



SOUTH ATLANTIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

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Dr. Michelle Duval, Chair | Charlie Phillips, Vice Chair
Gregg T. Waugh, Executive Director

AGENDA **Mackerel Cobia Committee** Sawgrass Marriott Ponte Vedra Beach, Florida

Thursday, June 15, 2017 – 9:30 A.M. to 11:00 A.M. (Times subject to change)

Approval of Agenda – Ben Hartig

Approval of March 2017 Mackerel Cobia Committee minutes – Ben Hartig

1. Status of commercial and recreational catches vs. ACLs (**Attachments 1a and 1b**) – NMFS SERO
 - a. Presentation – SERO
 - b. Committee discussion and action as necessary – Ben Hartig
2. Status of Amendments under Formal Review – NMFS SERO
 - CMP Amendment 26 (king mackerel ACLs, allocations, stock boundary, incidental catch) – sent July 7, 2016
 - CMP Framework Amendment 4 (Atlantic cobia management measures) – sent October 28, 2016
 - CMP Framework Amendment 5 (modify permit restrictions) – sent December 2, 2016
3. Mackerel Cobia Advisory Panel and Cobia Sub-Panel Meeting Report (**Attachments 2a and 2b**)
 - a. Meeting summary and recommendations (**Attachment 2a**) – Ira Laks, Mackerel Cobia AP Chair
 - b. Cobia Fishery Performance Report (Included in **Attachment 2a**) – Kari MacLauchlin
 - c. Committee discussion and action as necessary – Ben Hartig
4. Emergency Action for Atlantic Cobia (**Attachment 3**)
 - a. Discussion Document – Kari MacLauchlin
 - b. Committee discussion and action as necessary – Ben Hartig
5. Update on the ASMFC Interstate Plan for Cobia (**Attachments 4a and 4b**)
 - a. Presentation – Bob Beal
 - b. Committee discussion and action as necessary – Ben Hartig

6. Atlantic Cobia 2017
 - a. State reports – State representatives
 - b. Committee discussion and action as necessary – Ben Hartig
7. Consider Framework to Adjust Atlantic King Mackerel Trip Limits
 - a. Background – Kari MacLauchlin
 - b. Committee discussion and action as necessary – Ben Hartig
8. Common unit for tracking CMP landings (**Attachment 5**)
 - a. Presentation – NMFS SERO and SEFSC
 - b. Committee discussion and action as necessary – Ben Hartig

Other Business – Ben Hartig

Adjourn – Ben Hartig

Mackerel Cobia Committee

Ben Hartig, Chair

Michelle Duval, Vice Chair

Anna Beckwith

Mel Bell

Zack Bowen

Mark Brown

Roy Crabtree

Doug Haymans

Jessica McCawley

Robert Beal, ASMFC

Rob O'Reilly, MAFMC

Tony DiLernia/Dewey Hemilright, MAFMC

Attachments

Attachment 1a: NMFS SERO Commercial ACL Report for CMP species

Attachment 1b: NMFS SERO Recreational ACL Report for CMP species

Attachment 2a: Mackerel Cobia AP and Cobia Sub-Panel April 2017 Meeting Report with Cobia Fishery Performance Report

Attachment 2b: Mackerel Cobia AP and Cobia Sub-Panel April 2017 Minutes

Attachment 3: Discussion document on emergency action for Atlantic cobia

Attachment 4a: Cobia options presented to the ASMFC South Atlantic Board State/Federal Fisheries Management Board – May 2017

Attachment 4b: Summary of process for state/federal regulations for summer flounder

Attachment 5: SEFSC presentation on common units for CMP monitoring

Staff: Kari MacLauchlin

OVERVIEW

Mackerel Cobia Committee

The Committee will approve of minutes from March 2017 meeting, and the agenda.

1. **Status of commercial and recreational catches vs. ACLs – (*Attachments 1a and 1b*)**

Description: The Committee will receive status updates on commercial and recreational landings for Atlantic king mackerel, Atlantic Spanish mackerel, Atlantic cobia, and Florida east coast cobia. Recreational landings (*Attachment 1b*) will available at the Committee meeting.

Required Committee Action: Discuss and take action as necessary.

2. **Status of Amendments under Formal Review**

Description: SERO staff will brief the Committee on the status of each amendment under formal review.

- CMP Amendment 26 (king mackerel ACLs, allocations, stock boundary, incidental catch) – sent for formal review on July 7, 2016
- Framework Amendment 4 (Atlantic cobia management measures) – sent for formal review on October 28, 2016
- Framework Amendment 5 (modify permit restrictions) – sent for formal review on December 2, 2016

Required Committee Action: Discuss and take action as necessary.

3. **Meeting Report from the Mackerel Cobia Advisory Panel and Cobia Sub-Panel (*Attachments 2a and 2b*)**

Description: The Mackerel Cobia Advisory Panel (AP) and Cobia Sub-Panel met jointly on April 19-20, 2017. AP Chair Ira Laks will provide a summary report of the meeting and present the AP and Sub-Panel recommendations to the Committee (*Attachment 2a*). Council staff will also review a summary of the cobia fishery performance report generated at the AP/Sub-Panel meeting (*included in Attachment 2a*). The minutes are available in *Attachment 2b*.

Required Committee Action: Discuss and take action as necessary.

4. **Emergency Action for Atlantic Cobia (*Attachment 3*)**

Description: The Mackerel Cobia Advisory Panel (AP) and Cobia Sub-Panel approved a motion (6 in favor/5 opposed/4 abstained) to recommend that the Council request NMFS to consider emergency action to change the current stock boundary and annual catch limits (ACLs) for Atlantic and Gulf cobia to the boundary and ACLs in place prior to CMP Amendment 20B. Council staff will review a discussion document (*Attachment 3*) on emergency action criteria in the context of Atlantic cobia.

Required Committee Action: Discuss and take action as necessary.

5. **ASMFC Interstate Management Plan for Cobia (*Attachments 4a and 4b*)**

Description: Bob Beal, Executive Director of the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission, will brief the Committee on the status for the interstate management plan for

cobia. At their May 2017 meeting, the South Atlantic State/Federal Fisheries Management Board reviewed options for cobia (**Attachment 4a**):

From the [May 2017 ASMFC meeting summary](#):

Cobia Draft FMP

Following the progress report on the draft FMP development, the Board directed the PDT to develop options that maintain recreational and commercial harvest within the federal allowable catch limit of 620,000 pounds while providing states the flexibility to establish seasons and vessel limits to control harvest within a specified limit. The Board supported the inclusion of a coastwide bag limit of 1 fish per person and a 36" FL size limit consistent with the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council (SAFMC) Plan. The Board also considered potential complementary measures to be discussed with the National Marine Fisheries Service and the SAFMC related to cobia fisheries in federal waters. The draft FMP will be reviewed by the Board and considered for public comment at the August 2017 meeting. Pending Board approval, management measures from the draft FMP could be enacted as early as the 2018 fishing year.

The Board was updated on scheduling of the next benchmark stock assessment for AMG cobia through the Southeast Data, Assessment, and Review (SEDAR) process. This benchmark stock assessment will begin with a Stock Identification Workshop in 2018.

Recognizing that the majority of the cobia harvest occurs in state waters and that sole management authority would provide maximum state flexibility, the Board approved a motion to request that the SAFMC consider transferring management authority of Atlantic Migratory Group cobia to the Commission. The Board was informed that a potential transfer of management authority would not affect the upcoming SEDAR assessment.

Motions

Move to request that the SAFMC and GMFMC consider transferring management authority of Atlantic migratory Cobia stock to ASMFC. Motion made by Mr. Bush and seconded Mr. Cimino. Motion carries without objection.

The Committee will also review the process for summer flounder state-federal management (**Attachment 4b**).

Required Committee Action: Discuss and take action as necessary.

6. **Atlantic Cobia 2017**

Description: State agency representatives will provide updates to the Committee on actions and decisions regarding recreational harvest of Atlantic cobia in state waters for 2017.

Required Committee Action: Discuss and take action as necessary.

7. **King Mackerel Trip Limits**

Description: The new regulations for king mackerel established in CMP Amendment 26 will go into effect on May 11, 2017, including updated commercial trip limits for the Atlantic Southern zone. The Atlantic Southern Zone will have split seasons, with Season 1 as March 1 through September 30, and Season 2 set for October 1 through the end of February.

Each Atlantic Southern Zone season has a quota and specified trip limits:

- SC/NC line to the Flagler/Volusia county line: 3,500 lbs year-round
- Flagler/Volusia county line to Miami-Dade/Monroe county line:
 - Season 1: 50 fish for March 1-31; 75 fish for April 1-September 30
 - Season 2: 50 fish until February 1, then will increase to 75 fish if <70% of the Season 2 quota has been landed.

Some fishermen on the Florida east coast have expressed concern about the new trip limits, especially the 50-fish limit for March 1-31 from the Flagler/Volusia line to the Miami-Dade/Monroe line. Additionally, some of the Florida on the AP recommended that the Council review the March trip limit or consider a different trip limit for north of the Volusia/Brevard line.

Committee Chair Ben Hartig will review the trip limits and input from the AP and fishermen.
Required Committee Action: Discuss and take action as necessary.

8. Common Unit for Tracking CMP Landings

Description: The annual catch limits and quotas listed in the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) for all CMP species are in round and eviscerated weight combined. Landings are tracked “round and eviscerated weight combined” for all stocks/sectors except for recreational Atlantic king mackerel and recreational Atlantic Spanish mackerel (whole weight). For the Atlantic stocks, overfishing levels (OFLs) and acceptable biological catch (ABCs) are in whole weight. The language in amendments for the most recent ACLs for the Atlantic CMP stocks specify that the ACL is equal to the ABC (in whole weight) but do not explicitly state that the ACL is in whole weight. CMP stocks are the only managed stocks in the Atlantic and Gulf that are tracked “as reported.” The table below summarizes the units used for each Atlantic stock.

	ACL Tracking ¹	Stock Assessment ²	Amendment Language ³	CFR Language ⁴
Atlantic KM- comm	As reported	OFL/ABC whole weight	ACL= ABC but units for ACL not specified	round and eviscerated weight combined
Atlantic KM- rec	Whole weight			
Atlantic SM- comm	As reported	OFL/ABC whole weight	ACL= ABC but units for ACL not specified	round and eviscerated weight combined
Atlantic SM- rec	Whole weight			
Atlantic Cobia - comm	As reported	OFL/ABC whole weight	ACL= ABC but units for ACL not specified	round and eviscerated weight combined
Atlantic Cobia- rec	As reported			

¹SERO ACL Webpage: http://sero.nmfs.noaa.gov/sustainable_fisheries/acl_monitoring/index.html

²SEDAR 38 for king mackerel, SEDAR 28 for Spanish mackerel and cobia

³ Amendment 26 for king mackerel; Framework Amendment 1 for Spanish mackerel; Amendment 20B for cobia

⁴ <http://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?SID=86d3e4e21c5c4a3cd94b7f259d8700e1&node=50:12.0.1.1.2&rgn=div5v>

Without a common unit for the ACLs/quotas and for tracking landings, the proportion of landings that are whole fish and the proportion that are gutted fish is unknown. The final proportion of the ACL will never be precise under this system, and actual landings may be exceeding the ACL because of the difference between gutted to whole weight conversions for some species. The Mackerel Cobia AP and Sub-Panel also pointed out the inconsistency as a concern. The Committee will discuss use of common unit for ACLs, quotas and tracking, and how to improve reporting for these species to capture a more accurate picture of landings. SERO and SEFSC staff will provide input and guidance on options for modifying the units for monitoring so that they align with the units of the ABCs and ACLs (*Attachment 5*).

Required Committee Action: Discuss and take action as necessary.

Other Business