South Atlantic Councils, and so the South Atlantic Council would be responsible for the management measures in the mixing zone, which was the area south of the Keys.



The current preferred for both councils, and recommended by both advisory panels, is Preferred Alternative 3, which sets that boundary year-round at the Miami-Dade/Monroe County line, and so the Gulf Council would be responsible for management measures in the mixing zone. We have, in Figure 3 here, where that boundary would be, and this striped area is the mixing zone that aligns with the SEDAR 38 mixing zone.

For this, we have all of the input that we've received from the AP and from public hearings. It supports the Preferred Alternative 3, and I also added in this decision document, where I could, the council's rationale for their current preferred alternative. This is what we'll put into the document, but I just want to be sure that this is sufficient and captures your rationale. Setting the boundary at the Miami-Dade/Monroe County line will allow the Florida Keys to be under consistent management under the Gulf Council throughout the year and is the same management boundary used for Spanish mackerel. Alternative 3 would also help enforcement and compliance.

MR. HARTIG: Okay, and if there's no -- If you're all happy with that wording, and it seems to explain it fairly well, we have a preferred. If there is no motions, we will move to the next action. Seeing none, Action 2.

DR. MACLAUHLIN: We are going to skip this action and move to Action 3, and so if you will go to page 15. This is incidental catch allowance for Atlantic king mackerel caught in the shark gillnet fishery. The background on this is that before Amendment 20A, when bag limit sales were prohibited, incidental catch that was caught in the shark gillnet fishery on commercial trips with vessels who had a commercial shark permit and a commercial king mackerel permit would sell those very small number of king mackerel.

After Amendment 20A was implemented, they could not do that and they would have to discard those king mackerel, even though they were on a commercial trip and they did have commercial permits. Gillnet is not allowed for most parts of the South Atlantic, only in the Florida Keys area, and so the fishermen asked the councils to consider letting them have an incidental catch allowance so they could retain and sell those small numbers of king mackerel.

We have the no action alternative and we have Alternative 2 and Alternative 3, and they are really similar, in that they set up allowing retention and sale of Atlantic king mackerel caught in the shark gillnet fishery. Alternative 2 sets the limits in the EEZ off of Florida with no more than two king mackerel per crew member can be onboard or sold. Then the EEZ north of the Georgia/Florida line is three king mackerel, and the Alternative 2 is consistent with the bag limits that are in place now.

Alternative 3 is similar, except that it sets the limits based on the zone that it's in. In the Southern Zone, and that would be South Carolina, Georgia, and Florida, it would be no more than two king mackerel. Then in the Northern Zone, it would three. We have this in place because you guys put the Northern Zone/Southern Zone system in place in 20B, and so it's just kind of making it consistent with that management system. Alternative 3 is the preferred for both councils and both APs recommended that.

I have a little bit of information about this. It's a small number of vessels and they're, at least in recent years, only off of Florida. We did have both APs that recommended Alternative 3. The



Gulf AP did recommend that there had to be a federal commercial king mackerel permit and the commercial king mackerel season was open.

At public hearings, we had one comment support Alternative 3, and then another comment recommended adding language to specify that the shark gillnet fishery only be allowed south of the Georgia/Florida line and north of the North Carolina/South Carolina line, so as not to encourage vessels on gillnet trips to fish in the Georgia or South Carolina waters.

The rationale that we have right now for the current preferred is that both the Gulf and South Atlantic APs support Alternative 3, and it would reduce discards and allow those commercial vessels to retain and sell king mackerel, but at very low levels that would not encourage direct harvest. Alternative 3 would also make the limits consistent through each zone, aligning management with the Northern and Southern Zone system.

MR. HARTIG: We've got a preferred alternative. It seems to be supported by both APs, and some of the public, and so if there's no intent for a motion to change that, we will move on. Go ahead, Michelle.

DR. DUVAL: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Not a motion to change, but I think just clarification that north of the latitude of Cape Lookout, gillnet is an allowable gear in the king mackerel fishery, and so Kari and I had talked about this. There are some restrictions. You're not allowed to use drift gillnet or long gillnet, but it is an allowable gear. We had that exemption as a long-standing exemption, and so I just wanted to make everyone was aware of that.

MR. HARTIG: Thank you.

MS. SMIT-BRUNELLO: I had a question. I'm assuming that king mackerel that are caught onboard these vessels and that are sold would be caught against the quota for the zone in which they were harvested, correct?

MR. HARTIG: Yes, that certainly would be my interpretation of what's going to happen, yes. As far as I know, the guys in our area, they're landing the fish right there in area fish houses, and so they would be within their zone. I don't think anybody is running up and down the coast trying to sell sharks, to my knowledge, in different zones.

MR. CONKLIN: So we're not going to be changing the dealer permits, the Southeast federal dealer permit, and it will still be the guys in that region have to sell to a Southeast dealer? Is that right, or would we need to include a Gulf dealer permit as well?

MR. HARTIG: That's probably not my question, but I don't believe you would need two different permits to buy fish in the Atlantic, but, Monica.

MS. SMIT-BRUNELLO: Would you ask that again, Chris?

MR. CONKLIN: I was just making sure that the dealer permit didn't need to change, since we are delegating the management down there to the Gulf and that's all.



MS. SMIT-BRUNELLO: You mean on the previous action, where you're changing the management zone?

MR. CONKLIN: No, in Preferred Alternative 3. It just says that the king mackerel must be sold to a dealer with the Southeast federal dealer permit, and I was just making sure that someone in the Keys, where this shark gillnet fishery is going on, wouldn't have to have a Gulf dealer permit too.

MS. SMIT-BRUNELLO: Right, and I think there is one Southeast federal dealer permit, and so they wouldn't need to get something else.

MR. HARTIG: That was a great question, Chris, because you know, as we delegated that mixing zone to the Gulf, I didn't think about that at all, and so great catch there, buddy. Thanks, Monica. All right, Kari.

DR. MACLAUHLIN: We are going to skip, for today, Actions 4 and 5. We will get into those a little more tomorrow, and we'll move on to Action 6. This is page 24. This action modifies the ACL for Gulf king mackerel based on the recent stock assessment, SEDAR 38. We have our no action alternative. Preferred Alternative 2 would set the Gulf king mackerel ACL equal to the ABC recommended by the Gulf SSC, and you have that there.

Then Alternative 3 considers a constant catch scenario for Gulf king mackerel in one of the following time periods, and the ACL during the selected time period may not exceed the ABC recommended by the Gulf SSC. There were two different options.

Currently, the preferred alternative of both councils is Alternative 2, and the Gulf and the South Atlantic AP recommended Alternative 2. During the public hearings, the South Atlantic and the Gulf public hearings, there was support for that preferred alternative. At the South Atlantic public hearing, a few commenters voiced concern that the Gulf ACL was being set to the ABC, but, under the current South Atlantic preferred alternative for the Atlantic ACL, the Atlantic ACL was not being set to the ABC.

Then the rationale that we have for the current preferred is that Alternative 2 is based on the Gulf SSC's recommendation and the stock is not overfished or undergoing fishing, and the ACL can be set equal to ABC. You can add, remove, or edit the alternatives or change the preferred.

MR. HARTIG: Any intent to change the preferred? I don't believe so, and so we can go to the next Gulf option.

DR. MACLAUHLIN: We will move on to Action 7, the next Gulf action. This will revise the commercial zone quotas for Gulf king mackerel. With Action 1, that will change the management boundary to align with that stock assessment boundary and update all the annual catch limits. The commercial zone quotas, their proportion of the Gulf ACL, would have to be revised, because there will no longer be a Florida East Coast Zone as part of the Gulf management system. There will just be the Western, Northern, and Southern Zones for the Gulf.

We have the no action alternative. Alternative 2 revises the commercial zone quotas for Gulf king mackerel by taking the Florida East Coast Zone quota and equally dividing it into four equal parts



and then adding that to each of the remaining Gulf commercial zones, which the South Atlantic AP recommended at their last meeting.

Alternative 3 revises these by taking the Florida East Coast Zone and then giving each of the remaining zones a proportion based on the proportion they have now. Then Alternative 4, which is the Gulf Council preferred and the Gulf AP recommended, revises the commercial zone quotas as 40 percent for the Western Zone, 18 for the Northern Zone, and 21 percent each for the Southern Hand Line and Southern Gillnet.

It's just easier to look at a table of these than to try to explain it. Alternative 1 is the no action, and so the Florida East Coast Subzone will go away when we set up that different management boundary, and so the proportions need to be revised for the Gulf zones. Alternative 2 bumps everyone up the same amount.

Alternative 3 is more of a proportional increase, and Alternative 4 was recommended by the Gulf AP. It was kind of a negotiation that the AP came up with and made that recommendation to the Gulf Council. Table 8 shows the poundage for each of those.

Going down to the AP and the public comment recommendations, the Gulf AP has picked Alternative 4. The South Atlantic AP, the last time they talked about it, had been supportive of Alternative 4, but, at their meeting in February, they recommended Alternative 2, and so to allocate a larger proportion to the Southern Zone.

At the South Atlantic hearings, we had several commenters support a larger allocation for the Gulf Northern Zone, because that zone has always had a small allocation and there should be more quota in the zone to support a longer season, and then some commenters were concerned about the Southern Zone gillnet allocation. They thought that was unfair, and then we had one comment in support of the Gulf Preferred Alternative 4. At the Gulf public hearings, most commenters supported Alternative 4, and the Florida Keys fishermen supported Alternative 3.

The Gulf Council's rationale for their current preferred alternative is they selected that as the preferred based on the Gulf AP recommendation and that it represents a compromise to provide a little more of an allocation to the Northern Zone than Alternatives 2 or 3. For this one, you would need to select a preferred alternative to move forward.

MR. HARTIG: All right, and the Gulf's was Alternative 4. I did receive a call at lunch from Martin Fisher, the AP Chair in the Gulf, and this is -- Of course, it came from the Gulf AP, and he was pushing for Alternative 4. One thing I will say that Martin said, he said if you guys can try and support that preferred alternative, he said, as Chair of the AP, that he would work hard to get that other item of business that we have that's different from the Gulf, to get consensus on from our position. That's just something I will throw out there. Based on the comments and everything we've heard, is there anyone willing to pick a preferred under Action 7?

MR. BOWEN: I'm not sure that I want to be the one to pick the preferred. I am not a commercial king fisherman, but I did want to put it on the record that if we don't go with Alternative 4 that it will definitely hold this amendment up even further, and so, again, I'm not in a position to make the motion, but I did want that on the record.



DR. CRABTREE: I'm on the Mackerel Committee on the Gulf too, and we had a lot of round-about about these subzone allocations, and there were a lot of concerns that some areas may have been, particularly that Northern Zone -- I guess it was under-allocated initially and there have been some changes to the fishery. **It seemed like this was a pretty good compromise that folks were behind, and so I will go ahead and make a motion to adopt Preferred Alternative 4 as our preferred.**

MR. HARTIG: Motion by Roy and second by Chris. Discussion? Is there any more discussion on this? **Is there any objection to this motion? Seeing none, that motion is approved.** We will move on to Action 8.

DR. MACLAUHLIN: In Action 8, this would consider revising the recreational and commercial allocations for Gulf king mackerel. This was a similar situation to Atlantic Spanish mackerel that we talked about, where the commercial landings were butting up against the commercial ACLs, or exceeding them, and the recreational landings were around 50 percent or lower of the recreational ACL, and so the council wanted to look at either moving some of that recreational allocation to the commercial allocation or looking at different kinds of mechanisms to have some flexibility to move the allocation back and forth.

Right now, the Gulf Council preferred is the no action, and so this would leave it with the current allocations at 68 percent recreational and 32 percent commercial. The Gulf Advisory Panel also recommended no action on this.

Then we have Alternative 2, which would revise these permanently. What they would do is move 5, 10, or 20 percent from the recreational to the commercial. Alternative 3 revises those allocations by transferring a percentage of the stock ACL to the commercial allocation each year until the recreational sector lands 80 percent of its allocation. Then there would be no additional allocation transfers and it would stay there. We had two options, where it would be 2 percent every year, until the recreational sector landed 80 percent of its allocation, and then 5 percent.

Alternative 4, which you guys talked about during the Joint Dolphin Wahoo, conditionally transfers a certain percentage of the stock ACL to the commercial until the recreational landings reach a predetermined threshold, and so we have different options for those. Then, once the threshold is met, it would go back to the current 68 recreational and 32 percent commercial.

We have some options that have the transfer of 5, 10, 15, or 20 percent, and the South Atlantic AP recommended Option a and Option e under this action. Then the threshold would be that it would revert back to the status quo sector allocations if 80, 90, or 100 percent of that adjusted recreational sector ACL was landed.

Then Alternative 5 would be to establish a sunset provision, so that any changes in those sector allocations would go back to the current allocations after five, ten, or fifteen years. The Gulf Council had discussed this, and they currently have selected no action as the preferred alternative. I have some information in there about the landings, the commercial and recreational landings, and how much of the total ACL has been met, and then just a table to simplify what those allocations would look like under all of the different alternatives and options.



The Gulf AP recommended Alternative 1, or, if not, at least a sunset provision in there after five years. That was in November of last year. Then the South Atlantic AP recommended that conditional transfer, with Options 4a and 4e as the preferred.

At the South Atlantic public hearings, we did have one commenter who supported moving some recreational ACL to the commercial ACL, and then a written a comment that supported the South Atlantic AP's recommendation. At the Gulf public hearings, most of the commenters supported no action, and the Florida Keys fishermen supported Alternative 3.

The Gulf Council has selected Alternative 1 as the preferred, based on their Gulf AP recommendation and then also that there's been an increase in recreational landings of Gulf king mackerel in the last year. There also is a potential increase in the bag limit for Gulf king mackerel, in Action 9, and that could increase recreational landings. That could lead to an in-season closure if that recreational ACL is reduced through these changes in allocation. That's where we stand now, and the Gulf Council has selected Alternative 1 as the preferred. The South Atlantic does not have a preferred at this time.

MR. HARTIG: Leann, do you have any insight on that?

MS. BOSARGE: I don't know if I would call it insight, but we had a discussion at our last meeting on this reallocation versus possible transfers and such, and most of -- As far as actually considering one of the alternatives other than the preferred that you see, most of that conversation would have probably revolved around that Alternative 4, but I think what gave us pause about that at the last meeting was what you mentioned, that we were looking at increasing that bag limit.

Then the increase in recreational landings, that's the first time we had seen that data in this document, those most recent year's landings, and they went from, on the recreational side -- The year before, they had landed about 40 percent of their ACL, and it jumped up to about 62 percent. That gave us a little bit of pause, saying, okay, wait a minute. As you're looking at Alternative 4, we've got to think about this and run some numbers and do some math and see if this is going to work out and which one of these -- The Gulf CMP AP had recommended no action, and that's what we chose as our preferred at the last meeting.

MR. HARTIG: Thank you. I appreciate that. That gives me some clarification.

MR. HAYMANS: Because this is precedent setting, and we may wind up using something similar to this in other fisheries, I just want to make sure that we understand what this is. So you would look back at the previous year's landings. If recreational hasn't hit 80 percent, then either 5, 10, 15, or 20 percent of that current year's ACL could be temporarily transferred to the commercial side, and so they have an ACL plus a transfer, so that it stays known what that ACL for the split is. We get to the end of that fishing year and you reexamine the 80 percent, or whatever level we come up with, and do it again and it's not automatic and it's not for a five-year period, but it's an annual transfer, right?

In this regard, with the APs, they are recommending an 80 percent recreational level with a 5 percent transfer, and so that would happen each year automatically until recreational hits 80 percent? I just want to make sure that I'm understanding it.



MR. HARTIG: I think that's exactly how I understand it. You explained it very well. Is there someone willing to make a motion on a preferred on Action 8? Doug.

MR. HAYMANS: **I shouldn't have done that, only because of the precedent that it sets for the future, but, Mr. Chairman, I would make a motion that we select Alternative 4a and 4e as our preferreds.**

MR. HARTIG: Motion by Doug and second by Chris.

DR. CRABTREE: Do you really want to take the lead on reallocating Gulf king mackerel when the Gulf Council has decided not to?

MR. HAYMANS: Not really, no, but I am going off of our AP's recommendation and the fact that --

DR. DUVAL: I have the same level of discomfort as Roy. I mean I know our advisory panel recommended this, and I have a lot of respect for the thought that our AP puts into these types of recommendations, but I also know that we're also trying to come to some consensus on how the Southern Zone is managed, and we're not at consensus right now with our preferred alternatives between us and the Gulf, and I'm not sure that -- Well, I am pretty sure that selecting this as a preferred alternative from the South Atlantic side is not going to make coming to consensus on the Southern Zone management options any easier, and so right now I will not be supporting this motion.

MR. HARTIG: I would just say in the past we have pretty much followed the Gulf's lead on almost everything they do, and they have followed the lead on what we have done. There has been a little bit of back-and-forth when there was a substantial possible impact on the Atlantic stock, when they wanted to change that boundary issue and the timing in the Gulf. We did have a problem there, but that was going to be a major impact on our fishermen. To me, I don't think we should be getting into the Gulf's business on this one. I don't think it's appropriate.

MS. BOSARGE: I was going to say we did disagree with one of your preferreds on one alternative there, or one action item that we were looking at, and it had a lot to do with the traveling fishermen, and I can see where that may cause you to have a disagreement with us on this Action 8, because you do have traveling fishermen in the South Atlantic that would reap some benefit, commercial traveling fishermen, and do you see what I'm saying, if there was a shift in the Gulf of allocation, whether it be a hard shift or a soft shift as you transfer from recreational to commercial. From that perspective, I can see where you may reap some benefit and have some input, as far as Doug's motion.

MR. HARTIG: From an efficiency standpoint, I mean this amendment has been around. There is some really important things we have to get done. I would advise the committee to just try and stay with the Gulf preferreds in this instance, so we can try and get some of these really important things initiated in the king mackerel. This whole stock assessment thing is being held hostage right now by some differences we have.

I think they can be overcome on the one issue that we have a difference with. We need to vote on this. **All those in favor of the motion, which is to select Alternative 4a and 4e as the preferred**



**in Action 8, all those in favor of the motion raise your hand; all those opposed. The motion fails.** That brings us back to would someone else like to make a motion in Action 8 for a preferred?

DR. DUVAL: **I move that we select Alternative 1, no action, as a preferred for Action 8.**

MR. HARTIG: Motion by Michelle and second by Mel. Is there further discussion? **Is there any objection to that motion? Seeing none, that motion is approved.** Madam Chairman, that's all we can accomplish at this time, and so I would return it back to you, because we're getting close to public hearing time.

DR. DUVAL: Thank you very much, Ben, for efficiency in motion here, and so we're going to take a quick break and let staff get set up for public comment, which begins at 5:30. Thank you.

The Mackerel Committee of the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council reconvened at the Westin Jekyll Island, Thursday morning, March 10, 2016, and was called to order by Chairman Ben Hartig.

MR. HARTIG: I would like to bring the Mackerel Committee back to order. The first thing I would like to say, since we did have a change in committee membership, is those on the committee are Michelle, Anna, Mel, Zack, Chris, Roy, Doug, Charlie, Bob Beal, Tony DeLernia, and Dewey Hemilright. Good to see you, Dewey. It's been good to see you again and spend some time with you this week. Those are the committee members. The next item that we left off with yesterday, the first item is Action 2 in Amendment 26, page 7. That is to revise the ABC for Atlantic migratory group king mackerel.

DR. MACLAUHLIN: This action updates all of the reference points, the biological parameters, and so you have already reviewed that and that will just go into the FMP. I am going to continue on to Action 2-1. That revises the ABC for Atlantic king mackerel, and remember the South Atlantic SSC provided ABCs at a high, medium, and low-recruitment scenario, to allow for some flexibility for the council.

We have the no action alternative. The preferred alternative for both councils and supported by both advisory panels is to set the ABC at the recommendation under the high-recruitment scenario, and then Alternative 3 is the medium-recruitment scenario, and then Alternative 4 is the low-recruitment scenario. Then we have those in Table 3, so you can see what the actual pounds would be under each of those recruitment scenarios and the buffer between ABC and OFL.

Again, both APs have supported the Preferred Alternative 2. Also, at public hearings, we had several commenters that supported setting the ACL equal to the ABC under the high-recruitment scenario, because the stock is not overfished and overfishing is not occurring, and that there are lots of small fish. Some folks talked about that the council is specifying recruitment as not in a high period, and that's incorrect.

Then we also have the rationale for the current preferred alternative, that public input and recommendations from the AP support selecting Alternative 2. Anecdotal information suggests that there is a new cohort of fish, and recent SEAMAP data also indicate an increase in juveniles. The projections can be run again after two years to incorporate catch data and updated information from surveys into the ABC recommendations. Last, the high-recruitment ABC levels are the only



alternative that would set the ABC levels higher than or equal to the ACL in the preferred alternative in Action 2-2.

MR. HARTIG: So, we have a preferred for the ABC. Is there any intent to change the preferred? Seeing no motions, moving on.

DR. MACLAUHLIN: Action 2-2 revises the ACL and the commercial quotas for the Atlantic Northern and Southern Zone and the recreational ACT for Atlantic king mackerel. We have the no action alternative. Alternative 2 sets the ACL equal to ABC. That is the recommendation from the South Atlantic Advisory Panel.

The current preferred alternative for both councils is Alternative 3, which sets ACL equal to the deterministic equilibrium yield at F at 30 percent SPR, which is 12.7-million pounds. This was a recommendation from the South Atlantic SSC, and also the Gulf AP recommended this. Then you also have Alternative 4, which sets ACL equal to the deterministic equilibrium yield at 75 percent of the F at 30 percent SPR, or 11.6-million pounds, and Alternative 5, which sets the ACL equal to 90 percent of the ABC that you select in the previous action.

You did hear, during the public comment yesterday, from some of the advisory panel, one of our advisory panel members, about why they supported Alternative 2 for the preferred alternative. There were reports of small fish and increasing landings and that the stock is not overfished and overfishing is not occurring and that there were already buffers in place, through that OFL/ABC system, that eliminate the need for the more conservative ACL under Action 2-2.

The Gulf AP supported Alternative 3, the deterministic equilibrium yield, and they felt that a constant catch may help protect the stock if there was an issue with recruitment, and the more conservative ACL would not affect either sector, because the landings have been below the ACLs in recent years.

We have our public hearing comments. Several commenters supported setting the ACL at the ABC under the high-recruitment scenario. The rationale for the current preferred is that Alternative 3 will provide stability with the constant catch of 12.7-million pounds, and this is also the recommendation for the South Atlantic SSC, under which the ACL is based on the SPR.

Additionally, there is concern that relatively low landings in recent years may have indicated a problem with the stock, and, if that's the case, a more conservative ACL would allow the juveniles to move into the older year classes and help build the stock before the ACL is increased. After a few years, the ACL and projections can be reviewed and the ACL modified to increase the quotas, if necessary.

MR. HARTIG: Thank you, Kari. You have heard the comments from the public. You heard the comments from the public last night as well. Is there any intent to change our preferred under the ACL determination?

DR. DUVAL: This is a tough one for me. Remind me. Does the Gulf Council -- Have they selected a preferred alternative for this? Is it matching up with ours?



DR. MACLAUHLIN: Correct. The Gulf selected Alternative 3, based on the recommendation from their AP, and so the South Atlantic selected Alternative 3, I think at the December meeting, and then the Gulf Council selected Alternative 3 as their preferred also at their January meeting.

DR. DUVAL: I know we've received a lot of public comment regarding the way the fishermen have been fishing over the past several years and the broad range of sizes that they've seen, the evidence of recruitment that they've brought before us. My original thinking in selecting a preferred alternative at this equilibrium level was that it would provide more stability and that you wouldn't be dealing with an ACL that was decreasing, but just in looking at the numbers -- I mean, realistically, if we are able to approve this document and send it forward in June, recognizing that it has to go back to the Gulf Council and that we have some mismatched preferred alternatives, it's going to be the 2017/2018 fishing year before any new ACLs would be implemented.

I think, if you look at the numbers, if we were to change our preferred alternative to set ACL equal to the ABC, the difference between that equilibrium level of I think it's 12.7-million pounds -- I mean you only have three years of new ACLs. The AP recommended taking another look at the ACLs after two years of implementation. After that, we're going to need an update to the assessment.

I am willing to put forward a motion to change the preferred alternative to move to setting ACL equal to ABC, based on the fact that the differences in those numbers are decreasing and we would only be operating under a higher ACL for three years, and the testimony that we've heard from the fishermen regarding the significant recruitment that they've seen over the past several years, but I would also like to hear from other folks sitting around the table, whether they're on the committee or not.

MR. HARTIG: Anybody else like to chime in?

MR. HAYMANS: I had a different question, but I will respond to Michelle. The Gulf Council has already selected 3, yes? That's what I heard Kari say?

DR. MACLAUHLIN: That is correct. Both councils have Alternative 3 as the preferred.

MR. HAYMANS: I know that my faux pas yesterday was trying to direct the Gulf Council on what they were going to do, but, at the same time, aren't we trying to move this on through? I would suggest we stay where we are. It looks like, to me, that the ACL, by the time we get out to twelve, we have matched the ABC then, right, the 12.7 under the current selected 2-1 action?

DR. MACLAUHLIN: Yes, that's correct, and so here is the ABC under the preferred alternative in the ABC sub-action, and so this is what you would be setting the ACL equal to, and that's correct that your current preferred alternative, at the deterministic equilibrium yield, is 12.7-million pounds, and so that last year is the same, yes.

DR. DUVAL: Just in response to Doug's comment, that's because it would end up at the same place. That's why I was willing to go with like two fishing years of higher ACL.

MR. HARTIG: Yes, and, essentially, what that does, and I focused on the commercial ACL, but you had 2016 and 2017 that would allow 6.5-million pounds to be caught, and I focused on the



commercial because the recreational catches have been relatively low in this stock. The good thing is that they are trending up in the latest information we've seen. That's a good thing, but the past five years, they've only caught 1.7-million pounds, and they have -- In the last fifteen years, they have never caught even the ACT that was in the equilibrium determination, and so the recreational catches are probably going to be relatively low. There is probably little real impact on the stock.

2016 and 2017, we're already underway, and so the only real place where we get increased commercial catches is in that wintertime portion, and we're already through that. Even if this got into place sometime later in the fishing year, the numbers wouldn't increase that much for this year, and at that 6.5-million pounds. It decreases, 2016 and 2017, to 5.9-million pounds, in 2017/2018. Then 2018/2019, it's 5.2 and, in 2019/2020, we're to the equilibrium yield that we had in our preferred.

Basically, the differences are -- In this next season, it was 1.8-million pounds, which was a lot, but we're not going to have to deal with that. It's 1.2 for next year and half-a-million pounds for the year after that, and then zero compared to, when we get to 2019/2020, the difference between our preferred and then the high-recruitment scenario.

The other thing I would add is that when we talked about high recruitment, you need to remember that high recruitment, in this context, is not high recruitment for the time series of recruitment of king mackerel. It is average recruitment for the time series of king mackerel. In the assessment, they came out with their productivity estimates based on those last years of recruitment, and so they weren't comfortable going back into the time series and giving you the high-recruitment scenarios based on what happened in the past.

Basically, those are taking into consideration what had occurred in the latest time series, and so that's one thing to keep in mind. Where we really are with recruitment in this stock, we don't know yet. I think, if we go back to Bonnie and have their people rerun the projections based on the recruitment scenarios, we will get an answer to that, and I hope we can do that within the next couple of years and have the projections rerun, so we actually see the scientific determinations based on the recruitment scenarios.

We will have some cohort information by then, because 2012, what I had seen, was a big year class, based on what I had seen in the past. I saw the age-zero fish in 2012. They entered the fishery last year. The fishery had increased landings last year and we saw fish, for the first time in five years, in the spawning stock. The three-year-olds from 2012 actually participated in the spawning stock in our area. We saw hydrated eggs in those smaller fish, and so that was a great sign, and we hope to continue to see that in the future.

The catches, as Mason had pointed out last night, the catches in the Atlantic zone after March, after those winter fish move back to where they're going to the north and we get into our summer and spring fishery, if those environmental conditions persist, we're never, ever going to get anywhere near what we used to catch. That's not going to happen anymore, and, based on the last four or five years of what we've had to deal with and the changes that we continue to see in the Gulf stream, I think that's the new conditions that we're going to be dealing with. I don't have a big problem going to the higher-recruitment ACL, and I just want to put that on the record.



DR. LANEY: I'm not on your committee, but what does it do to discards if you go to the higher level, given all the testimony we heard about the fact that there are lots of small fish out there?

MR. HARTIG: I think you heard the fishermen say that when they get into the small fish that they leave them immediately. They don't want to catch those animals. They're too small for them. They are usually not mixed, that frequently, with the fish that they're actually trying to catch, and so they're usually separated.

The other thing that I would say, that I neglected to mention, is these fishermen have fished under the most restrictive trip limits in the Gulf or Atlantic for a long time. They brought these trip limits before us a number of years ago and we haven't changed them much. We have changed it a little bit, but they have fished under the most restrictive scenarios anywhere, and so they bring that point up to me all the time, you know when are you guys going to do something for us, while we've done probably the most for the stock, from the commercial standpoint, by keeping our catches low, and that's the other contributing factor.

I mean, wherever you set this, you have to keep in mind that they're only going to be able to catch what their trip limit is, which is fifty fish for a portion of the season and seventy-five for another portion, and so they're already limited by those restrictive trip limits where most of the fish actually are caught, and so that's one thing you need to keep in mind as well.

DR. CRABTREE: As a general rule, I have not encouraged setting ACL equal to the ABC. When I look at this specific case though, the spawning stock biomass is well above the BMSY proxy. The Fs are quite low. I think it's unlikely that the changes you're talking about would have an impact on the 2016/2017 season, because of the timing of it, and so we're really talking about a higher ACL in two years, and then they all get you to the same place.

I don't see anything to lead me to believe that the recreational catches are likely to change as a result of this, and so it seems unlikely, to me, that we would catch the ABC anyway. Most of the effect seems to be on the commercial side, where they may catch a few more fish, but that's really dependent on what happens with the upwelling and the rest of things. It seems, to me, in this particular case, that there is relatively little additional risk to the stock with doing this, and so, as a general rule of thumb, I don't go down this road, but it doesn't seem to me that the change you're talking about here poses any real risk for the stocks, and so I don't really have any objections to making this change.

MR. BELL: My initial question actually had to do with kind of the upwelling thing, or the changing environmental conditions, and if that's sort of the new norm, then maybe it's just things have redistributed themselves and the chances of really getting in there and hurting something aren't as great. Procedurally, I had a question. If we get out of sync with the Gulf in terms of preferences, is that an issue, time-delay-wise, or how is that resolved? I just don't know, procedurally.

MR. HARTIG: No, that's a great question, and I think -- I mean, since you're adding more fish, potentially, to the Atlantic stock, it should allay the Gulf's concern. It should actually keep the season open longer, probably, and I mean there are some indications that fishermen, some fishermen, with fish available on our side now in the summer will not travel, because they can actually catch some fish on our side for a change. As the fish move through, and they actually



change their migratory patterns as they age, and they get into this stock in larger sizes, again, you will see probably less people travel. I think it helps the argument with the Gulf by increasing that potential catch for those two years.

MR. BELL: But it wouldn't delay implementation, necessarily?

MR. HARTIG: We have one -- The split season, we already have a difference. I mean there's always a chance that if you change it that the Gulf might not go along with it, but Leann is here. We're putting on the record what we think we want to have happen. She can take our concerns and, trying to allay some of the Gulf's fears and trying to get some of our fishermen maybe not to travel, based on the catch recommendations that we have. I think the Gulf -- I am not going to go out there, but the argument is a logical argument to try and help the Gulf's situation that they see. I will leave it at that.

MS. SMIT-BRUNELLO: Just to be clear, the Gulf Council will see this at their next meeting in April again.

DR. PONWITH: Just a couple of things. You talked about trip limits, and I think it's important to split out the notion of trip limits and ACLs, because a trip limit's job is to slow the pace at achieving the ACL. The ACL creates the ultimate barrier beyond which you can't go, and so treating those two as interchangeable I think can become problematic, but I do recognize that both create constraints on the industry.

The other thing that I worry a little bit about is conflating which of these plausible scenarios, the high, medium, or low-recruitment scenario, and conflating that with setting ACL equal to ABC, because those are also two complete different things. Setting ACL equal to ABC is indicative of your confidence in your ability to stop that fishery when you hit it, so that you don't exceed the ABC, which is the thing you must not do.

Setting ACL equal to ABC says you've got the ability to stop the fishery on a dime, and typically our ability to do that is always higher on the commercial side than on the recreational side, but I think it's important to separate those out, what those jobs are of each of those management decisions, so that we don't mix those up.

DR. CRABTREE: The thing that gives me some comfort here is I think it's extremely unlikely that the recreational fishery will catch their allocation. In fact, I think they will be substantially below it, and so it seems to me that, given our reasonably good ability to close the commercial fishery when they hit it, even if they went over a little bit, I don't think there's much chance at all that we would hit the ABC, and so I'm pretty comfortable here that we have a very low likelihood of exceeding the ABC, or the total combined ACL in this case, just because of where the catches have been and the history of the fishery.

MR. CONKLIN: I was going to speak to Wilson's point about the discards. Most of them are probably alive. They're not gaffing those small fish and they're not swallowing live bait rigs. They're just pulling one hook, usually, right up to the side of the boat and slinging it back off and that fish is gone. It's probably dumb enough that it's probably going to bite again and get released again, alive. Then, to the Gulf Council meeting, we'll be there next month and we'll definitely



come up with our sales pitch and reiterate these actions and get those folks to go along with it, and so have no fear. We will do it.

MR. HARTIG: I appreciate that, Chris, because you will be the person who does go to the Gulf.

DR. CRABTREE: That was my question. So Chris will be at the Gulf Council meeting?

MR. HARTIG: Yes.

DR. CRABTREE: Make sure you're briefed up real good, but I think the argument that this choice of ABC probably lessens the incentive to travel will resonate with them.

MR. HAYMANS: I am fine with the ABC equaling ACL, but, at the same time, I just look at the landings of what we're presented for the last four years. The high over that time was two-million pounds. The current ACL is 3.9, and we're going to 4.7. Do we think we're going to triple the landings, or am I missing -- Am I reading the table wrong?

MR. HARTIG: I think, if you look at king mackerel over time, where the ABC has been set, it's been set high, higher than what we've been able to catch for almost the entire history of the fishery, but what it has done is it has allowed the fishery to take advantage of high year classes for a period of time as the stock goes up and down. I mean it's an amazing consistent sine wave of year classes going through over the last twenty-five or thirty years, but that's really what it's been able to do. It allows the commercial and recreational fishermen to take advantage of high year classes in a highly uncertain recruitment scenario fishery.

DR. CRABTREE: I think the bottom line I got from talking to them is if the upwelling phenomenon persists, it's very unlikely that they're going to catch all of this, but, if things change next year, then their catches could go up.

MR. HARTIG: I think you'll see our catches go up a little bit, but with these upwelling scenarios, which I have to deal with through the entire summer, it's taken about probably 70 percent of the days I actually catch fish out of production. Like Roy says, and the other fishermen as well, if that continues to persist, we will never get the catches we once had in this fishery, no matter where you set it. Michelle, did you have something?

DR. DUVAL: Mr. Chairman, I was prepared to make a motion, if you would like one. **I move that we change our preferred alternative under Action 2-2 from Alternative 3 to Alternative 2.**

MR. HARTIG: Motion by Michelle and second by Mel. We've had a lot of discussion. Is there any further discussion? **Is there any objection to this motion? Seeing none, that motion is approved.** The next item is Action 4. What page is that on, Kari?

DR. MACLAUHLIN: Page 17.

MR. HARTIG: PDF page 17, and that's to establish commercial split seasons for Atlantic migratory king mackerel in the Southern Zone.



DR. MACLAUHLIN: Moving into Action 4, we have our no action alternative, which would just leave the one year-round quota for the Atlantic Southern Zone. That would be starting March 1 through the end of February. The Gulf Advisory Panel recommended this, and I will discuss that a little more. In January, the Gulf Council selected Alternative 1 as their preferred.

Alternative 2 was based on a recommendation from the South Atlantic AP last year, and then this year, at their February meeting, the South Atlantic AP recommended Alternative 2, and that is the current South Atlantic preferred alternative. This allocates the Southern Zone quota at 60 percent from March 1 through September 30 and 40 percent for October 1 through the end of February. Any remaining quota from Season 1 would transfer to Season 2, but Season 2 would not be carried forward. When the quota is met or expected to be met, the commercial harvest in the Southern Zone will be prohibited for the remainder of the season.

We have a couple other alternatives to look at. Alternative 3 is also a 60 percent/40 percent split season, except that Season 1 would go from March 1 to October 31, and Season 2 would be November 1 through the end of February. Then Alternative 4 looks at a 50/50 split season quota, where Season 1 is March 1 through October 31 and Season 2 is November 1 through the end of February.

Again, since the councils have different preferred alternatives, we can't submit for formal review until all the preferred alternatives are the same, and so this will go back to the Gulf Council in April and -- If you guys take final action here, then it will go to the Gulf in April and they can change or keep their same preferreds and take final action. If they're all aligned, then we'll submit it. We'll get it ready to send it for you, and, if not, then it will come back to you in June.

A few considerations that I have in here -- So a large proportion of the Southern Zone quota is landed in what is now the Florida East Coast Subzone, 90 percent or higher in most years. The AP had recommended this because the commercial split season would ensure that a portion of the Southern Zone quota would be available for the later months, even if there's a high level of harvest in the earlier months.

We have a figure in there that kind of shows the general landing patterns for the Southern Zone by month. The months of September through November usually have the lowest landings and then there's an increase. The fishermen report that the landings in the fall months usually start to increase in November, but, in some years, they have become abundant in October, and that's why the AP had recommended the seasons in Alternative 2.

In years of high landings, such as in 2009/2010, there may be high landings in March that could affect the Season 1 landings reaching that split season quota, and then there's lots of information in the draft document, in Section 2.4. We have this figure in here, and what this shows is it takes into account the fishing years 1998/1999 through 2013/2014. The solid line is the average pounds per month, and then the gray area is the range. You can see in some years it was a lot higher than the average and then lower, but, in general, there is a pattern and that's what it's based on.

Also, Alternative 2 kind of sets up a system similar to how the system is set up with the Florida East Coast Subzone. Even when folks on the Florida east coast are fishing, in the spring and summer, they will always -- Under the current system, where they switch to Gulf in the winter, there will always be quota, because they switch to the Gulf quota. This system will kind of mirror



the system that's set up there now. We have some tables in there to show you the actual pounds for the split season quotas under each of these.

Then we have a couple of figures in here. I have the tables that show what it would look like with the ACL that you just selected as your preferred. The ones in here are based on your previous preferred, where the ACL was set at the deterministic equilibrium yield. Maybe I will just run past these. In general, when we were doing the analysis -- In general, if you have a year like 2009/2010, where the conditions were right and the fish were there and they were catching them, there is a possibility that in Season 1 it will -- There could be an early closure, especially -- This is setting the ACL at 12.7-million pounds, and so this is the lowest.

Some of the higher ACLs, and your current preferred ACL, would probably keep those landings under the ACL and avoid a closure. Then, for Season 2 in general, the Season 2 landings will stay under even that lowest ACL, 12.7-million pounds.

At the last meeting in February, the South Atlantic AP supported Alternative 2 as the preferred, but then they also recommended that the councils consider adding a 70 percent/30 percent alternative, which you guys talked about in December, I think. We had talked about it before, with doing a 70/30 percent, but then it wasn't added. That, of course, would slow down the amendment. We would have to add additional analysis, but the AP felt that the Alternative 2 would set the system up under which the quotas would be similar to the current system they're working under.

The South Atlantic AP also discussed how these alternatives would affect the traveling fishermen, because this came up as a concern at the Gulf AP and the Gulf Council. They felt like the split season quotas in Alternative 2 would be more likely to provide access in December, January, and February than under a year-round quota.

They felt like it could be more likely that the quota would be met under a year-long quota before that winter fishery was done, and so if that happened, there would likely be more fishermen that would travel from the Florida east coast to the Gulf, and that would be under the year-round. They felt like the split season quota would reduce the number of fishermen who would be likely to travel to the Gulf.

The Gulf AP had recommended that Alternative 1, no action, with trip limits to manage the harvest, and they felt that year-round quota would reduce the number of the fishermen who travel to the Gulf from the Florida east coast. At public hearings, we had several commenters that supported Alternative 2, that split season quota, and then another one who brought up using that 70 percent/30 percent allocation, and then many commenters supported a March 1 opening for Season 1.

We have the rationale. The South Atlantic Council has selected Alternative 2 as their preferred, based on the South Atlantic AP recommendation, and the Gulf Council selected Alternative 1 as their preferred, based on the Gulf AP recommendation and concerns about traveling fishermen. You can change the alternatives or change your preferred alternative. I will get those back up here, and we do have our Mackerel AP Chair here as well.

MR. HARTIG: Ira, I'm sorry I neglected to bring you up to the table on the last discussion, but if you have anything that you would like to add from the AP perspective on either one of these actions



-- In fact, you can come up and sit right here if you would like. That way, I absolutely know you're right here, because I can't miss you. I appreciate you coming.

MR. LAKS: My pleasure. One thing I would like to add is in this fishery, it's a small-boat fishery. The largest boats are probably forty-foot. The average is probably twenty-two to twenty-eight-foot, and so the likelihood of going over the ACL is not only limited by environmental conditions, but the weather conditions too, but in the right years, it would allow those guys to catch a few more fish.

MR. HARTIG: Absolutely. Kari has done a lot of work on the traveling fishermen, and it's a really interesting story that her information tells, and so it would be interesting to hear some of that.

DR. MACLAUHLIN: I'm sorry that this was not ready beforehand. It was kind of something that, when we realized that this was the main issue between the inconsistent preferred alternatives with the council, that we needed to get the information from the Science Center. We put in our data request and that was awesome. Steve Turner turned that around quickly, and we really appreciate it.

What we asked for was we took all the -- We identified all the vessels that had a commercial king mackerel permit on a vessel that was home-ported in a Florida east coast county. That's 531 vessels, and we said we want all of their landings by month and by zone, from 2004 as far as you can get. He sent all the way through December of 2015. This is logbook information.

It was a very large dataset, and so I have some of the information in there so that you guys can understand the concern here that's coming from the Gulf. Here in this table, and I'm putting together a larger document that will go into the amendment and will be presented at the -- Here is one table, and just so we know, these are -- We have 531 Florida east coast vessels. That's what we have identified them as, because they have listed their home port.

425 of them have no catch from the Gulf zones, at least since 2004. Maybe they went, but so most folks are not going to the Gulf. Of the 106 that are left, they kind of -- Really crunching the numbers, they are kind of starting to show some patterns, and we have ten vessels that go all the time. That's your core group. They go every year. They've been going for a very long time and they're always going to go. It's part of their portfolio.

Then you have the medium and the low. They have started going in more recent years, and I will show you a graph that will probably explain a little more why, and then you have seventy-one of those vessels, so the largest majority of the Florida east coast vessels that went to the Gulf, went one year and they never went back. This is any zone, if they went to Southern, Western, Northern, or two or three of those.

Here is another table that we put together. This is the number of the Florida east coast vessels that went to at least one Gulf zone. Sometimes they go to two. Maybe they go to the Western Zone and then, on the way back, they will go to the Northern Zone. You can see how this has increased in recent years. It was your core group, maybe a few people checking it out here or there, but your core group of about a dozen who always go, but then, in these later years, it has really increased, the number of vessels that are going, that have gone over.



Then I have this graph. What we have here is the blue line is the number of Florida east coast vessels that went to the Gulf Western Zone, and this is kind of the primary zone where a lot of vessels -- If you plotted all of them, it would look the same, pretty much. This, over here, is the number of vessels, what the blue line shows, and then we plotted it against this orange line, which is Atlantic king mackerel landings, which you guys know the landings have decreased in recent years. This other side here is the axis for that, and so it's millions of pounds of landed.

You can see that as the Atlantic king mackerel landings decrease that the number of Florida east coast vessels that reported catch from a Gulf zone increased. Now it's starting to decrease in these last couple of years, and so we'll see where that goes, but that's the concern from the Gulf.

MR. HARTIG: Any questions about that?

DR. CRABTREE: So do you attribute that falloff in the east coast landings predominantly to the environmental conditions and upwelling and those kinds of things?

DR. MACLAUHLIN: These are Atlantic king mackerel landings, and so this is -- In the winter, it's not counting the Florida east coast landings. Does that make sense? From April through September, that includes the Florida east coast, but then, once they switch to the current system, where they're fishing on Gulf, it doesn't include that. I mean I plotted the Florida east coast landings, which are just November through March right now, and there wasn't really a pattern, as much as there was for April to September. If the landings aren't good, that seems to affect how many of those boats go to the Gulf.

MR. HARTIG: I think, Roy, in talking to the fishermen, some of the people who have gone and are not going back again, I mean it's not easy to go over there. It's not an easy thing to go over and be away for three or four months, away from your family. Some guys are able to adapt to it and do it. We have one guy that did it for I think three years and now he is tuna fishing in Samoa, and so I mean that's -- He wasn't going back.

MS. BOSARGE: Just a technical question about the graph, because you were referring to months and the graph has years at the bottom. That is supposed to be years, right, because the lines would probably be about the same if those were months, because that's about the time of the year that you would peak over in our neck of the woods, in the Gulf. Those are years, right, and not months?

DR. MACLAUHLIN: I was working on some monthly, so that you could see, but I do -- This is the years. This is the total number of the Florida east coast vessels in that year. However, the Florida east coast vessels are only in the zones at very specific times of year, which I have here. In the Western, they only go to the Western zone from July to September or October. There were a few years where maybe there was some reported catch in December or January sometimes, and they're only in the Northern Zone in October to November. They're only in the Southern Zone November through March.

MR. HARTIG: Any questions about the traveling? That's a really cool presentation. I mean it really lays out maybe some of the reasons why people are going and it also -- In talking to people, it's not for everybody. Some people go and they don't go back again, and so that could be, Roy, in those later years that things weren't as rosy as they had been in the past. Catches were lower in the beginning of the season, and so some of these guys who had gone thinking that they were going



to have big catches early did not get those catches and they came home early. In their determination, they're probably not going back again. As our stock improves, that will also help that as well.

MS. BOSARGE: Kari, can you send that so that when we have our meeting in April that we can look at it, because those were exactly the questions we had, and I think that will inform our decision. We wanted to know how many of these boats are traveling. Is it just handful or what the case may be? I do think a lot of the concern in the Gulf was with the Western Zone.

This is always very hard for me to get a grip on, because I come from the shrimp fishery and we are a traveling fleet. That's what we do. I mean we shrimp everywhere, all through the Gulf and through the South Atlantic. When you get into these territorial things, it's kind of -- It's not what I'm used to, but, anyway, we do have a lot of the traveling fleet that comes to the western Gulf, and I would venture to guess that some of the conversation is going to have to do with -- You see that opening date for the western, that July 1, we had a lot of conversation in a previous document about pushing that date out some, to give some of those fishermen in the western Gulf a better shot at catching those fish, just based on the way the fish move and things of that nature.

We didn't, because you all said don't do that, and if you do that, it's going to coincide with some of our openings and we're going to bottom-out the price and so we didn't. Then we have that one alternative where we're looking at trying to share some of the quota, and you see where our preferred is right there. That's not happening at this point. We are not sharing quota between recreational and commercial to give those western guys a chance, maybe, from that aspect.

Then, when we saw this split season, we said, oh my gosh, are we going to bring even more boats over to fish on that western quota if they peak out their landings early and their season is actually closed? Those guys wouldn't have a choice of fishing under the CPUs, even when they're not that great. They wouldn't have that option.

But, having said that, you just changed your ABC/ACL, and so that gives a little bit more comfort right there. There's a lot of moving parts, but I think this would inform the decision, especially when you show that there's only ten boats, ten or eleven boats, that are in that high category that pretty much travel every single year. We can kind of get a better grip on it.

Somebody made a comment the other day, and I think it was Ira actually, that maybe one day those two APs should meet jointly. It's not the big, bad traveling fleet if you actually all get in a room together and you understand you have the same issues and are facing the same things. I don't know that that's necessarily something we have to do right now, because this document is getting, hopefully, close to the end, but in the future maybe it might not be a bad idea, but this is a great discussion and I will definitely take it back to the Gulf, and I'm sure that Chris will hammer it home too.

DR. MACLAUHLIN: I'm coming in April. Again, sorry that you guys have not seen this until I put it on the screen, but really some of it I did yesterday afternoon, just because we -- It was a hefty dataset and I'm still looking at the best way to tell the story of what's going on, but we will have that for you guys ahead of time, because we're almost finished with it, and it will be a little more presentable. I will be there also to talk about any of the analysis part, and Chris will be there to represent.



MR. LAKS: I just want to add one thing about the traveling fishermen. I don't have anything to back this up, but I think Ben can back me up here. I think the fleet is tending to go to smaller boats, and a lot of the guys who travel live on their boats. If you're on an outboard and you're trailering it over to the Gulf and you get two weeks of bad weather and you're living in a hotel, economically it becomes hard to stay there. Everything has to fall out right to travel over there. You're eating out every meal and you're living in a hotel. If the weather is bad, you're not going to make any money. You can probably see that those boats that travel over there are the larger boats that they can stay on their boat and have the ability, but a small, twenty-five-foot outboard, it's a gamble to go over there. It really is.

MR. HARTIG: That's predominantly in that Northern Zone, where the fishery is closer to shore, and we do have some trailered boats that go there, but Ira is right. If things don't line up right, you're going to lose money trying to participate in that fishery. Then again, those guys aren't leaving if we get our fish back, and indications are that, from several lines of evidence, that we're seeing an improvement in the stock. We've had a lot, a lot of discussion. Ira, did you have anything from the AP to elaborate on the split season for Action 4?

MR. LAKS: Just that it really preserves the way we've fished in the past with what was considered the Gulf group. It keeps us somewhat in the same mode we've been fishing, and, again, to alleviate the Gulf having a split season and being able to fish December, January, and February, we will discourage people from traveling to the Gulf if they can fish in their backyard.

MR. HARTIG: All right. We have a preferred and the Gulf has a preferred. We've had a lot of discussion. Is there any intent to change our preferred? Seeing none, we're moving on. That brings us to Action 5, the trip limit discussions.

DR. MACLAUHLIN: That would be page 22 for Action 5. This will establish trip limits for the Atlantic Southern Zone. Just so everybody knows, the language we're going to start using for the Gulf is Gulf Western Zone, Gulf Northern Zone, and then Gulf Southern Zone. We are probably going to try to start saying "Atlantic Northern Zone" and "Atlantic Southern Zone" a lot, and we've added that into the draft amendment, to always specify which southern zone we're talking about.

With Action 5, this is for the Atlantic Southern Zone. We have Alternative 1, no action. The current trip limits in the Atlantic Southern Zone is north of the Flagler/Volusia County line. It's 3,500 pounds year-round. Then, from April 1 through October 31, between the Flagler/Volusia County line and the Volusia/Brevard line, it's 3,500 pounds. Then from Volusia/Brevard to the Miami-Dade/Monroe County line, it's seventy-five fish from April 1 through October 31.

Because of the boundary change in Action 1, there would be, under a no action alternative, no trip limits from Flagler/Volusia to the Dade/Monroe line from November 1 through March 31. That's why we're trying to just kind of reestablish the trip limit system, because the management boundary has changed.

The alternatives were developed based on some recommendations from the AP at their April 2015 meeting, and so you guys have gone through a couple of different ways to look at the alternatives for the Atlantic Southern Zone. When the South Atlantic AP met in February of this year, they selected a couple of the alternatives to recommend.



Alternative 2, which the South Atlantic AP recommended in February, this would set the trip limit north of Flagler/Volusia at 3,500 pounds. Then, south of the Flagler/Volusia County line, the year-round trip limit is seventy-five fish for Atlantic king mackerel. Then we have Alternative 3, which sets -- In the Atlantic Southern Zone, we have the 3,500 pounds north of Flagler/Volusia, and then, south of it, it would be fifty fish from March 1 through March 31 and seventy-five fish for the remainder of Season 1, as designated in the split season action. Under your current preferred, that would be March through September.

Then there were a couple of options for a step-down to slow down harvest if 75 percent of the Season 1 quota has been taken. That will go back to fifty fish. Then, in Option 3a, that could only happen after August 1. Option 3b is it could happen any time during Season 1.

Alternative 4 is for Season 2, and so, under your current preferred in Action 4, that would be October through February. It would set the area south of the Flagler/Volusia line and it would be fifty fish for Season 2. That was recommended by the South Atlantic AP, and then we have a couple of options for when a potential step-up could happen. That is similar to the current management situation.

The South Atlantic AP recommended Option 4a, all parts of Option 4a, in which the last month of Season 2, if less than 70 percent of the quota had been taken, it will bump up to seventy-five fish for that last month. Then we have a couple of other options, either starting on January 1, with the trigger being 70 percent of the quota, or February 1, with the trigger being 80 percent of the quota.

What the South Atlantic AP has recommended with Alternative 4 and Option 4a and Alternative 2 -- What they were going for, even though Alternative 2 says year-round, what they were trying to do was set up seventy-five for Season 1 and then fifty for Season 2, with a potential step-up. We clarified that at the meeting when they made their motion, that that's what they were trying to do.

We have the AP recommendations. The Gulf AP did talk about this, but they decided that the South Atlantic AP should make those recommendations. Then, in the public hearings, we had several commenters that supported the South Atlantic AP's recommendation, where it's seventy-five fish in Season 1 and fifty fish in Season 2, with a possible step-up.

We did have one commenter that supported doing seventy-five fish in Season 2 with a step-down, and then there was some concern about Volusia County wouldn't have access to the 3,500-pound trip limit in Season 1 that they would have under the current system. For this, you would need to select a preferred alternative and option.

MR. HARTIG: Ira, potential AP considerations on the trip limit? I mean we're all over the place on this one, unfortunately, but go ahead.

MR. LAKS: I think the fishermen feel, especially in this zone, that they've bent over backwards to keep their fishery open all year. We're under, by far, the most miniscule trip limits of the whole fishery. Opening at seventy-five in March, what they feel is it maximizes the potential for the best economic gain during Lent, and also the weather in March is terrible. Currently, in that zone right now, it's blowing thirty for four or five or six days, and nobody is fishing.



If you don't open it at that, they feel that it doesn't allow them to catch the maximum potential when they can get out. Keeping it at seventy-five from April through the first season is historically where we've been, and then going back to fifty and trying to keep the season open year-round and with a step-up of anything that is left on the quota, it's very similar. I think the fishermen just really agree that that would be the best way to make the most out of the fishery.

MR. HARTIG: I think what I would like to do here is probably not discuss this right now. There's some things I have to tie up, in looking at these. I think that we ought to hold this until full council and then have something to bring before you.

MS. BURGESS: I just want to ask a technical question, because the way the alternatives are worded now in the document, we have, as Kari pointed out, Alternative 2 is for year-round and Alternative 4 is for Season 2. I just would like clarification if it's technically possible to choose 2 and 4a and have it understood that 2 applies to Season 1, or if we need to add another alternative.

MR. HARTIG: That sounds like a Monica question. Can we mix and match some of this and bring something that makes more sense to you at full council? Is that a possibility?

MS. SMIT-BRUNELLO: Do you mean can you select more than one preferred alternative?

MR. HARTIG: Yes.

MS. BURGESS: The question is Alternative 2 specifies year-round, but the AP's intention is that it would apply to Season 1, and Alternative 4 speaks to Season 2. Is it possible to select Alternative 2 as the preferred, with the intention that it applies to only Season 1, and then select Alternative 4 for Season 2, or do we need a new alternative that addresses just Season 1?

MS. SMIT-BRUNELLO: What you're saying is, I think, that there is no one alternative in here that describes exactly what you want to do. Your head is nodding yes, for the record, and so then I think that if you want to craft a different alternative that you should -- If you want one alternative that gets you where you want to go and it's not in here, then yes, you should specify another alternative.

MR. HARTIG: But what does that do? What are the implications of specifying another alternative in this document?

MS. SMIT-BRUNELLO: It has to be analyzed. You have to have the information before you. It could be that all of that information is already in the document, but it's just not packaged in a way that speaks exactly to one single alternative, and we could get -- Maybe Kari would like to discuss that a little bit. If there needs to be some more packaging done, depending on what Kari says, maybe then that would need to come back before you in June for final action.

DR. MACLAUHLIN: Mike Larkin did that analysis. He may actually be the one to speak about it, because I think that the way he did the analysis for Alternative 2 was seventy-five fish for a whole year and not in combination with anything else. However, he was working with fifty and seventy-five-fish trip limits, and so it may be in the scope of the analysis already, even though he never did a combo of Season 1 at seventy-five without any changes, like Alternative 3. What do you think, Mike?



DR. LARKIN: Just stand by for a minute. Hold on.

DR. MACLAUHLIN: We have that analysis. We would probably just need to reorganize that part, but we have an analysis that would show seventy-five fish for the entirety of Season 1. That's in the document, but it's just not presented in that way. It would be in Appendix G.

MR. HARTIG: That's an answer to that question, but go ahead, Jessica.

MS. MCCAWLEY: My suggestion would be that maybe we craft another alternative. It looks like we don't need any additional analysis, but, especially if this document is going back to the Gulf, I think it will be less confusing if we craft another alternative here, and I don't know if that's something that you want us to work on between now and full council, work on with Kari, or if Kari feels like she knows what we're talking about. I'm up for whatever.

MR. HARTIG: I think we all ought to get together and sit down and work on something that's workable, because the first season step-down isn't in there. That's another consideration we need to deal with, and so -- That's my bad, and I'm sorry for this. I thought we had something that was ready to go and we don't, and I will apologize to the council for that.

We'll deal with it. We'll bring it back to you at full council, and so we're going to move on and we're going to move to the last item that we have to deal with in this document, Action 9. That's the last item under the Gulf that we weren't able to accomplish yesterday. What's the page on that, Kari?

DR. MACLAUHLIN: Page 31. Action 9 is to modify the recreational bag limit for Gulf king mackerel. Currently, the bag limit is two fish per person per day. We have the Gulf Council Preferred Alternative 2, which is three fish, and that is recommended by both the South Atlantic and the Gulf AP. The current South Atlantic preferred is the bag limit at four fish per person per day.

I do want to clarify the reason right now that there are different preferred alternatives. It's that the Gulf Council preferred was Alternative 3 at your last meeting, and the South Atlantic selected that also as their preferred, and then the Gulf Council changed their preferred to Alternative 2. They got a recommendation from their AP.

We have a couple of graphs in here to show how this is going to work. With the public input, we had one commenter support Alternative 2 as the preferred, the three fish bag limit. At the Gulf public hearings, most commenters supported an increase in bag limit, but they did have a couple that supported keeping it at two fish.

The rationale is that the Gulf Council selected Alternative 2 based on the Gulf AP recommendation, and they have talked about this a little more, about increasing the bag limits, in order to increase the recreational opportunities and possibly increase the recreational landings. The South Atlantic Council had selected Alternative 3 to track the Gulf preferred at their last meeting. Committee actions are changing the alternatives or changing your preferred alternative.

MR. HARTIG: Is there a motion to change our preferred alternative to the Gulf Council's preferred?



MR. CONKLIN: **I will make the motion that we deselect Alternative 3 as our preferred and select Alternative 2 as our preferred in Action 9.**

MR. HARTIG: Motion by Chris and second by Zack. Is there further discussion? **Is there any objection to that motion? Seeing none, that motion is approved.** We can't do anything else and we will go to cobia. What is first on cobia?

DR. MACLAUHLIN: Give me about two-minutes.

MR. HARTIG: You need two minutes? Okay. I am hesitant to let you all go, but if you have to, go.

MR. HARTIG: It looks like mostly everybody is here and it's quieting down. The first item we have under cobia is Mike Larkin's presentation of the recreational season for Atlantic cobia.

DR. LARKIN: I am going to give you an update on the recreational sector for cobia. In March of 2015, Amendment 20B changed the cobia ABC and ACL, commercial and recreational, and ACTs based on SEDAR 28, but the AM, the accountability measure, did not change. I am going to talk about that in a few slides from now.

Following SEDAR 28, the recent assessment, the Atlantic cobia stock is from New York through Georgia. That's how they define the Atlantic stock. East Florida was a different stock. Here, which is really I guess the hot topic and what everyone keeps bringing up, is in 2015, as you can see in this graph here, they were really high. I also added the 2015 recreational ACL there. I should point out this is the recreational landings from New York through Georgia.

Also though, in 2013, that recreational ACL was not implemented. I added it just to show you for comparative purposes, but that red line was not implemented in 2013 and 2014, but you can see if it was in 2013, using those landings from New York through Georgia, they went over the ACL in 2013 and they were under it in 2014, but then 2015 had really high landings.

Then the details of those really high 2015 landings, here I break it down by state. You can see that Virginia and North Carolina are the big players in this, with 47 percent of those landings coming from Virginia and 41 percent of those landings coming from North Carolina. South Carolina only had 8 percent of the landings, and Georgia only had 4 percent of the total landings.

Over in the far right-hand column there, is the percent standard error. You can see, for three out of the four states, they're relatively low. It's 39 percent for Virginia, 29 percent for North Carolina, and 47 percent for South Carolina, as compared to other stocks where we've seen 70 or 80 or even 100 percent PSE. Georgia does have a PSE of 75 percent, but Georgia has a much shorter coastline area, and, again, they're only contributing about 4 percent of the total landings.

Now I will try and answer why they were so high in 2015. The first thing I looked at was looking at those low landings in 2014 and those high landings in 2015. What was the cobia caught per person? They are statistically not different. You can see it's 0.512 for 2014 and it's 0.523 in 2015, but there was a higher average weight. If you look at the figure down below it here, in 2015, you can see actually, in 2015, that the average weight was higher than it was in 2013 and 2014, but I



expanded the time series to go back to 2010 to show you that the average weight fluctuates from year to year.

In fact, it was a high average weight in 2015, but it's about the same average weight it was 2010. If you expanded this time series even more, you would see it just fluctuate up and down around roughly about thirty-two pounds. In fact, if you expanded the last twenty years, if you fit a linear regression, you would have a line with a slope of zero. Really, I'm trying to show you there is no clear trends, even though in the last two years it's been a higher average weight, but, over time, it kind of goes up and down, up and down, and fluctuating around thirty-two pounds average weight, but we happen to have higher average weight in 2015.

Then I also want to point out the targeted fishing effort. Yesterday, we talked about the effort that I showed you was for all trips, all MRIP and all headboat, where in this case it's something different. This, I looked at for each year and what is the targeted fishing effort. When they survey these MRIP -- When they survey at the dock, they ask what was the primary and what was the secondary fish that you targeted?

When cobia was listed on those trips, I summed them up, and you can see that when they're targeted, both primary and secondary, they're much higher in 2015 in the total number of trips than they were in 2014 and 2013. You can see that essentially the targeted fishing effort is higher in 2015 than it was in the last two years. More people are targeting cobia.

Now, to move on to the accountability measure, in 2011, Amendment 18 set the accountability measure. If the recreational ACL and total ACL -- When I define total ACL, that's the commercial and recreational ACL combined. If they're exceeded, then compare the recreational landings to the recreational ACL over a range of years, essentially a three-year average. However, if the ACL is changed, then the first single year of landings will be compared to the recreational ACL.

What I'm trying to explain in this paragraph is there's some flexibility in the future. You can actually look at a three-year average of landings to compare them to the recreational ACL, but if the ACL is changed, which it was in 2015, then that first single year of landings will be compared to the recreational ACL.

Where we are right now is the ACL was changed in 2015, and so we have to look at those landings in 2015 to determine whether they exceeded the ACL and whether the accountability measure needs to be kicked in, and also in 2015 both the recreational and the total ACL were exceeded.

The AM requires the season to be reduced in 2016, based on projections of when the landings will reach the ACT of 500,000 pounds. It may not have been clear, and I apologize, in the figure before, but the ACL in 2015 was 630,000, whereas the ACT is lower than that, and so now you're shooting for the ACT of 500,000.

For now, in terms of projections, you have some -- I am showing you some flexibility down here. The closure date really depends on what years are used to predict what the 2016 landings would be. 2013, the closure date for hitting that ACT of 500,000 would be June 27. 2014, it would be August 14. In 2015, it would be May 31. If you take the average of those three years, you can essentially smooth out those high peak landings in 2015, and so the average of 2013 to 2015, you get a closure date of June 18.



We also took into account the change in North Carolina's regulation. They switched from a two fish bag limit down to a one cobia per person bag limit in middle to late February, and so, incorporating that into the projections, it doesn't give you much of a difference. It actually adds two days, but you can see over here the average 2013 to 2015, and incorporate that change in the bag limit in North Carolina, and you get a closure date of June 20, which is what was announced yesterday.

I am trying to provide you more details here of why does it not make that much of a difference. In fact, I did this table up top here. If there's no reduction in bag limit, you get a closure date, and this is, again, using the average of 2013 to 2015 landings, but if you have no reduction in the bag limit, you get a June 18 closure date. If you take into account that North Carolina bag limit of one cobia per person and their change, you get June 20, which is what we announced. Any additional bag limits, South Carolina and Georgia, it only gives you one more day.

Really, the reason for that is in this figure down below here, and it's the percent of trips for the cobia per person. Some of you may be wondering how do you get less than one cobia per person. Really, you have to take into account how we get the data.

We survey somebody at the dock of how many people were fishing. Let's say there were four people fishing and how many cobia were caught on that trip -- We don't know if this person caught two or this person caught one, but, instead, we have the total number of fishermen and the total number of fish for that trip. If you have four people fishing and two cobia caught, that comes out to about a half a cobia per person, whereas, in reality, if you have four people -- If you want to maximize that bag limit, if you have four people fishing, you can harvest eight cobia. That would be the two cobia per person.

When I looked at the survey data, when people were surveyed at the dock, the majority of the trips caught less than one cobia per person. There's a lot of examples of four people fishing with two cobia and five people fishing with three cobia and three people fishing with only one or two cobia, and so, in all those cases, there was less than one cobia per person. That's why it didn't make a huge difference when North Carolina changed their bag limit from two down to one cobia per person.

Other options is a vessel limit, or I call it a vessel limit. A lot of people call this a boat limit, and so meaning the boat can only harvest one cobia, no matter how many people are on the boat, or two cobia or three. In this case, you could have more of an impact, if you do want to reduce landings in the future. You can see that the lower you get, the more the impact.

If you drop down to a two cobia vessel limit, you will reduce the harvest of the three, four, and five cobia per boat. That is one option, and so you have more -- The lower you get, if you drop it all the way down to one cobia per vessel, then you can eliminate all the other trips and reduce that harvest. The lower you get, the more of an impact you will have.

Size limit is another option. I first want to point out that 100 percent of the cobia are sexually mature at thirty-one-inches, according to the recent assessment, and so all of these fish are above the size of sexual maturity. All of these fish above this red line here, that's the current minimum size limit, and so you can kind of get that behind you.



Anyway, you do have more of an impact, or you could have a significant impact, of reducing harvest -- For example, if you moved all the way up to thirty-six, you would be reducing this harvest here, below that size limit here, and so all these, the thirty-three, thirty-four, and thirty-five, you would reduce harvest on those animals if you moved up to thirty-six. It's just another option to consider if you want to reduce harvest.

I am going to stop here for questions. I have several other slides beyond this, because I am sure you guys are going to want to know more details about the individual landings, and so I have additional slides I can show you, but I just kind of wanted to see what the questions were and play off of that.

MR. HAYMANS: Do you mind going back to the previous screen and just leaving it there for a minute, please?

DR. LARKIN: Sure. I guess I should probably explain this. Percent of cobia caught, this is from the 2015. This is, again, from New York all the way through Georgia, and then essentially the distribution of the fish at different sizes that are caught in that high year. Then the red line is the minimum size limit that's currently in place. Virginia has a -- Theirs is in total length, but it converts to about a thirty-three-inch fork length. All this data is in fork length, and so I just tried to keep them all on the same page there, but I would be happy to answer a question on it.

MR. BOWEN: Thanks, Mike. That was a good presentation. Let me ask you, do we have any analysis -- When we're thinking about raising the minimum size limit, do we have any analysis on discard mortality for cobia?

DR. LARKIN: That's a good question. It's low. Let me double-check that, because I have that right here. I think it's low. I think it's like 5 percent, is what they estimated in SEDAR 28.

MR. BOWEN: You said 5 percent?

DR. LARKIN: Yes, but let me --

MR. HARTIG: Please check it.

MR. BOWEN: I have a follow-up as well.

DR. LARKIN: It might have been 10, but I'm pretty sure it was -- I think I actually left it on my desk, but I'm going to stick with that. I believe it was in SEDAR 28, the recent assessment, they had a low discard mortality of 5 percent.

MR. BOWEN: Thanks, and I just want to add a little -- At the first of your presentation, you went through targeted trips. I can give you and the rest of the council some anecdotal information on why I feel like the targeted trips were increased, and it goes back to when -- At least from my state, it goes back to when sea bass were closed and didn't open until June 1.

What happened in my state was the charter guys -- We very rarely targeted cobia way back when. We always went sea bass fishing, and when sea bass regulations kicked in and the sea bass start year didn't open until June 1, we had to figure out -- To stay in business, we had to figure out other



species to target, and so what we did is we started targeting cobia more and more in May, and then those people that went at first, when the sea bass were closed and they went cobia fishing, we started getting repeat business off of that, and that's the reason, I feel like, at least in Georgia, that the targeted trips for cobia has increased, and I just wanted to give you and the council some background on why that is, at least from Georgia. Thank you.

MR. CONKLIN: How many dockside samples did you have to pull your information out of, Mike?

DR. LARKIN: I looked at Wave 2 and 3, and there was -- I focused on Virginia and North Carolina, and so I don't have those exact numbers in front of me now, but it was over a hundred samples for those waves. It was the peak ones, 3 and 4, from each state, and so a good number of samples.

DR. LANEY: I am not on the committee, but, Mike, on the Atlantic cobia recreational landings graph, could we put error bars on those estimates? If we did, what would they look like?

DR. LARKIN: This one right here?

DR. LANEY: Yes.

DR. LARKIN: If I add the PSEs essentially to them, yes.

DR. LANEY: Do you know, off the top of your head, what the PSEs are on this?

DR. LARKIN: I would be confident that they would not overlap. Therefore, they are statistically different from year to year, from what I've seen.

MR. HARTIG: Any other questions?

MR. HAYMANS: Thank you, Mike, for your presentation there. Given your analysis here, what are some of the scenarios that can be done to make sure the season goes longer than June 20 or 21?

DR. LARKIN: I would say, if you want to get the most bang out of your buck -- I would say definitely the most bang for your buck would be any changes to North Carolina and Virginia, since that's where the majority of the landings occur. I know bag limit is one option, but size limits can have a significant reduction, too. I hate to say it, but the landings were -- There is still a good number of landings in South Carolina and Georgia, but I would definitely focus on changes to Virginia and North Carolina. Also, the timing, too. If you waited until August, it would be too late, not only because of the closure, but the landings seem to peak right around in mid-summer.

MR. HAYMANS: How about the scenario of the bag limit or vessel limit changing through the season, like if it reaches -- Not that it would be up-to-date on the the MRIP survey, because it would lag behind, your surveys and reporting, but how about if you took projections from 2015 and said that we're going to have a two fish bag limit or vessel limit until June 30, and then, after that, we're going to reduce it down?



Do you need questions asked of how to get these scenarios down to extend the season? You gave a few reasons, but have you done any analysis that says if you do this and this that it's going to last this long, because the economics -- I don't have to tell you, because I am sure everybody else has too and this whole council, but the economics of people not being able to fish, especially in this fishery, and catching people by surprise is drastic and vast.

Extending the season out somehow, in any capability, under the limits of the council is imperative, and I believe it's incumbent upon everybody to think outside the box of how this can work, especially given the numbers that some have a really hard time believing that in 2015 there was -  
- The ocean turned to cobia, given your marine statistical survey, or MRIP, and it's just a difficulty that we have to live with, and what further analysis are you doing or looking forward to, or do you have to have questions from different states or from this committee and council to look how to --  
The scenarios of which the season can be extended. Thank you.

DR. LARKIN: I have done ballpark analyses. You can look at a boat limit from four. You get a 4 percent reduction. You go down to a 3 and you get a 13 percent reduction. I've looked at ballpark estimates for what would it be for changing the size limit.

I guess what I would like to see, because it's really -- There's a hundred different options you could look at. So I looked at the catch rate per day and then I can apply these reductions. Should I apply them to Virginia state waters? Should I apply them to North Carolina state waters? There is a lot of different options here. What would really help me is, if you want a scenario to look at, is specifics.

What date would you implement a vessel limit and what would it be? On what date would you implement a size limit and what would it be? Then I can answer it. I can give you certainly ballpark estimates now, but it would be much more -- If you wanted a much better answer, I would just need much more specifics, instead of trying all these different options at once.

MR. HAYMANS: I think that in the near future here that hopefully they will come up with some more specifics of how to do that and looking at it. We know every year is different from one year to the next, weather conditions and different things, and so just looking at ways to extend the season and give some people some opportunity to fish. Thank you.

DR. LARKIN: Keep in mind we did look at, when we made that closure date of June 20, an average of landings. If we just used 2015, I think it was like May or something. It was a much, much shorter season, and so, essentially, trying to smooth out that huge peak from 2015. We did look at an average of 2013 to 2015.

MR. HAYMANS: What is the percentage -- I think I read it somewhere or saw it, but I'm not quite sure, but what's the percent of the fish that are caught in state waters?

DR. LARKIN: That's a great question. That's one of my back-up slides here, if you could bear with me. I think that's my last slide. This is from that 2015 landings from New York down through Georgia. 82 percent of them came from state waters. I looked at other years too, and it's fairly consistent. It might be 80 or 85 or whatever, but the majority of it comes from state waters.



DR. DUVAL: You know, just following up on Dewey's comments about the significant economic impact that this is going to have, and I think mostly for our neighbors to the north, Virginia, and Virginia doesn't really even see any cobia until maybe, at the earliest, like the third week of May. I know that the folks in Virginia are interested in any way possible that this season could be extended by any actions that their commission might take in state waters.

They would like to see an increase in the size limit and implementation of a boat limit. I know I had our staff do some preliminary analyses showing what the combined impacts would be of going to a vessel limit and increasing the size limit, and it seemed like, in terms of a percent reduction in weight for harvest, you could maybe get overall combined amongst the states, if all states went to say a certain vessel limit and an increase in the size limit, it was possible to get maybe up to a 20 percent reduction, but, again, that's looking across all years and that's looking at like maybe a thirty-eight-inch fork length limit.

I know that folks in Virginia are interested in bringing to their commission, which is going to be meeting March 22, I believe, some options that they could consider that would increase the season length, but they also want to be able to tell their commission what that increase in season length would be.

This is a pulse fishery, and I mean myself, just based on the fact that the majority of landings have been occurring in state waters, I would like to see the council explore either a joint management plan with the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission or a complementary management plan with the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission, because, to be perfectly honest, the seasonal nature of this fishery, in order for us to I think be flexible enough and allow for maximum access to the resource and tailoring of regulations that are going to keep harvest within an ACL, but also allow for that flexibility that the states need without the significant economic impact, we're going to need to explore that type of joint management as an option.

The commission process is more flexible and it moves along more quickly. The states have the ability to implement what's called conservation equivalency, where they are able to design management measures to meet the needs of their fishermen.

Clearly the June 20 season length that we have right now disadvantages fishermen in North Carolina, to some degree, but pretty much it almost eliminates Virginia's entire fishing season. I will probably offer up a motion to that effect at some point, but I just want to throw it out there for folks to consider.

I have briefly mentioned this to the folks at the Atlantic States Commission. I'm sorry that they were not able to be here today for this discussion, but I do think that's something that we should explore, and, so, rambling and getting back to my point of how do we -- I guess the first question is if the folks in Virginia were to say we would like to see what would happen if we were to implement a three fish or a four fish vessel limit, combined with an increase in the size limit to thirty-eight or thirty-nine-inches fork length, what would that buy us, in terms of a season length -- I think that's what they need to go to their commission in March to be able to do that. Now, again, they don't really have any cobia harvest on record during the month of April, and so their season really doesn't get going until --



DR. LARKIN: I'm sorry to interrupt you, but I'm going to put up this slide right now to show you that seasonality. This is the landings by wave, just to confirm what you're saying. You can see the green line is Virginia and the blue is everything, from New York all the way through Georgia, but, really, it was those four states of Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Georgia, but, anyway, the black line is North Carolina, the dashed line, and the green dashed line is Virginia. I didn't mean to interrupt you, but it's showing you that in Virginia they have some landings in Wave 3, May to June, but the real peak of their harvest is in that July to August wave. You can continue, and sorry.

DR. DUVAL: I mean that's it for now. I'm sure I will have more comments and more questions. I think the biggest one was, I think, for folks in Virginia, they would like to see the results of that analysis and so if they were to implement by an emergency action a vessel limit and a larger minimum size at their upcoming March meeting, to be effective before the season gets going, to be effective in April, would the Fisheries Service be willing to do that analysis and recalculate the season length and potentially reissue a Fishery Bulletin with an updated length of the season? This is what folks are looking for anyway to try to at least mitigate some of the economic impact.

DR. CRABTREE: To that point, yes, and we would be happy to work with them on the analysis, and if it indicated that the season length needed to be adjusted, we could do that based on new information, and I also tend to agree with Michelle that this does seem like a species where a role is there for the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission to play.

I think we're going to continue to have some issues with states outside of the South Atlantic's jurisdiction and how well represented they are and that kind of thing, and, really, this is a species where management is not going to be successful unless the states are intimately involved in it, because the fishery is taking place in state waters.

I think it's something we ought to explore some discussions with ASMFC about a greater role for them in managing the fishery, but we're happy to work with any of the states on looking at alternative scenarios and providing whatever assistance we can for them to make changes in their management, and then we'll take those into account.

MR. BOWEN: I was going to echo Dr. Duval's sentiments. I agree with what she said, and maybe just a further or another alternative, and I was going to ask Mike to pull it up actually before he did, but, combined with what Michelle said, maybe changing the start date for the fishing year to the start of Wave 3, which would be May 1, and not only implementing a change in the fishing year, but also an end of the fishing year, kind of like we had talked about doing in the management for sea bass, and having not only a start date, but an end date. I just wanted to throw it out there and get the wheels turning for everybody.

MR. BELL: Just to mention it in the context of talking about state activities, but I know this committee is aware that South Carolina had taken some action through a different process. We were a little different from North Carolina, but we were, as we've briefed before, interested in taking some measures to protect our distinct population segment down in the southern part of our state, and that is still moving through our legislative process.

It was our desire to hopefully have that in place before May, which it may very well be, but we don't have an exact date for implementation at this point, but when that goes into effect, that would,



for waters basically in the southern part of our state, state waters, it would be a no take for the month of May, a three fish vessel limit, and a one fish per person otherwise. That could help a little bit, but, in the grand scheme of things, since we're not a huge player, it might buy half-a-day or something and I don't know, but at some point you could perhaps recalculate that in, but it is not in effect at this point, but we're hoping that it will be fairly soon.

MR. HARTIG: Any more questions of Mike? Seeing none, John did an analysis -- Go ahead, Michelle.

DR. DUVAL: Just one more thing. Mike, you mentioned earlier that you looked at daily catch rates.

DR. LARKIN: I break it up. The landings come in waves, and I included headboat too, but that was like 2 percent of the landings. They're a small player, but I look at the landings by -- It comes in waves, and I break it up by number of days in that wave. If there were sixty days, it's 10,000 pounds divided by sixty.

DR. DUVAL: So basically when you're doing the season length calculation, each day has the same catch rate?

DR. LARKIN: In that wave, yes, in that specific wave.

MS. BECKWITH: Looking at the shore mode, the 2 percent that was landed in 2015, is that primarily from piers? Is that where that shore mode comes from?

DR. LARKIN: I would have to look into that. I don't know, for that shore mode. It sounds reasonable, but I could find out.

MS. BECKWITH: My assumption would be that that would all be coming from piers, and we did get some public comment from one individual who was concerned about the closure and cobia being caught from piers, and something that we might consider is it's such a small percentage that we may want to go ahead and consider an exception to cobia caught from piers. We would have to think that through, but once a cobia is caught from a pier, releasing a cobia from a pier is not really feasible.

Those fish are dead. You can release a cobia at the boat without too much damage, but releasing a cobia from the pier, that's just a dead fish, and so it's such a small percentage that I can't imagine that if we made a one per person exception for fish caught from piers that it would be detrimental to the whole ACL, but it would be a safety issue, and I think a major discard issue.

MR. HARTIG: In the spirit of information transfer, John did an excellent presentation, if some of you all got to look at that, in the briefing book. If it's the pleasure of the committee to see that information he put together, I think it would be good for the public to see it as well. It talks to what is the direction of the cobia catches and are these numbers real, and it gets to that point. John is up here. Do you want to see it? I see heads nodding.

MS. SMIT-BRUNELLO: Ben, is this in the briefing book?



MR. CARMICHAEL: This is. This was sent around and it's in the briefing book. I got wind of this up at the ASMFC meeting, talking with Michelle in February. This is called Cobia 2016 and it's B3. I think it was in the emailed stuff that you guys got on Friday.

DR. MACLAUHLIN: I believe it's 7e.

MR. CARMICHAEL: It was in the Friday emailed stuff.

MS. SMIT-BRUNELLO: It's also on the website, the council website briefing book, at 7e.

MR. CARMICHAEL: It is on the website as well. This came up -- Michelle and I were talking about this at the ASMFC meeting in February, and, as is often the case when you're dealing with a primarily recreationally-oriented fishery, you want to go and look into the data some and consider what's going on, because there are times when there are vagaries and unexpected occurrences within the MRIP program, and it's natural with any kind of sampling program, and, when you have hundreds of species which you're sampling, you've got to figure it's going to happen with a couple of species a year, even with really good statistical precision.

That's just the nature of the beast, and you all were around here when we were setting allocations and doing the Comprehensive ACL Amendment. You may remember that really weird spike that we had in wahoo. We dug into that extensively, and it just turned out that it was a really good year for wahoo that year, and it was unusually good, and it was enough good that it showed up in all the sampling and wahoo were just all over the reports.

We recently had an issue with hogfish, where we kind of tracked that down to kind of a real narrow area, and it just seemed to be a sampling quirk, where they intercepted some folks that had an awful lot of hogfish, and it wasn't a ubiquitous, all-around-the-area type of thing. The intent here was just to look into that and see if there's a particular place within the cobia data where it seems like there's an unexpected, unusual spike, or is this just kind of across the board.

Basically, it was just to get a sense of how does this compare to the longer time series, and not just the last year since the ACLs, but the cobia overall since we had the assessment, and one of the ways that I looked at that was just to look at what the limits we have are in place and plot them -- I will go down to the figure, because that's always the easiest way to go through this stuff.

I was interested in what the landings were, and, of course, that's the blue line. Here, you can see, over time, going back to 1981 when the MRIP/MRFSS program started, you can see that this is clearly an all-time high. We see that it's quite a bit higher over some of the landings that we had near the terminal years of the assessment.

The red line is your recreational overfishing level, and that's just something I sort of made up as a test statistic, or an example, to show here in this. It's just 92 percent, because that's the cobia allocation. It's 92 percent of the OFL that was estimated, and so it's just a way of sort of putting this in the perspective of the overall fishery, and, in this case, it's primarily recreationally driven, and so you could have used the OFL just as well, but for a fishery that's more 50/50 or something, you might be really interested in how particularly high landings compare within what's viewed as what share of that fishery is going to that sector.



The ACL, here's the rec ACL, which was in place for 2015, and then here's the ACT. The ACT is what you are targeting at in terms of setting a season, and so you can see, for 2016, you're trying to get down here. In 2015, we estimate the landings that were way up over here, and so, by any measure, the landings were very high, and I think Mike did a really good job of looking into that and looking into some other aspects of the MRIP dataset, which really illustrate that. It's just sort of across the whole system. You just saw a lot of cobia. It was a good year for cobia with regards to people interacting with them and catching them, but, in terms of what that does to us in accountability measures and what it does for the fishery next year, people are not going to consider that it was a good year for cobia, by any means.

One of the things that immediately became apparent with this is notice this trajectory in landings. Landings had been kind of trending downward there for a while, from the high that was observed here, and, looking at these landings which are above the reference points, the question that led to was how does that compare with the assessment, because the assessment results were that the stock is not overfished and not overfishing, and that seems maybe a bit surprising, looking at where things are now, and I will get to that in a second.

We went through that. I didn't find evidence, and I think Mike showed that as well, but this increase is across the board. It's across the states. It's in pounds and it's in numbers, and so it doesn't seem like there is any sort of anomaly going on there in terms of it's just there was a huge increase in average weight, and so maybe it wasn't good weight sampling or there's a huge increase in one area. It just seems to really be all over.

One thing that was noticed, and I think Mike mentioned this as well, is there was high success for cobia, and so the number of successful trips went up a bit. The percent of successful trips went up a little bit. The number of targeting trips went up for cobia, and this is one of those things that -- You know recreational fisheries can have a tendency that if people are catching cobia and the word spreads, the more people will go out there for and target cobia. This is something that we deal with all the time, whenever we have a rebuilding fishery, and it's just inherent to the nature.

If people are catching a lot of something and it looks like it's good conditions for a particular species, then you're often going to see more effort directed to it and you're going to see people maybe tailoring their methods more for that species, getting higher success rates. In the case of dealing with accountability measures, which are simply based on poundages, that can kind of have an exacerbating situation to the problem that you're really trying to control, unfortunately, but it's just the nature of the beast here.

The mean weight was up slightly, but even, setting that aside and using a longer-term average mean weight, you're still well over the ABC, and so there was very little that I could discover that I thought, okay, here's what's going on, other than just there's a lot of cobia out there.

Here, you can see the mean weight over time, and it's actually been fairly consistent. It sort of went up here in the early part of the series and then has largely evened out, and though, while it was higher in 2015, as I said, when I used the average over this period, you're still well over in terms of your accountability measures, and the mean weight is up near the high, but not that much, relative to kind of the better years in cobia in terms of mean weight.



I looked at the PSEs to just consider how certain are we in our estimates. In this case, here's a big figure which shows PSEs, by state. One of the things about this is this is a Georgia to New York stock. If you go to MRIP, and I was just trying to use stuff that anyone can go to MRIP and use, without getting into custom queries and confidential data or anything like this, but you could get an estimate of South Atlantic cobia landings with a PSE across the entire region, but that would include Florida, because Florida is part of the South Atlantic. To get at this, you actually need to get your data by state and then add up landings for Georgia through New York. That means your PSEs are by state.

PSEs by state are going to be, by nature, a little bit higher than PSEs for the whole region, because I'm trying to take the same data and get finer resolution, but, overall, what this showed is -- This is North Carolina and Virginia in the red blocks, in the black circles, and they're where most of the catches occur. Their PSEs, lately, have been running around 30 to 40-some percent. Encouragingly, they have tended to go downward. We see some of the highest PSEs occurring here, and that was around 2006. The PSEs are tapering downward, which is a good sign. It means we're doing better at estimating. Overall, it's certainly not a case where suddenly the PSE went extremely high in this year.

Then we get into the assessment questions. The concern is did overfishing occur back in 2004 and 2010, from looking at that first figure? What the assessment showed us was that overfishing wasn't occurring at that time. This is probably one thing that does need some explanation, because the thought is if you were catching more than your MSY, how are you not overfishing?

That was happening because there was a very high biomass at that time. With a high biomass, you can take a larger amount of fish than your long-term average sustainable yield, which is MSY. You can take a larger amount of fish for a short period of time without exceeding the rate, and you're not exceeding the rate because there is so many fish in the population.

We know if you take too many fish for too long of a time that you're taking away your principal, if this were a retirement account. You're taking away that principal, and so your rate is going to start going up. What we see in the cobia stock is that is what happened, but we know that, at the highest landings there, prior to this last year, in 2006, the stock assessment said it was very close to having overfishing occurring. It was nearly one, in terms of the fishing mortality rate. It drops down, really responding to the landings trends, but it didn't quite cross that level.

However, looking at the spawning stock biomass. In the time when we were having the highest landings, we see our spawning stock biomass was up around 2.5 times MSY. If I've got two-and-a-half times my biomass necessary to take MSY, I can take a pretty good yield for a couple of years and not exceed the F rate, but the cost is going to be that biomass is going to go downward, because I'm taking too many fish. We saw that in the cobia stock.

The spawning stock biomass went from about two-and-a-half times here, at its peak, down to I think it was around 1.5 or 1.6 times MSY levels when the assessment ended in the terminal year. While the stock wasn't overfished and overfishing wasn't occurring in the terminal year of the assessment, the trajectory of spawning stock biomass was really not all that favorable. It certainly shows that there was a need to put some brakes on this fishery and keep it from going over its limits and make sure that the landings were held at a sustainable level.



The question then, of course, is this assessment ended in 2011. What has been the effect of some of these landings which were -- In 2013, they were a little bit above the allowable levels. They were kind of below that for a couple of years and then 2015, and so what effect has that had on SSB? We really don't know.

I felt that was important to explain, because it is counterintuitive, and remember that when we have an assessment, we base our overfishing on the F rates. When we're between assessments, as we are now, it can be based on the landings level relative to some reference point, but we know that's an approximation, because whether or not that truly results in overfishing, in terms of actual removals, you can only tell once you've got the assessment and you account for the stock abundance.

DR. DUVAL: John, the terminal year of data in the assessment was 2011, it looks like.

MR. CARMICHAEL: Yes.

DR. DUVAL: The assessment seems like it's getting a little bit stale, to me. I mean I would think that we would want to think about fitting in an update, at least, to the Georgia through New York, the Atlantic stock of cobia, as soon as possible. I mean that's one of the suggestions that we've received from the public, is that that assessment needs to be updated.

I was wondering if maybe you could talk a little bit about some of the comments that we've gotten that have been about the fact that there is a line drawn at the Georgia/Florida border with regards to the separation between the Atlantic stock and the Gulf stock, and I think a lot of folks see that as an arbitrary split and that there are two zones for cobia, and so people are asking why can't we transfer between zones.

I think if you look at the annual catch limit for the East Florida ACL and the Georgia through New York ACL, and if you were to add those two ACLs together and then you look at what it was prior to the stock boundary change, those are roughly the same. I think it was -- The ACL for prior to the stock boundary change was 1.4-million pounds. I think the Florida ACL is 830,000 pounds. The ACL for the Atlantic stock was 630,000 pounds.

Even if that stock boundary change hadn't occurred and you added those things together and you considered the 1.5-million pounds of landings, we would still be over by 300,000 pounds, or something like that, if that stock boundary change had not occurred.

I think it's important for people to understand that. I think it's important for the public to understand that, but I think what the public is not understanding is it seems to be that there was this line that was just drawn at the Georgia/Florida border and, when I looked at the stock assessment, I could see that the boundary change was based on genetic analysis and it was based on tagging information, which indicated that there is a mixing zone right around -- Is it Broward County and that's where Cape Canaveral is, or is it Brevard?

MR. CARMICHAEL: Brevard.

DR. DUVAL: Brevard County? So it's right along the middle of the peninsula, and there wasn't necessarily a very clear delineation, it seemed like, as to where that boundary line should occur



between Atlantic and Gulf stocks. That's another thing that the public has brought forward in terms of something that would need to be reexamined, and I was just was hoping that you could clarify that, a, the decision for a stock boundary is not one that the council has any role in and it's simply something that we receive and have to respond to and talk about transfers, or lack thereof, between the Atlantic and Gulf stocks. I am just going to let everybody know that I'm going to have more questions with regard to the setting of annual catch limits and accountability measures, specifically, for Monica to explain a little bit.

MR. CARMICHAEL: Yes, and you're right, and you explained the situation fairly well. The stock ID is something which comes out of the stock assessment, the biological stock ID, and they look at things like genetic analyses that they have available. I believe your summary of that was correct. There is sort of a gray area, and that's always the case in these situations. Species don't tend to draw hard and fast lines. They are wild animals and they move around and there's always some mixing.

My other belief is that, as is often the case, there was probably not as many samples as could have been desired in the area where it turns out the break is happening, which you kind of don't know that, where you maybe need really intensive sampling on a much finer geographic scale, until you get in and do the analysis, but that was my recollection, and that, again, is very typical. You can tell a real distinction between say North Carolina area fish versus Florida Keys fish, and then it got a little bit more gray in there, which led to the recommendation which they provided in lining up with state lines.

That is, based on the feedback that goes between the council setting regulations and the scientists making decisions, there, in the past, there certainly has been an interest that if you can set boundaries that match up with existing jurisdictions, that can tend to be a much more effective way, in terms of dealing with what is a biological gray area, because things get an awful lot more complicated in terms of monitoring and accountability measures and handling data when you start having lots of different boundaries that line up with county lines and everything else within a state, just because of the nature of how data are collected and estimates are being made.

If this were a line somewhere in the middle of Florida, then obviously folks can't go to MRIP and see what the data are for this stock. I think that's why there's been a tendency, when there is a gray area, to say here's a jurisdiction that exists.

Again, and sometimes you don't know how these are going to play out in the future and how that may come to really be an incredibly point and bearing on management, which, in cobia now, maybe that's getting more attention, that boundary, than it did five years ago when this assessment was done, of course, which is usually what happens whenever there is management consequences.

In Florida, there's a portion of the Gulf stock which goes to the east coast of Florida, and the Gulf stock is considerably larger, which is another thing which can be typical for these species. I think the MSY in the Gulf was 50 percent greater, or more, than what the MSY is in the Atlantic stock, and so that's kind of another reason why it seems like that Florida east coast portion is larger, and there are much higher landings in the Florida east coast than what there are in the Atlantic.

You're right, and I think if you looked at Florida, the entire South Atlantic landings including Florida, you would still be over that old ACL that was in place, based on data-limited methods,



before the assessment was done, because Florida had a really good year in cobia. I think they had maybe a million-pounds or something on the Atlantic, or 750,000, or 500,000. I forget. There were so many different numbers, but it was a pretty good bit of landings in there as well.

MR. HARTIG: I think one thing, John, that corroborates the genetic information in what Mel's guys have done with their distinct population segments in South Carolina, and I mean that certainly speaks to one of the separation reasons that went into this assessment.

MS. BECKWITH: Just, to John's point, the Florida east coast had 350,000 pounds landed, and so they're at 42 percent.

MR. HAYMANS: John, can you back up a little bit to the weight issue? Weight is calculated each year based on the weight for that year, observed weight for that year, right?

MR. CARMICHAEL: It's based on sampling of fish at the docks.

MR. HAYMANS: Yes, for that particular year, and so when I look back at -- You didn't number the figures, but the mean weight, I mean it does look like this year was -- It was at least five or six-pounds heavier, per fish, and I go back and look at the estimate for the numbers of fish, and I mean that does account for 250,000 or 260,000 pounds of the million-pound overage. I mean that's 25 percent. It seems like it's a lot of additional weight per fish for that year.

MR. CARMICHAEL: Yes, you see that in the figure, and that's why I looked at taking the average of the couple of years and doing a different mean weight. It really wasn't enough to do the difference, and this is -- What I did here is I took the A plus B1 numbers, and that's the landed fish, and I took that -- They report that in numbers and they report that in pounds, and I just divided, because weight sampling is a difficult thing, and if you look at just weight observations, there can be a lot of uncertainty in those, and that's one reason the Science Center has an alternative approach that they apply for getting at weight, and so I felt this was just a quick-and-dirty way to look at what the weight has done.

As I said, even accounting for that change in this one year, you're still well over the numbers of fish landed. It's 43,000 or so, and looking back at the assessment, the allowable yield, just at MSY in 2015, it was about 20,000 or 30,000. You're even -- If we track this fishery in numbers, you're going to be over as well.

DR. LARKIN: I just wanted to point out we used the same input data, John and I, but we have different datasets, and so you took years -- Correct me if I'm wrong, John, but you took years from the MRIP website, whereas we use a different method from the Science Center, both in the landings and using the average weight.

Mine includes headboat as well, which was a small sample anyway, but they have a different -- The Science Center uses a different method, where if they go to a dock and the fish is already filleted and they need to estimate what the weight would be of that fish, they look around in local areas and try to make sure they have a sample size of thirty. If they don't, they will expand further and further out. I guess what I'm saying is we do have different -- Like my average weight in 2015 was similar to what it was in 2010, where his was -- Your average weight in 2015 was a little bit higher. I just wanted to point out that little caveat.



MR. CARMICHAEL: The sample size and weight is important, and the MRIP Program gives a caveat about weight sampling being challenging and estimates of harvest in weight not being as precise as estimates of harvest in numbers. That is why the Science Center has an alternative approach to try and fill in gaps within the weight sampling, because so many of the things that we do are set in numbers, and they're trying to reduce some of that uncertainty and have a method that does weight, and they are working with folks at MRIP to consider maybe having those methods become more of the norm and resolve this issue we've had for a couple of years of two different potential weight values.

DR. DUVAL: Are there other questions? I am filling in as Vice Chair of the committee right now, for a bit. Doug, did you have a follow-up?

MR. HAYMANS: I was just going to go way back to your point about perhaps looking at commission partial control. At least in the snapper grouper fishery, 80 percent was our magic number for taking some of those fish out of the management unit, and I think I heard Mike say earlier that we were above 80 percent in state waters for most of the year, and so it's a good candidate for that.

DR. DUVAL: I agree. Any other questions for John right now on some of the assessment-related information? I am just wondering what folks' thoughts are around the table about an update to the cobia assessment. It is getting somewhat stale, and perhaps we need to consider that during our next SEDAR Committee meeting.

MR. CARMICHAEL: I totally agree, and I would say that before February that I probably thought that cobia was one that maybe was a candidate for an MRIP revision, given the status of the stock that we knew at that time and where landings had been up to that time, but I think now, with these high landings that have occurred, we're certainly concerned with what that means in terms of overfishing this population and where the spawning stock biomass may lie today. I believe that this is one which we probably wouldn't consider appropriate for just an update with the MRIP data through the last terminal year and it actually needs a full update, to bring in all the new information and all the survey values and particularly the size and age information of the harvest, to see what's happened here and what this may have done to the stock.

DR. DUVAL: I agree. Any other comments or questions for John right now, just on maybe I guess the science end of this issue? Okay. I see the Chairman is back in the room, and so I'm turning things back over to him.

MR. HAYMANS: John, I've got a question for you. When is the peak spawning season for cobia, say in North Carolina? I know it changes a little bit through the range, and are you familiar?

MR. CARMICHAEL: I don't know, offhand. I will look around to Marcel or anybody that might know. My recollection is it tends to get later in the year as you move north. Certainly there's been discussion of a lot of spawning fish being in the Chesapeake in early summer, and it probably being earlier in the year like in South Carolina and others. Mel or Mark, can you say much about the South Carolina, where you've at least studied them a lot down there?

MR. BELL: Can you ask that again, please?



MR. CARMICHAEL: When do you think the peak spawning is happening in South Carolina?

MR. BELL: That's actually why we picked May as the month that we were -- Basically, what these fish were doing is coming into the southern sounds and bays to spawn, and it probably is May. They start showing up, and it depends on water temperature, but they start showing up in mid to late April, and then it kind of peaks in May and then gradually after that, and so May would be reasonable.

DR. DUVAL: I would say similarly for North Carolina, and maybe a little bit later, but, just based on all of the conversations that I've had with fishermen, and particularly in North Carolina, where they are seeing more and more spawning occurring in Pamlico Sound and fish staging up there.

MR. CONKLIN: I would just like to say that I know when we got in trouble with red grouper, where we are now with it, it's because a lot of those fish were spawning a May. We clean a lot of fish in our market, and I can tell you that the cobias, we see a tremendous amount of eggs in cobia in May, and whatever management we look at in protecting the stock, we should think about that spawning season.

MR. BROWN: John, how far out would an update be for the cobia, being as that we have everything going on like with blueline tilefish and all that? How far out in the future would it be to be able to do an update?

MR. CARMICHAEL: If I put my SEDAR hat on, I would tell you the earliest that we would take such a change like that on the schedule would be for say in 2018, because we've got plans in place for 2016 and most of 2017. Maybe in the latter half of 2018, but I think it comes down to dealing with the MRIP revisions and how many resources are going to be necessary to do how many of those stocks, and so late 2017 to 2018. If you do 2017, you will have 2016 data. It's a couple of years out, really, any time we're talking about that for doing the next assessment, because, as you mentioned, there's a couple of stocks which have been of serious concern which are on the schedule for the next couple of years.

DR. LANEY: I'm not on your committee, but I just pulled up a paper on cobia spawning, and it reports, and this was done in South Carolina, Mel, I think, the paper. It says spawning peaks along the Atlantic coast of the Southeast U.S. currently in May. It's off the coast of North Carolina in June, and, in Chesapeake Bay, it's June and July. South Carolina maximal spawning activity of cobia is in May. It corresponds to peak fishing effort.

MR. CARMICHAEL: So you're talking spring, May and June, for most areas, with the geographical gradient, getting earlier in Florida and later in Virginia.

MR. HARTIG: I am going to get Anna, and then we need to move on.

MS. BECKWITH: This question is more for Michelle. If she can go through and tell us a little bit about what it would take to -- What the process would be to get the commission involved, because I agree with what I've heard, the idea of management by the commission and allowing states to come up with conservation equivalencies that are a little bit more appropriate for their fishermen is attractive. I'm kind of curious about what the process would be for the South Atlantic Council to begin that process or what that would look like.



DR. DUVAL: This would probably come before the commission's South Atlantic State/Federal Fisheries Management Board, which includes states from New Jersey through Florida, and there are a number of species that that management board considers. It would probably be initially discussed at that South Atlantic Board, which would make a recommendation to the ASMFC's Policy Board that they would like to look into or begin development of a fishery management plan for cobia.

We do have an ASMFC plan for Spanish mackerel. It largely reflects and complements the federal fishery management plan, but we have been able to use that plan to provide for some additional flexibility. For example, we had an addendum that allowed for a decrease in the minimum size limit of Spanish mackerel for pound nets only during the months of July through September, when some of those undersized fish are coming into those nets, and when you go to bunt the net and bail the fish, the fish are just dead.

We've been able to use that to be flexible. I would have to consult further with ASMFC staff in terms of timeframe or how that might happen, and so I'm reluctant to say anything more at this point, other than I have let them know that this is something that I am interested in and hope to have a conversation with them next week about that.

MS. BOSARGE: I was pretty interested in what Michelle had to say too, and I just wondered -- To go along with what Anna was saying, how do you foresee those two groups working, those two groups being the commission and, as you develop, possibly, an FMP for this species through the commission, how does it interact with your council here, and I guess also some other councils along your coastline, but how do you foresee that interaction taking place, because I can see the states do sit on this council, but, as far as the other way, how would it go? How would that look?

DR. DUVAL: There are quite a few examples of joint management between the ASMFC and the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council, summer flounder, scup, black sea bass, bluefish. The Atlantic States Commission also has a Spiny Dogfish and Coastal Shark Management Board, and so there is a fishery management plan for that as well. Where there is joint state/federal management, oftentimes the council will be the one that establishes the annual catch limits, the ABC, maybe the council will be setting any gear-related restrictions, accountability measures, and any state-by-state quotas.

In the case of summer flounder commercially, in other instances, the fishery management council will establish the ACL broader gear restrictions, maybe some minimum size limits and things like that, but then the states have the ability to do something more flexible in terms of seasons. Often size limits, say for the recreational fishery. I think a good example is recreational black sea bass.

The recreational measures really have been crafted at the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission level, where you have a group of states in the Mid-Atlantic and southern New England area that have come together to try to craft similar size/season/bag limit regulations, just based on the nature of the fishery and providing equitable access to the resource, given the geography of that particular area, and then you have a couple of other states in the Mid-Atlantic region that have similar size/season limit regulations. Then North Carolina, that's not a very big fishery for us recreationally north of Cape Hatteras, and so our regulations are reflective of the federal regulations.



The council has set sort of a set of coast-wide regulations for the fishery, and then the states, through the ASMFC plan, have the ability to either adopt those federal regulations or craft something through conservation equivalency. That's a really messy, rough way of describing it, but for -- There are definitely mixed opinions on the success of having joint management like that. Certainly for summer flounder, scup, and black sea bass, there is a huge specification setting meeting that occurs, joint meeting, that occurs between the Mid-Atlantic Council and the commission's board.

Many of the same people who sit on the council sit on the board, and so they're acting in both capacities. It can be a little bit cumbersome that way. In terms of Spanish mackerel, the Atlantic States Commission simply tends to complement what the council does here, but, for example, this exemption from the Spanish mackerel minimum size limit -- None of that discussion occurred here. That was all at the Atlantic States level, because it was all a state water thing.

MR. HARTIG: Okay. John, thank you so much for taking the initiative to look at that and to bring that forward. I think that answers a lot of questions that a number of us had, and the public as well. It may not have taken care of all of it, but it was a great presentation, and thank you. The next item of business is the options paper for framework amendment. Where is that, Kari?

DR. MACLAUHLIN: This is Attachment 7c. Then I sent out a revised version. Michelle caught a small typo, but you can use either version, and I will point that out to you guys. It's 7c. This is the shortest options paper. Originally, it was on the schedule, when we were getting prepped for this meeting, to really dig into options of a more fleshed-out options paper for June, but then cobia became of more interest to a lot of folks, and so we decided we would provide just some potential framework actions, but that's why you have such a brief options paper here, because really we had thought that it would just be kind of a shorter discussion about what you wanted in June, but now it may be something that you guys want to start work on a framework amendment.

We have our background and then the annual catch limits that are in place through Amendment 20B and the recreational AM language that you have. The management measures, the minimum size limit is thirty-three-inches fork length, and that is the same in all the states except Virginia, where it's thirty-seven-inches tail length. The bag limit, the federal bag limit, is two fish per person per day, except in Florida, where it's one fish per person per day, or six per vessel, whichever is less. In Virginia, it's one, and now in North Carolina it's one per person. Then we have the federal commercial possession limit, which is two fish, and we do not have a federal commercial permit requirement.

We have some of these that you talked about a little bit at the December meeting, the possible framework actions of reducing a bag limit, establishing a vessel limit, increasing minimum size, changing the start of the fishing year, some kind of closures or management measures during a spawning period, rolling seasonal closures by state or area, others. Those would be able to go in a framework action and it would move a little quicker and it would not require the Gulf Council to approve that.

A plan amendment though would take a little bit longer. It would need to be approved by the -- It would be a joint plan amendment, and so it would need to be approved by the Gulf Council as well and go through that timeline. That's going to take a little longer, anything like state-by-state quotas



and even prohibiting retention by for-hire captain and crew, which was in some comments that you received. Then we can talk about other actions, to get started.

What staff would need from you is what you would want and the timeline for that. I have a potential timeline for a framework amendment, and this, as always, is very optimistic. You would direct staff on what actions and alternatives, and I would ask that you get as specific as possible if you want to do that. Staff would work on that in April and May and bring it back to you in June, and you could review select preferred alternatives and take final action. A hearing could be held at that council meeting or we could have a webinar, and then we would submit that in the summer. Possibly it could be implemented by December of 2016. That's very optimistic, even for a framework amendment.

A timeline for a plan amendment would be a little longer. We would need to do scoping. Even if you provided us specifically with what actions and alternatives, we would do scoping in April. It would probably be a webinar, and then develop that document and bring it back to you in June. You could approve it for public hearing. We would do those in August and you could take final action in September and the Gulf in October, but it still would take nine months, minimum, to get that through, and that's if everything goes okay and workloads for staff works out with that. This is the earliest.

What I would like from you is what actions do you want and how fast do you want to get that rolling, and then you guys would talk about that with your priorities in Executive Finance. You could also, if you don't want to get really specific, you could ask us to bring back an options paper and tell us what items you think you would be interested in. Obviously there's not going to be a full-blown analysis for every different alternative. We want you guys to get as specific as possible, because it really helps us narrow down the good and meaningful information to bring back to you in June. The reason why it says framework action here and plan action here is that our framework procedure is set up where certain actions can go in a framework and certain actions have to go in a plan amendment.

MR. HAYMANS: Carrie, this is sort of already tentatively scheduled for the year 2016, and is that right, a framework amendment?

DR. MACLAUHLIN: Yes.

MR. HAYMANS: That would be my druthers, at least in my opinion, is to work on a framework.

MS. BECKWITH: I actually have a question on the accountability measure, just to make sure I understand. If I'm reading it properly, we fish to the ACL, and if the ACL is exceeded, then the following year we fish to the ACT, but if we don't go over the ACT, do we go back to fishing to the ACL in the following year? Then there's also that three-year running average, but, given that 2015 was such an overage, are we going to have to use that 2015 year as part of that moving average for the next three years, and so we're never going to get out from the hole, just because of the 2015 landings?

MS. SMIT-BRUNELLO: If that's a question for me, I will jump in. The way your accountability measure is structured right now is, in terms of the years you would use, next year you would have an annual catch limit. You would need to see what was caught in 2016, but I think you would use



a couple of years' data and not just 2015, because then you would have 2016 data to use. Unless you change your accountability measure, yes, you're going to be using several years of data.

MS. BECKWITH: Again, just so I'm super clear, if we fish to our ACT next year and we don't surpass our ACT, then we will have to fish to our ACT the following year, because of that 2015 being averaged into it?

MS. SMIT-BRUNELLO: I think that's correct.

MS. BECKWITH: Then, once we get out of that 2015 being the running average and we have fished to our ACT for two or three years, then we can go back to fishing to our ACL?

MS. SMIT-BRUNELLO: The accountability measure for recreational cobia, which is also known as cobia that are not sold, because it's the same -- You have stated that, whether it's commercial or recreational, it's two per person. You don't need a federal permit to catch cobia that will be sold from federal waters. You don't need a federal permit.

It is an interesting challenge to interpret all of that, and so the accountability measure for cobia that are not sold, or recreational cobia, states that if the sum of the cobia landings that are sold and not sold -- So if the sum of the recreational and commercial landings, that total ACL, is exceeded, then the next year you have to look at when you think the ACT will be harvested and then that's the length of your season. That's where we are this year. Last year, that total sum ACL was exceeded, and so now, as Mike presented, you look at when you believe the amount of harvest that equates to the annual catch target, when that will happen and then that's the length of your season.

MS. BECKWITH: Right, but I guess my point is even if we hit only that ACT and we get our fishing under control and our effort under control, then we're still being penalized in 2017, because we're averaging in this 2015 high landings.

MS. SMIT-BRUNELLO: The way you've got it set up right now, the accountability measure would take into account 2015 and 2016 landings.

MS. BECKWITH: Then we would have to fish to the ACT again.

DR. DUVAL: This is a nice segue to the question that I wanted to ask Monica, which was about the accountability measures, and I think that's been -- Given that the majority of cobia harvest is in state waters, most anglers have never experienced annual catch limit management. They are not familiar with accountability measures, and, Monica, I was wondering if you could review the requirement for councils to set accountability measures for their managed species, and then also, I guess, we can change our accountability measures, but that would have to be done through a plan amendment. Is that right, Kari? Yes, I'm seeing nods.

DR. MACLAUHLIN: That's my understanding, is the accountability measure would be a plan amendment.

DR. DUVAL: So I think some of the questions that we've been getting from folks is why can't you use a three-year running -- Why couldn't we have used a three-year running average of 2013, 2014, and 2015, just the landings from the Georgia through North Carolina portion of the stock, to



compare against the brand-new ACL, since that's how things turned out, and so a broader question for Monica about the requirements of the law and then, I think, a more tactical question about why could we not have used the averages from 2013, 2014, and 2015.

MS. SMIT-BRUNELLO: Just briefly, and, as you're all aware, the Magnuson Act National Standard 1 states that you shall prevent overfishing while achieving your optimum yield. Congress also put in a requirement for councils, and it's a requirement of every fishery management plan for every council across the country to establish a mechanism for specifying annual catch limits at a level so that overfishing doesn't occur and then also to include measures to ensure accountability, i.e., that you meet those annual catch limits and that you don't have overfishing.

In the National Standard Guidelines that discuss what's an accountability measure and what's an annual catch limit and those sorts of things, I thought it might be helpful to just read a couple of sentences, and that is that accountability measures are management controls that prevent ACLs from being exceeded and to correct or mitigate for overages of ACLs.

The accountability measure that you put in through Amendment 18, I think, to the FMP, the Coastal Migratory Pelagics FMP that includes cobia, has these requirements that we just discussed, in that if the total recreational and commercial ACL was exceeded for one year that you have to look at the next year and see how long the fishing season should be, so that you hit your annual catch target, and so that's where we are now.

I know there was some email traffic and other things from folks who were getting tuned into the Magnuson Act process, stating that you don't have to take these kinds of closure actions and that you can change those. On the one hand, yes, you can change those, but you have to do it under the process that the Magnuson Act requires.

For example, you put in these -- You had an amendment to the fishery management plan that said these are our annual catch limits and these are our accountability measures, and you submitted that to the Fisheries Service. The Fisheries Service put that out for public comment and then put out a proposed rule for public comment and then responded to the comments and implemented those catch limits, those catch targets, and those accountability measures. That's where we are now, in that we've determined the accountability measure kicks in, and the Fisheries Service has issued a temporary rule and a Fishery Bulletin and all that, letting the public know that, I believe it's June 20, that the recreational sector for cobia will close.

You, at this point, the council, don't have anything to do with rescinding that closure notice, if you will. You don't have that authority right now, unless you go through the Magnuson Act process, which changes the accountability measure that was subject to public comment and all that. If you want to change the accountability measure for the next season, then Kari has laid out a couple of ways to go.

One would be through a more abbreviated process, a framework measure, which may or may not include accountability measures. I will have to check the management plan. The other way is to go through a plan amendment and change the accountability measures. You have the authority to change the accountability measure for the future, but not for the accountability measure that you already put in place right now, and that's what is the subject of this June 20 closure.



DR. DUVAL: Thank you, Monica, and so just a quick follow-up. Just to be clear, it's the role of the Fisheries Service to run the numbers and do the calculations and make the determination that yes, we need to have a shortened season for cobia. The council does not have a role in that part of the process.

MS. SMIT-BRUNELLO: No, you set up the process. You told the Fisheries Service what they were going to do. You said, Fisheries Service, here's what we want you to do when you reach a certain target, and, yes, it's the Fisheries Service who looks at those numbers and determines whether that target has been met, and that's what we've been discussing here this morning.

DR. DUVAL: If wanted to change our accountability measures to never have any kind of closure on cobia recreationally, could we do it?

MS. SMIT-BRUNELLO: As long as the recreational harvest never exceeded their annual catch limit, then you could do that, but Congress has told you that you are to prevent overfishing, and one of the ways you prevent overfishing is having annual catch limits and then measures that kick in when those catch limits are reached or exceeded, sometimes. In a perfect world, the recreational sector would never catch its catch limit and then you would never need a closure, but that's not what is occurring right now.

DR. MACLAUHLIN: In Amendment 20B, you did modify the framework procedure, and you can make changes to ABC, ACL, control rules, and accountability measures under a standard documentation process for open framework actions. Accountability measures that could be changed in your framework are in-season AMs; closures; trip limit reductions; designation of IFQ; implementation of gear restrictions; post-season adjustment of season length; implementation of a closed season, bag, trip, or possession limit; reduction of ACL; revoking a scheduled increase in the ACL if the ACL was exceeded; gear restrictions; reporting and monitoring. You can cover all of those in a framework.

MR. HARTIG: Thank you, Kari.

MR. BREWER: I am not on your committee, but I have been paying pretty strict attention, because I love to catch cobia. I've got to say, here of late, down in our area, I've been -- Unfortunately, the bull sharks have been eating more of my catch than I have, but, insofar as 2016 goes, we can forget it. There's nothing that we can do.

What we can do, however, is take some actions, I think through a framework action, and perhaps several of them. I don't think we want to change our accountability measures, because the accountability measure that's in place right now is doing exactly what is supposed to happen. Overfishing is occurring. We're seeing the spawning stock biomass decrease, rather significantly, from the charts that I saw, and that's worrisome.

Taking a look at the different regulations that are in place and taking a look at the charts that we've been presented with, I'm just going to throw out something for consideration, just to get the ball rolling, but it kind of looks like, to me, if you took your minimum size limit to thirty-seven inches, which has been recommended by some of the commenters, and went down to a one fish per person limit, and some sort of boat limit, and, here, I am not familiar enough with the six-pack boats and



the headboats and whatnot to know what would be a reasonable number, be it two fish or four fish or six fish or ten fish.

I don't know, but with some sort of a boat limit, you're actually going to get some reduction in the catch that's being represented here. Just going to a one fish per person apparently is going to have very little to no effect, and so it seems like you need to have some sort of vessel limit put in place, and, with that, I will shut my mouth.

MR. HARTIG: Mark, did I have you on the list?

MR. BROWN: I was just thinking of a motion that I could make, but I was waiting until all of the discussion was done.

MR. CONKLIN: **I am prepared to make a motion to direct staff to look at vessel limits for one fish, two fish, three fish, and four fish.** I'm willing to entertain more than that if need be, but I think that's a good start.

MR. HARTIG: Did you make that as a motion or are you entertaining it?

MR. CONKLIN: I did make it as a motion.

MR. HARTIG: Motion by Chris and second by Mark. It's one, two, three, and four, correct?

DR. DUVAL: Chris, I am wondering if you would be willing to consider that actually up to six fish, because right now, captain and crew can retain their limit. If you have a six-pack boat, you could actually have eight fish onboard, and so I wouldn't mind seeing what that analysis looked like with six fish. I would also love to see what a combined size limit increase/vessel limit would be, and so if you were able to combine those -- Like if you went to a four fish vessel limit, combined with like a thirty-seven-inch fork length increase in the size limit, what does that buy you, in terms of season length?

These are the types of reductions that my counterparts in Virginia are very interested in, particularly for their state commission. I mean I guess maybe the simplest way might be to just have a follow-up motion, but I didn't know if you would be willing to consider that.

MR. CONKLIN: **Most certainly.** I didn't know if we needed to have that in a whole separate motion, but sure, I would be willing to add up to six fish. That's fine, but also keep in mind that, at least for the for-hire industry, and recreational as well, people can still go and fish for cobia, but they just can't retain as many. There is still a lot of intrinsic value in being able to catch one and the need to have six dead fish on the dock is -- In our area, there's been a lot of guys that are getting that many and if somebody is in our town on vacation and stuff, do they really need to be toting a bunch of meat around or trying to get it back on an airplane? That's all I was thinking about.

MR. HARTIG: My intent would be to leave this motion fluid until we get everything in there. I don't know how that works with Roberts Rules of Order, but that's what I would like to try and do.

MR. CONKLIN: **I will add the thirty-seven-inch size limit and the six fish.**



DR. MACLAUCHLIN: Do you want to have five in there, or one, two, three, four, and six?

MR. CONKLIN: **One through six.**

DR. DUVAL: Procedurally, it might just be easier to vote on this motion, so that you can see what those reductions look like just by themselves, and then have a follow-up motion where we look at a combined vessel limit with increases in the minimum size limit, and that just might be cleaner, instead of trying to pack everything into one motion, with the assumption that these are things that would be included in a framework. I am happy to make a follow-up motion once we dispense with this.

MR. HARTIG: We've got a motion by Chris, and that is to direct staff to look at vessel limits for one, two, three, four, five, and six fish. It's seconded by Mark. Is there any more discussion on this motion? **Is there any objection to this motion? Seeing none, that motion is approved.**

MR. BOWEN: **I would also like to make a motion to direct staff to look at changing the start of the fishing year to May 1, to see if we could get some reductions that way.**

DR. MACLAUCHLIN: If you want to have some other start dates to look at as well, you could let us know. If it's just that one or are there other ones that you would be interested in?

MR. BOWEN: Right now, it is just May 1, because we all know that it's a pulse fishery, and I would just like to see May 1 right now.

MR. HARTIG: We probably have to have a range of options for NEPA consideration, and so allow staff some leeway to do that.

MR. BOWEN: Most definitely, yes. That was just to see what kind of reductions we could get from harvest from what it is now from January up through April.

MR. HARTIG: Let's get a second first and then we'll -- Second by Michelle. Any discussion? I mean we had some.

MS. BECKWITH: Zack, a May 1 start date, I agree with you, but it won't have any reductions. It just may mean that it stays open longer for the time period that we typically need it for, May, June, and July, but we won't get any reductions from a change in the start year.

MR. BOWEN: I would like to see, because I think there are -- I know they're minimal, but I think there are some landings prior, before May 1. I think we will get some reductions. I don't know how much, but there are some landings before May 1.

MR. COX: I am not on the committee, but I just want to continue to bring up the fact that if May is a peak spawning month, would you not want to look at some spawning protection for this species?

MR. HARTIG: I mean it's a conundrum of what we look at. All the catch occurs in the spawning months, basically. You're stuck with a fishery where the only access, predominantly, is right smack in the middle of the spawning fishery, and there's no way to get out of that. The way to get



out of it is to try and keep our catch within the ACL, and I don't see how we can do a spawning season closure and not severely impact this fishery. I just don't see it.

MR. COX: Just to follow up, I'm not saying completely close the fishery, but I'm just saying that could be a -- Maybe you could have a smaller limit on the boat limit or something during that particular time.

MR. HARTIG: I think we're already going there with trying to stay within the ACL, and so we're going to get to probably some of the most restrictive things we've done for cobia, based on just trying to say within the ACL, and hopefully that would have some impact on spawning. Go ahead, Michelle.

DR. DUVAL: I realize we haven't dispensed with this motion. I was going to make another one once we're done.

MR. BROWN: This is primarily a recreational fishery, but when I look at amberjack commercially, we close that for one month for spawning, and I just -- I think that there is probably some need here to look into this, as far as probably a way for us to be able to keep the fishery open, is to look at some month in regards to closure.

MR. BELL: As long as it's okay to stack up motions, which I guess we're doing right now, then I would also move to direct staff to look at a one fish per -- On top of all of this, look at one fish per person all the time, as a background.

MR. HARTIG: Can I dispense with this motion first?

MR. BELL: There's a couple on there.

MR. HARTIG: I know. I said my intent was to put everything in one, Mel, and then the committee decided probably not to do it that way and we're going to do it in a series of motions, because the way they're analyzed may be different.

MR. CONKLIN: I got this presentation the other day from a cobia farming company. They're farm-raised cobia, and I'm not sure about wild cobia, but they reach sexual maturity by about 330 days of age. They get up there pretty quick, and so maybe that would be something to think about when you're asking for a spawning season closure.

MR. BROWN: When Chris brought that up, I did want to say one thing, and that is I fish out of Shem Creek. There was a guy on the dock next to my boat who caught one off of the dock, and it was this big. We donated it to the South Carolina Aquarium. They put it in the aquarium, and one year later, that fish was over thirty pounds.

MR. HARTIG: We know they have tremendous growth potential. We've got a motion. Is there any more discussion on the motion? The motion was to direct staff to look at changing the start of the fishing year to May 1. **Is there any objection to that motion? Seeing none, that motion is approved.**



DR. DUVAL: **I would like to direct staff to look at a combined size limit increase with a vessel limit decrease, with the size limits ranging from thirty-three to thirty-nine inches fork length, in one-inch increments, in combination with the one through six fish vessel limits.** Basically, it's a sliding scale to see how that impacts your season.

MR. HARTIG: Motion by Michelle and a second by Zack. Is there discussion? **Is there any objection? Seeing none, that motion is approved.**

MS. BECKWITH: **I would like to consider a one per person year-round from the piers only, as sort of a separate consideration.** That would cover the public comment that we received that it's such a small percentage of cobia that are caught from piers, but the discard mortality on those is practically 100 percent, and so that would cover -- It would reduce that level of discards, and that would be separate from any other closures.

MR. HARTIG: I don't see Monica right now. I was going to ask her -- To me, you could actually take that out. You could set that aside and it would remain open in the piers until their allocation was caught. If you had a set-aside, like we do in Spanish for the commercial fishery, where -- But I don't know if you can do that with a framework or not, but this may be something for longer-term thinking, but I agree with you. I think that's a good idea. We've got a one fish per person cobia caught from piers motion. It's seconded by Michelle.

MR. COX: Again, I am not on the committee, but I just wanted to bring up something for discussion. For the commercial cobia limit, it's two per person, where it has been for both sectors, and I think we probably know what's going to probably happen this year. If you look at the historical cobia catches, three of the last five years we've exceeded the ACL. In 2011, we went 163 percent.

I see a lot of cobia getting sold under the commercial limit. I would guarantee that we're going to probably exceed the commercial cobia ACL this year, probably by quite a bit, and so I'm just putting it out there for thought. We may want to think about, just so we can keep a year-round cobia fishery for the commercial fishery, maybe we want to look at some changes, maybe as well as a size increase. We don't catch a lot of small ones, but if we could get any benefit for the commercial sector to keep it open, so we don't get in this same problem. Maybe one per person during a certain time of the year or through the year, but I would like to hear what Dewey's thoughts are on it as well.

MR. HEMILRIGHT: I mean there's no doubt in my mind -- I don't cobia fish, but there's plenty of probably back-door cobia going to the restaurants, without a doubt, because it's a good fish and people love to eat it. It's fresh and readily available, and so any way that could extend the season out for the commercial, those truly commercial-caught fish, it would help the commercial industry.

MR. HAYMANS: We could take this framework list and we could walk down each of those bullets and we could all put something up there that we want to see. For instance, I would like to also see the size limit inch-by-inch by itself. However, I don't want to get into the position where we were the last time we did a framework, particularly on black sea bass, where we only asked for a bag limit and it came back and it really should have been a bag limit and size limit. Is it possible to direct staff to give us as many alternatives within what they've presented here as possible, as they see necessary, such that if -- I just want to see a maximum --



MR. HARTIG: I think staff has told you to be real specific in your recommendations. However, that is a recommendation and I don't know how that plays out, but Michelle has got something.

DR. DUVAL: Doug, I think we could -- I mean we have vessel limit by itself and we have combined vessel and size limit. I don't think it would be an issue to do size limit by itself as well. I mean our staff has already looked at this, and I can tell you that there are some reductions to be gained by doing that, either in combination or by itself.

I think we can do that. I would say let's probably take care of this motion and then you can have another one. I would also like to see some consideration of seasons. Those are also part of the public comments that we got in order to maximize the access, but stay within our limits.

MS. BECKWITH: I agree with Jack. He and I had some of this discussion earlier. I think any choices we make for the recreational fishery, I think we need to match the commercial as well. I'm not sure how we take that into consideration for the framework, but there needs to be something in there that gives us an option of whatever we choose for the recreational we can choose for both sectors, for commercial and recreational.

MR. HARTIG: I would speak to that. If the commercial fishery is not meeting their ACL at two fish, I wouldn't want to change the ACL, I mean change the possession limits. In Florida, I think that's the case. We're bumping up against it, but we're not exceeding it in Florida for the commercial landings. I know Florida is not a consideration in that now, but -- Jack, there is concern. I didn't know we had that big of an overage in cobia commercially. I didn't know that, and so that's something you may want to address with a motion in what goes into this, what we look at here, or is the intent now to really focus on the recreational fishery problem that we have? It's your decision, but let me get Doug.

MR. HAYMANS: Mr. Chairman, it just occurred to me that that's a motion that addresses the fishery specifically in state waters. Can this council do that?

MS. SMIT-BRUNELLO: I would say not.

MR. HARTIG: Roy, that's not a good idea, to --

MR. HAYMANS: Unless it's a really long pier.

MR. HARTIG: -- make an MSA regulation in state waters.

DR. CRABTREE: Yes, that's something the states would have to deal with.

MR. HARTIG: Thank you. We're kind of caught waiting for Anna, but go ahead, Mel, while we're waiting, and then I've got Charlie.

MR. BELL: I might have missed this, but I obviously picked up on the fact that was state waters, but then you could just change that to, in the background, consider a one per person as kind of a baseline to start with, and then you add these other things on there. I mean just make it one person and then look at other options and a one, two, three, four, five, six boat and whatever, but, as a baseline, instead of just saying piers there, you could just --



MR. HARTIG: But aren't we already covering that in the number that we did in the first -- We've got one through six being analyzed in the first motion, and so --

MR. BELL: Is that person or boat?

MR. HARTIG: Was that vessel?

MR. BELL: That wasn't vessel, wasn't it?

MR. HARTIG: Okay. Sorry. I am corrected.

MS. BECKWITH: I just was asked a question on this about if we would want to consider an exemption on the piers from the larger size limit, and so this one gets a little bit confusing. I understand, but the intent would be to just not have those discards coming off those piers when they get those few cobia that they do catch off the piers, and so it may be that the exemption for the pier fishermen even has an exemption to the new size limit, because they don't get those really larger cobia that they catch. It's just up for discussion. I am just trying to solve a problem that's been brought to my attention, but I don't know the best way of doing it.

MR. HARTIG: We appreciate that, but while you were talking to Gregg, there was a discussion that we can't do this, because it's not in our jurisdiction. It escaped me as well, and so would you like to withdraw this motion or would you like to --

MS. BECKWITH: **Sure, I guess.** If we can't do it, then we can't do it.

MR. HARTIG: The motion is withdrawn by Anna. Is that all right with the seconder? Okay. **That motion is withdrawn.** Now, do we want to do something per person? Go ahead, Michelle.

DR. DUVAL: **In keeping with Mel's point, I move that we look at a one fish per person bag limit everywhere.**

MR. HARTIG: It's seconded by Zack. Any discussion on this one? It's pretty straightforward. **Is there any objection? Seeing none, that motion is approved.**

DR. DUVAL: **I don't mean to be taking over the mic here, but I would also like to look at seasons.** One of the things that was mentioned in the potential framework was sort of rolling seasonal closures, the corollary being rolling seasonal openings. If you wanted to look at rolling seasons by state, maybe, and how that might look. I know that's not very specific and I know it's messy, but I'm just very conscious of the fact that Virginia doesn't get access to these fish until the very end of May. I just want to make sure that we're considering that. That's a motion.

MR. HARTIG: We have a second. Then we can have some discussion. Go ahead, Mark.

MR. BROWN: Michelle, would you consider amending it to like a one-month rolling -- In other words, having a one-month timeline for that?

DR. DUVAL: Do you mean like South Carolina would open April 15 and North Carolina would open May 15 and Virginia would open June 15? What do you mean by one-month rolling?



MR. BROWN: Obviously the spawning seems to be occurring in different areas at different times, and if you're wanting to try to benefit the fishery with some sort of a closed time, maybe have like a one-month spawning closure for certain areas, whichever area it's going to benefit.

DR. DUVAL: I almost feel like looking at rolling season starts could address that, because if you -- Depending on where that start date would be for each state, you could address the spawning issue.

MR. HARTIG: They're really two different things. I see them as -- I see what you're trying to do, and you may accomplish it in that vehicle, but I'm not sure you can. There is a different focus on why Michelle is going the direction she is, but, Mel.

MR. BELL: What Mark was trying to is is like what we decided as a state to do, specifically, again, focused on the concerns about that distinct population segment. You're right that the problem is the peak season occurs when the spawning season occurs, because the fish are aggregated and that's what makes them so easy to catch, but that's -- We reached a point, again, with that distinct population segment, where our concerns were so grave that the fishermen were coming to us and saying, in essence, stop us. We can't stop ourselves and stop us, but we know we need to do this, because basically you were really hammering these fish at a very critical time.

That's what I think Mark was trying to achieve. Whatever you roll or whatever is different kind of maximizes some protection for those fish at a key time off of each state. I don't know that that's the same as just kind of the rolling season.

DR. CRABTREE: You might be able to do this, but I think if you start trying to set different closed seasons off of each state that it's going to be difficult to figure out how to do that without state-by-state allocations, and you can't do allocations in a framework amendment, and so it seems like you're starting to get into plan amendment territory here. I'm just not sure how you will calculate when to be open and how long off of each state without somehow allocating.

DR. DUVAL: That's why I think it would be great if we had partnership with the ASMFC in here, because that would be the perfect role for them. I mean I'm happy to withdraw the motion if folks think that this is going to be too difficult to get something in place for next year. I appreciate that.

MS. BECKWITH: Roy, a quick question. That's the case for a seasonal closure off of each state, but if we had a different opening date off of the states, that's not a closure, but it's just a season opening date. If we had a rolling season opening, would that be as much of an issue?

DR. CRABTREE: If you have a different opening date, you're going to have to have a different closing date off of each state, and then to calculate how many days of fishing they should get, it seems -- I'm not sure how to do it without saying they get to catch some number of pounds and now you're back into the allocation question. There might be a way to do it, but it's just not immediately apparent to me. I tend to agree with Michelle that this would be one that would work much cleaner with ASMFC.

DR. DUVAL: **I will withdraw my motion, if Anna agrees.**

MR. HARTIG: The seconder agrees and motion is withdrawn.



MS. BECKWITH: Did we decide we can do the accountability measures in a framework? Michelle just nodded, and so I'm going to let her have a hack at it first.

DR. DUVAL: I would like to explore modifying the accountability measures, and I think, more specifically, not to eliminate the use of a three-year running average, but to modify it so that we can still use the three-year running average, but only apply that to the landings for the Atlantic stock, as compared to the appropriate year ACL. I'm not making myself very clear, but what I was stating earlier was that why could we not have used the average of 2013 through 2015 landings and compare that to the new 2015 ACL?

I mean the harvest is not going to change, even if the ACL changes. I understand that that's how our accountability measures are set up right now, is that this three-year rolling average resets when we get a new ACL in place, but why could we not modify that resetting piece of it and just compare the landings from the appropriate area to the ACL for the appropriate area? That's what I'm trying to get to.

MS. SMIT-BRUNELLO: I'm glad you brought that up, because I realized that I don't know that I answered the last part of your question that you asked me previously, which is why was one year of landings used, as opposed to the three-year rolling average. I'm sure, as you're aware, that because Amendment 20B changed the annual catch limit beginning in 2015, only those landings were used.

If you could figure out a motion along the lines of what you were talking about, I think that we could look at revising the accountability measure, which can be done via framework. Kari was right. I went back and looked at 20B, and it does allow you to make accountability measure changes in a framework.

MS. BECKWITH: Michelle, I guess I'm trying to figure out how that will help, because we went over -- If you look at what the new ACL is, we would have gone over it in 2013 as well, and so we were under the ACL in 2014, but we would have been over in 2013. If you average those three out, I'm not sure it's going to help us a lot and then that still sort of keeps this 2015 being factored into the process for us for the next two years anyway, and so I'm not sure that that modification is going to make a big difference in the long run.

I was more thinking along the lines of keeping the rest of the accountability measure in there, but getting rid of that three-year average, because if you go over your ACL one year, then you modify to reach the ACT the following year, which is probably enough, or then we can put in an in-season closure, which is not there, and that was part of our problem this year, is that we didn't have an in-season closure.

When we were over our ACL, we continued to have landings come in, but I am just struggling to see where the three-year average has been helpful, and so I would rather see a potential for an in-season closure if we're going to go over our ACL, and, if we go over our ACL, then do what we're doing, which is shoot for the ACT in the following year, and then maybe some other modifications, but the three-year average doesn't make a lot of sense to me.

MR. HARTIG: I don't know. I haven't looked at the numbers, but whatever you all want to do here.



DR. DUVAL: Certainly, if it had been a three-year average, it would -- You wouldn't have had this spike in 2015 being compared. I mean I'm just throwing out options based on the public comment that we've received. We put the three-year moving average in there to try to account for the variability in landings.

I completely agree that the lack of an in-season closure has really helped to get us where we are. I don't think it would make the public any happier to have an in-season closure, but it would certainly get us out of having to account for this big of an overage down the road. I'm fine if you want to suggest modifying the accountability measure, recreational accountability measure, for cobia to more closely reflect what we have for snapper grouper.

DR. CRABTREE: In-season closures, I don't really think, are workable here, because the fishery is pretty pulsed into just a couple of summer months, and, by the time you've got any landings, it's already all over. I think you're almost stuck with you would have to project it based on the previous years or something. I just don't think, with the current data collection system, that's a real productive way to go.

MS. SMIT-BRUNELLO: Just to remind everybody, I think that you used to have three-year running averages, as Michelle said, in a lot of the snapper grouper recreational accountability measures, and you eliminated most all of those because of issues, and I can't recall exactly why, but -- However, you should keep in mind what Roy just said, which was the amount of harvest I think that occurs for cobia during those peak summer months. It's, I think, different than some of your other snapper grouper species, and so you do run into different issues.

MS. BECKWITH: Roy, is there, from your experience -- We do have black sea bass, where we set the beginning and end of the season projected on the previous year's effort. Would that make more sense for this sort of fishery? I mean what is an accountability measure that makes the most sense for this pulse fishery?

DR. CRABTREE: I think what you ought to do is just look at alternatives that get rid of the average. Using averages, it's helpful in some ways, but it creates another set of problems and things, and I think one option, which is what we've done in many cases, is to look at not using averages, but it's very difficult to do in-season kinds of monitoring. The stock is in pretty good shape. I think you're better off making adjustments the next year, which is what we're doing.

DR. DUVAL: Kari has got up on the screen how we've changed things in the generic accountability measures amendment, and so it's not -- There is no moving average, but it does give the Regional Administrator latitude to adjust the season as needed, I guess, based on the information that's available. It still uses it only if the species is overfished and the total combined commercial/recreational ACL is exceeded.

Then you would look at adjusting the length of the recreational season. I mean it's pretty much exactly what we had to do this year. There is no in-season closure. It's a 2015 annual catch limit compared against the 2015 ACL with a seasonal adjustment. That's what we had. The only other option I can think of is what we did for -- This pretty much incorporates what we did for black sea bass, which is really publishing the season prior to the start date of the fishing year based on the previous year's landings, and so what's up on the screen isn't a whole hell of a lot different than what we've had to do this year.



MR. HARTIG: Okay. We've had a lot of discussion. We've got a bunch of things to explore. Are there other things we want to do? Do we want to do -- We're in such a conundrum with the accountability measures that I don't know what to do, almost, anymore. This isn't the case. Yes, it's a high landings figure, but it looks like all the information is pointing to that it was high. In other cases, we have aberrant things that come out of the blue and then we have accountability measures to try and deal with those. I don't know. If you want to add another motion -- Michelle.

DR. DUVAL: **I mean I think if the committee is willing to do it that I'm happy to make the motion to explore modifying the accountability measures to maybe reflect what we have for snapper grouper.** It would remove the three-year running average. Roy has pointed out the difficulty in trying to do an in-season closure, just given the pulse nature of the fishery, and so I am happy to make the motion to explore modifying the accountability measures, as shown.

MR. HARTIG: Motion by Michelle and second by Anna. Any more discussion? **Is there any objection? Seeing none, that motion is approved.** Is there anything else that the committee would like to see?

MR. HAYMANS: I just want to verify that we have the per vessel limits. We have the per vessel limits versus the size limits. We have the one fish per person. I assume we can use the number of fish per vessel as a proxy for the number of fish per person size limit, right? We can see that same table and -- In other words, if it's one fish per person versus an increasing size limit, is there a need to redo that calculation? Right now, we haven't asked for it. We have only asked for one fish per person, but, because we're doing it by vessel in a previous motion, we should be able to look back to that, or do I need to ask for one fish per person versus the size limit? Have I just totally screwed that up?

DR. DUVAL: Mike has already done that one per person analysis, and so it's not going to be any difficulty to include that.

MR. HAYMANS: With the size limit? Because you've asked for one fish per person, but we didn't combine that with the size limit increase.

DR. DUVAL: You are absolutely right.

MR. HARTIG: So would you like --

MR. HAYMANS: My point in asking that very convoluted question was does the analysis of the number of fish per vessel -- Can we get that information from that analysis without having to do the one fish per person and the size limit?

MR. HARTIG: I don't know the answer to that.

MR. HAYMANS: **Then I will make a motion that we examine one fish per person, with the same range of sizes as previously requested.** Then, if the analyst decides that it's easy for them to --



MR. HARTIG: Okay. Doug's motion is to look at combined bag limit options with increased minimum size limit, thirty-three through thirty-nine-inches fork length, in one-inch increments, with a one per person bag limit.

DR. MACLAUHLIN: Would you like to also add a two fish bag limit?

MR. HAYMANS: **Sure.**

MR. HARTIG: It gives you something to compare it to.

MS. SMIT-BRUNELLO: Depending on what the SSC does with Dr. Farmer's decision tool, I think hopefully you will be able to use that, and it might allow some combinations of things and you can look at the analysis that comes out of that, but I believe it allows for a little more fluidness, so to speak, between the combination of size limit with bag limit and all that sort of thing. That's just to keep in mind for maybe the next meeting.

MR. HARTIG: Thanks for that. We've got the motion. I'm going to read it again, because we added the two options. Look at combined bag limit options with increased minimum size limit, thirty-three through thirty-nine-inches fork length, in one-inch increments, a one per person bag limit and a two per person bag limit. Is there any more discussion on this motion? It was seconded by Charlie. Is there any more discussion on this motion? **Is there any objection to this motion? Seeing none, that motion is approved.**

Here is my suggestion. I know you all had a pow-wow over that commercial information. Can we have some more discussion about that between now and full council and then you guys bring that back to us, because that would help me and it would help us get through, in a more timely fashion, this committee meeting. Thank you for that, and thanks for bringing that to my attention. I did not know that. We've got a number of motions up here. Gregg.

MR. WAUGH: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We've had some issues and questions raised about how we handle emails, and it's an issue when it's outside of any official comment period. As you know, if we go out to public hearings, there's a cutoff for public comments. We compile all the comments and they're included in a package that goes to the council. We summarize them and you get that whole package.

Outside of official comment periods, emails that come in for a council meeting, we really don't have an established policy in terms of how that is handled, and we will draft something for you all to look at at the next meeting, but I just want to clarify that we've had some concern expressed by Captain Will Branson. He sent you an email dated February 11, 2016, and he attached a letter from the Norfolk Anglers Club dated February 7, 2016.

That was distributed to all council members along with Dr. Duval's response to Captain Branson on February 11. That was distributed to everybody in preparation for the meeting, and since it was already distributed and we weren't in an official comment period, we didn't include it in the second briefing book, or the briefing book when it was sent out. We will work that into our procedure for the future, so that we compile comments that come in on issues related to a meeting and include them in that briefing book.



We also continue to receive numerous comments, right up to a few minutes ago, and what we've been doing is distributing them to council members as soon as we receive them. We don't take the time to read all of those comments into the official record, because that obviously would take a lot of time, but they are distributed to council members.

We have posted all of those comments, including the letter from the Norfolk Anglers Club, to our website. They are available and the public can see what was distributed. After a council meeting, we compile all the comments and we attach them to the materials from this meeting, each meeting, so that they are a part of the official administrative record.

As I mentioned, we will have a draft policy for distributing comments for you all to look at, and we'll have to address how we handle this, because, in the future, we intend to go to one briefing book two weeks before the meeting, and so then we'll have this period up to the meeting and during the meeting, because you all are focused on the business at hand and everybody is not watching their emails and looking at comments that are coming in, and so we will figure out how we address that and bring that to you for your consideration at the June meeting, but I just wanted to go on record and assure everybody who is listening and have sent in comments that the council has received all of those comments and taken them into consideration in coming up with these draft actions for us to analyze, and they have all been posted to the website. Thank you.

DR. DUVAL: There was a comment by I think a Mr. Gorham. I mean I have corresponded with him back and forth several times. His comments were forwarded to all council members, but as staff has been posting those comments to the briefing book website, that was one that was inadvertently forgotten and will be posted to the website, and I just wanted to assure folks of that.

MR. HARTIG: I would like to say that the comments we got, there was a lot of data included with a number of those comments, which was interesting to look at. I mean it was helpful to look at their perspective using the data they use. I always appreciate it when the public uses data to make their point, and so thank you for that. It's time to go to lunch. We have gotten a lot done on cobia here. Think about if there's anything else at full council that you want to do. Really, we've got a couple of actions we have to do in full council. I'm going to turn it back over to you, Michelle, because I think the Mackerel Committee will be in recess until full council.

(Whereupon, the meeting was adjourned on March 10, 2016.)

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

Transcribed By:  
Amanda Thomas  
March 22, 2016



SOUTH ATLANTIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL  
**2016 COMMITTEES (continued)**

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✓ Zack Bowen  
✓ Chris Conklin  
✓ Roy Crabtree  
✓ Doug Haymans  
✓ Charlie Phillips  
Robert Beal, ASMFC Representative  
Mid-Atlantic Liaison, Tony DeLernia/Dewey  
✓ Hemilright  
Staff contact: Kari MacLauchlin

**LAW ENFORCEMENT**

Mel Bell, Chair  
Mark Brown, Vice-Chair  
Anna Beckwith  
Zack Bowen  
Ben Hartig  
LTJG Tara Pray  
Staff contact: Myra Brouwer

**PERSONNEL**

Jessica McCawley, Chair  
Michelle Duval, Vice Chair  
Mel Bell  
Ben Hartig  
Doug Haymans  
Staff contact: Bob Mahood

**PROTECTED RESOURCES**

Wilson Laney, Chair  
Jessica McCawley, Vice-Chair  
Mark Brown  
Zack Bowen  
Jack Cox  
Michelle Duval  
LTJG Tara Pray  
Robert Beal, ASMFC Representative  
Staff contact: Chip Collier

**SSC SELECTION**

Charlie Phillips, Chair  
Wilson Laney, Vice-Chair  
Chris Conklin  
Chester Brewer  
Roy Crabtree  
Michelle Duval  
Staff contact: John Carmichael

**SEDAR**

Michelle Duval, Chair  
Chris Conklin, Vice-Chair  
Zack Bowen  
Mark Brown  
Ben Hartig  
Charlie Phillips  
Robert Beal, ASMFC Representative  
Staff contact: John Carmichael

**SHRIMP**

Charlie Phillips, Chair  
Mel Bell, Vice-Chair  
Jack Cox  
Roy Crabtree  
Wilson Laney  
Jessica McCawley  
Staff contact: Chip Collier

*(Continued)*



SOUTH ATLANTIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL  
**2016 COUNCIL MEMBERSHIP**

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**VICE-CHAIR**

Charlie Phillips  
Phillips Seafood/Sapelo Sea Farms  
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Townsend, GA 31331  
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[Ga\\_capt@yahoo.com](mailto:Ga_capt@yahoo.com)

---

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Atlantic States Marine Fisheries  
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**2016 COUNCIL MEMBERSHIP (continued)**

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DR. MARCEL REICHERT  
ERIKA BURGESS  
LEANN BOSARGE  
DR. GEORGE SEDBERRY  
IRA LAKS  
ROBERT BOYLES  
AMY DUKES



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**Admin. Secretary /Travel Coordinator**

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✓ **Purchasing & Grants**

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**South Atlantic Fishery Management Council –  
March 2016 Council Meeting  
Jekyll Island, GA**

**Date:** ~~Wednesday~~ Wednesday, March 9, 2016

**Committee:** Mackerel

**PLEASE SIGN IN -**

*In order to have a record of your attendance at each meeting and your name included in the minutes, we ask that you sign this sheet for the meeting shown above.*

Name:	Mailing Address/E-mail: <i>(If your information is currently on file, please check the box.)</i>	How do you participate in South Atlantic fisheries? <i>(Check all that apply)</i>	
Bob Grunich	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> On File	Commercial <input type="checkbox"/> NGO <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Bill Kelly	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> On File	Recreational <input type="checkbox"/> Govt. <input type="checkbox"/>	
Mason Bowen	<input type="checkbox"/> On File	Charter/ For-hire <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____ <i>Describe</i>	
Russell Sinclair	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> On File	Commercial <input type="checkbox"/> NGO <input type="checkbox"/>	
BARRETT Colby	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> On File	Recreational <input type="checkbox"/> Govt. <input type="checkbox"/>	
Holly Binns	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> On File	Charter/ For-hire <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____ <i>Describe</i>	
		Commercial <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NGO <input type="checkbox"/>	
		Recreational <input type="checkbox"/> Govt. <input type="checkbox"/>	
		Charter/ For-hire <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____ <i>Describe</i>	
		Commercial <input type="checkbox"/> NGO <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
		Recreational <input type="checkbox"/> Govt. <input type="checkbox"/>	
		Charter/ For-hire <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____ <i>Describe</i>	
		Commercial <input type="checkbox"/> NGO <input type="checkbox"/>	
		Recreational <input type="checkbox"/> Govt. <input type="checkbox"/>	
		Charter/ For-hire <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____ <i>Describe</i>	

**South Atlantic Fishery Management Council  
4055 Faber Place Drive, Suite 201  
Charleston, SC 29405**





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March 2016 Council Meeting  
Jekyll Island, GA**

**Date:** ~~Wednesday~~ Wednesday, March 9, 2016

**Committee:** *Mackerel*

**PLEASE SIGN IN -**

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Name:	Mailing Address/E-mail: <i>(If your information is currently on file, please check the box.)</i>	How do you participate in South Atlantic fisheries? <i>(Check all that apply)</i>	
<i>Lora Clarke</i>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> On File	Commercial <input type="checkbox"/>	NGO <input type="checkbox"/>
		Recreational <input type="checkbox"/>	Govt. <input type="checkbox"/>
		Charter/For-hire <input type="checkbox"/>	Other _____ <i>Describe</i>
<i>Susan Shipman</i>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> On File	Commercial <input type="checkbox"/>	NGO <input type="checkbox"/>
		Recreational <input type="checkbox"/>	Govt. <input type="checkbox"/>
		Charter/For-hire <input type="checkbox"/>	Other _____ <i>Describe</i>
<i>Dean Foster</i>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> On File	Commercial <input type="checkbox"/>	NGO <input type="checkbox"/>
		Recreational <input type="checkbox"/>	Govt. <input type="checkbox"/>
		Charter/For-hire <input type="checkbox"/>	Other _____ <i>Describe</i>
<i>Jim Morley</i>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> On File	Commercial <input type="checkbox"/>	NGO <input type="checkbox"/>
		Recreational <input type="checkbox"/>	Govt. <input type="checkbox"/>
		Charter/For-hire <input type="checkbox"/>	Other _____ <i>Describe</i>
<i>Taron Grusich</i>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> On File	Commercial <input type="checkbox"/>	NGO <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
		Recreational <input type="checkbox"/>	Govt. <input type="checkbox"/>
		Charter/For-hire <input type="checkbox"/>	Other _____ <i>Describe</i>
<i>Gary Zurn</i>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> On File	Commercial <input type="checkbox"/>	NGO <input type="checkbox"/>
		Recreational <input type="checkbox"/>	Govt. <input type="checkbox"/>
		Charter/For-hire <input type="checkbox"/>	Other _____ <i>Describe</i>

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**Committee:** *Mackerel*

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Name:	Mailing Address/E-mail: <i>(If your information is currently on file, please check the box.)</i>	How do you participate in South Atlantic fisheries? <i>(Check all that apply)</i>	
<i>FRANK HELIX</i>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> On File	Commercial <input type="checkbox"/> NGO <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
		Recreational <input type="checkbox"/> Govt. <input type="checkbox"/>	
		Charter/ For-hire <input type="checkbox"/>	Other _____ <i>Describe</i>
	<input type="checkbox"/> On File	Commercial <input type="checkbox"/> NGO <input type="checkbox"/>	
		Recreational <input type="checkbox"/> Govt. <input type="checkbox"/>	
		Charter/ For-hire <input type="checkbox"/>	Other _____ <i>Describe</i>
	<input type="checkbox"/> On File	Commercial <input type="checkbox"/> NGO <input type="checkbox"/>	
		Recreational <input type="checkbox"/> Govt. <input type="checkbox"/>	
		Charter/ For-hire <input type="checkbox"/>	Other _____ <i>Describe</i>
	<input type="checkbox"/> On File	Commercial <input type="checkbox"/> NGO <input type="checkbox"/>	
		Recreational <input type="checkbox"/> Govt. <input type="checkbox"/>	
		Charter/ For-hire <input type="checkbox"/>	Other _____ <i>Describe</i>
	<input type="checkbox"/> On File	Commercial <input type="checkbox"/> NGO <input type="checkbox"/>	
		Recreational <input type="checkbox"/> Govt. <input type="checkbox"/>	
		Charter/ For-hire <input type="checkbox"/>	Other _____ <i>Describe</i>

**South Atlantic Fishery Management Council  
4055 Faber Place Drive, Suite 201  
Charleston, SC 29405**





**South Atlantic Fishery Management Council –  
March 2016 Council Meeting  
Jekyll Island, GA**

**Date:** Thursday, March 10, 2016

**Committee:** Mackerel

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Name:	Mailing Address/E-mail: <i>(If your information is currently on file, please check the box.)</i>	How do you participate in South Atlantic fisheries? <i>(Check all that apply)</i>	
Bria Koway	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> On File	Commercial <input type="checkbox"/>	NGO <input type="checkbox"/>
		Recreational <input type="checkbox"/>	Govt. <input type="checkbox"/>
		Charter/ For-hire <input type="checkbox"/>	Other _____ <i>Describe</i>
Linda Durrence	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> On File	Commercial <input type="checkbox"/>	NGO <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
		Recreational <input type="checkbox"/>	Govt. <input type="checkbox"/>
		Charter/ For-hire <input type="checkbox"/>	Other _____ <i>Describe</i>
Dean Foster	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> On File	Commercial <input type="checkbox"/>	NGO <input type="checkbox"/>
		Recreational <input type="checkbox"/>	Govt. <input type="checkbox"/>
		Charter/ For-hire <input type="checkbox"/>	Other _____ <i>Describe</i>
Deidra Jeffcoat	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> On File	Commercial <input type="checkbox"/>	NGO <input type="checkbox"/>
		Recreational <input type="checkbox"/>	Govt. <input type="checkbox"/>
		Charter/ For-hire <input type="checkbox"/>	Other _____ <i>Describe</i>
Lindsey Jeffcoat	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> On File	Commercial <input type="checkbox"/>	NGO <input type="checkbox"/>
		Recreational <input type="checkbox"/>	Govt. <input type="checkbox"/>
		Charter/ For-hire <input type="checkbox"/>	Other _____ <i>Describe</i>
Amy Dukes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> On File	Commercial <input type="checkbox"/>	NGO <input type="checkbox"/>
		Recreational <input type="checkbox"/>	Govt. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
		Charter/ For-hire <input type="checkbox"/>	Other _____ <i>Describe</i>

**South Atlantic Fishery Management Council  
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Charleston, SC 29405**





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Name:	Mailing Address/E-mail: <i>(If your information is currently on file, please check the box.)</i>	How do you participate in South Atlantic fisheries? <i>(Check all that apply)</i>	
Robert Olsen	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> On File	Commercial <input type="checkbox"/>	NGO <input type="checkbox"/>
		Recreational <input type="checkbox"/>	Govt. <input type="checkbox"/>
		Charter/For-hire <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Other _____ <i>Describe</i>
FRANK HEULES	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> On File	Commercial <input type="checkbox"/>	NGO <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
		Recreational <input type="checkbox"/>	Govt. <input type="checkbox"/>
		Charter/For-hire <input type="checkbox"/>	Other _____ <i>Describe</i>
Ryan Howard	<input type="checkbox"/> On File fishmeryan@gmail.com 113 Suncrest Blvd Savannah, GA 31410	Commercial <input type="checkbox"/>	NGO <input type="checkbox"/>
		Recreational <input type="checkbox"/>	Govt. <input type="checkbox"/>
		Charter/For-hire <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Other _____ <i>Describe</i>
Kristen Shipley	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> On File	Commercial <input type="checkbox"/>	NGO <input type="checkbox"/>
		Recreational <input type="checkbox"/>	Govt. <input type="checkbox"/>
		Charter/For-hire <input type="checkbox"/>	Other _____ <i>Describe</i>
Kathryn Knowlton	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> On File	Commercial <input type="checkbox"/>	NGO <input type="checkbox"/>
		Recreational <input type="checkbox"/>	Govt. <input type="checkbox"/>
		Charter/For-hire <input type="checkbox"/>	Other <u>GADNR</u> <i>Describe</i>
DICK BRAME	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> On File	Commercial <input type="checkbox"/>	NGO <input type="checkbox"/>
		Recreational <input type="checkbox"/>	Govt. <input type="checkbox"/>
		Charter/For-hire <input type="checkbox"/>	Other _____ <i>Describe</i>

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**Committee:** Mackerel

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Name:	Mailing Address/E-mail: <i>(If your information is currently on file, please check the box.)</i>	How do you participate in South Atlantic fisheries? <i>(Check all that apply)</i>	
Bob Cannon	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> On File	Commercial <input type="checkbox"/> NGO <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
		Recreational <input type="checkbox"/> Govt. <input type="checkbox"/>	
		Charter/For-hire <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____ <i>Describe</i>	
Julie Cal: Af	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> On File Georgia DNR	Commercial <input type="checkbox"/> NGO <input type="checkbox"/>	
		Recreational <input type="checkbox"/> Govt. <input type="checkbox"/>	
		Charter/For-hire <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____ <i>Describe</i>	
Susan Shegman	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> On File	Commercial <input type="checkbox"/> NGO <input type="checkbox"/>	
		Recreational <input type="checkbox"/> Govt. <input type="checkbox"/>	
		Charter/For-hire <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____ <i>Describe</i>	
Amy Smith	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> On File Georgia DNR	Commercial <input type="checkbox"/> NGO <input type="checkbox"/>	
		Recreational <input type="checkbox"/> Govt. <input type="checkbox"/>	
		Charter/For-hire <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____ <i>Describe</i>	
Cindy S. Smith	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> On File Georgia DNR/CRD	Commercial <input type="checkbox"/> NGO <input type="checkbox"/>	
		Recreational <input type="checkbox"/> Govt. <input type="checkbox"/>	
		Charter/For-hire <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____ <i>Describe</i>	
	<input type="checkbox"/> On File	Commercial <input type="checkbox"/> NGO <input type="checkbox"/>	
		Recreational <input type="checkbox"/> Govt. <input type="checkbox"/>	
		Charter/For-hire <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____ <i>Describe</i>	

**South Atlantic Fishery Management Council  
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THUR 10 MAR 16

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Neer	Julie	julie.neer@safmc.net
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Sedberry	George	george.sedberry@noaa.gov
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