

**SUMMARY REPORT
FROM THE MACKEREL COMMITTEE MEETING
Atlantic Beach, NC
December 8, 2009**

The Mackerel Committee met on December 8, 2009 in Atlantic Beach, NC. The committee received presentations by:

1. Gregg Waugh, SAFMC Staff, reviewed public comments from the Gulf Council scoping for Amendment 18. Forty three members of the public attended the hearing in Key West, FL on September 21st and nine individuals spoke. Thirty six members of the public attended the hearing in Marathon, FL on September 22nd and three individuals spoke. Four letters were received.
2. Gregg also reviewed the Gulf Council motions that moved all items to meet the new MSA requirements into Amendment 18 and the remaining items into Amendment 20. The Gulf Council also approved a motion to move forward with a commercial LAPP program for the king mackerel fishery and established an Ad Hoc Mackerel LAPP AP for the commercial industry.
3. Monica Smit-Brunello and Robert Boyles discussed the issues involved with the State of SC having cobia regulations that may be more restrictive than Federal regulations.

The SSC provided the following input:

King Mackerel Recommendations

The SSC could recommend an OFL level from the options as reported in the Mackerel Decision Document. However, because additional projections are necessary to develop ABC recommendations in accordance with the ABC control rule developed after the Mackerel assessment was approved, the SSC prefers that those projections also provide information to support annual OFL values.

In order to determine an appropriate annual OFL and ABC the SSC needs the following:

- * Updated landings
- * Measure of Recruitment
- * Updated projections which take into account the current years' landings
- * Ask for the production of both constant catch and constant F scenarios for the projections. Projections should provide the catch and F associated with a 27.5% chance of overfishing occurring over the projection period.
- * Recommend that multiple projections be generated for a variety of time series beginning with a single year projection, one through 2013, and also seven and ten year periods.

Request this information be submitted to the SSC on or before March 15, 2010.

Spanish Mackerel Recommendations

As the most recent assessment could not express OFL biomass, the SSC cannot provide guidance based on the assessment. In this instance, the SSC would need to default to the use of landings data as a means of determining an OFL, however at this time the SSC has not determined the best way to derive this value from landings. The SSC intends to discuss this further under the ACL topic on Tuesday, and will use Spanish mackerel as a test to work through the development of ABC in such cases.

Cobia Recommendations

Data may exist to assess Cobia, and the stock is scheduled to be assessed in 2012. The SSC will provide ABC recommendations for Cobia at the April 2010 meeting, based on information in hand at the time, when it addresses ABCs for all remaining stocks. (The less information the SSC has, the greater the uncertainty to be considered). The SSC will address the default control rule for un-assessed stocks at this meeting (Dec 2009) and develop an additional data request for un-assessed stocks to provide the information necessary to apply the control rule in April 2010.

The Committee deferred discussion about ACLs until they receive input from the SSC. This will likely be at the June 2010 Council meeting.

Under Other Business the Committee was briefed about the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission's (ASMFC) Public Information Document that will bring their Spanish mackerel plan into compliance with their internal requirements and what the Councils are proposing through Amendment 18. Public hearings may be held by ASFMC and the document is available from their web site (www.asmfc.org). The Committee also discussed quota monitoring and requested that the figures on the NMFS website be kept as up-to-date as possible so that fishermen know the level of landings remaining.

Direction to Staff/Team

1. Schedule a 1 hour Mackerel Committee meeting at the March 2010 SAFMC meeting to discuss GMFMC actions and to review the request to NMFS for data to address the SSC's needs. The SAFMC will address the issue of participation in the Gulf Mackerel Commercial LAPP efforts at that time.
2. Add an alternative to address number of nets, trip limits, and transfer at-sea to Mackerel Amendment 20.
3. Clarify in the SAFMC Decision Document on page 34 how the sale prohibition addresses king and Spanish mackerel caught under the bag limit. The Committee will also review specifying a commercial trip limit for cobia rather than calling it a bag limit.