



# SOUTH ATLANTIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

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

## **AGENDA (Revised)**

### **Mackerel Cobia Committee**

Town & Country Inn  
Charleston, South Carolina

**Thursday, September 28, 2017 – 9:00 A.M. to 12:00 P.M. (Times subject to change)**

Approval of Agenda – Ben Hartig

Approval of June 2017 Mackerel Cobia Committee minutes – Ben Hartig

1. Status of commercial catches vs. ACLs (**Attachment 1**) – NMFS SERO
2. Status of Amendments under Formal Review – NMFS SERO
  - a) CMP Framework Amendment 4 (Atlantic cobia) – sent October 28, 2016
  - b) CMP Framework Amendment 5 (modify permit restrictions) – sent December 2, 2016
3. Update on the ASMFC Interstate Plan for Cobia (**Attachment 2**) – Bob Beal
4. Atlantic Cobia 2017 State reports – State representatives
5. Request for recalculation of 2015 and 2016 recreational landings for Atlantic cobia (**Attachments 3a** and **3b**) – NMFS
6. CMP Amendment 31(**Attachments 4a – 4c**)
  - a) Scoping comments summary – Kari MacLauchlin
  - b) Review of options paper – Kari MacLauchlin
  - c) **Committee action:** Review and approve action(s) and alternatives; provide guidance to staff – Ben Hartig
7. Framework to Adjust Atlantic King Mackerel Trip Limits (**Attachment 5**)
  - a) Background – Kari MacLauchlin
  - b) **Committee action:** discuss and provide guidance to staff – 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 1:** NMFS SERO Commercial ACL Report for CMP species  
**Attachment 2:** Draft ASMFC Interstate Management Plan for Cobia – August 2017  
**Attachment 3a:** Letter to NMFS for Recalculation of 2015 and 2016 Atlantic cobia recreational landings – June 27, 2017  
**Attachment 3b:** NMFS Response for Recalculated 2015 and 2016 Atlantic cobia recreational landings  
**Attachment 4a:** Scoping Comments Summary and Minutes from Scoping Webinar  
**Attachment 4b:** VMRC comment on CMP Amendment 31  
**Attachment 4c:** Options Paper for CMP Amendment 31  
**Attachment 5:** Options for Atlantic King Mackerel Trip Limits

**Staff:** Kari MacLauchlin

# **OVERVIEW**

## **Mackerel Cobia Committee**

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

1. **Status of commercial catches vs. ACLs – (*Attachment 1*)**

**Description:** The Committee will receive an update on commercial landings for Atlantic king mackerel, Atlantic Spanish mackerel, and Atlantic and Florida east coast cobia.

**Required Committee Action:** None.

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

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

- 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:** None.

3. **ASMFC Interstate Management Plan for Cobia (*Attachment 2*)**

**Description:** Bob Beal, Executive Director of the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission, and Dr. Louis Daniel will brief the Committee on the status for the interstate management plan for cobia (*Attachment 2*). At their August 2017 meeting, the South Atlantic State/Federal Fisheries Management Board reviewed the draft plan and approved it for public hearings. A hearing on site will be held on Thursday, September 14, 2017, when the Council adjourns for the day.

**Required Committee Action:** Discuss and take action as necessary.

4. **Atlantic Cobia 2017**

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

**Required Committee Action:** Discuss and take action as necessary.

5. **Request for recalculation of 2015 and 2016 recreational landings for Atlantic cobia (*Attachments 3a and 3b*)**

**Description:** At the June 2017 meeting, the Council approved the following motion at: REQUEST MRIP RE-CALCULATE THE 2015 AND 2016 ATLANTIC COBIA RECREATIONAL HARVEST USING ANNUAL ESTIMATE OF CATCH AND EFFORT. A letter was sent to NMFS on June 27, 2017, requesting that NMFS provide these estimates for the September 2017 Council meeting (*Attachment 3a*). MRIP staff has already presented several alternative approaches to estimate catch and effort for rare recreational species for use in comparing to ACLs, and the SSC considered the alternatives reasonable and appropriate. *Attachment 3b* includes the NMFS response that they are unable to provide the the recalculated recreational landings for Atlantic cobia in 2015 and 2016.

**Required Committee Action:** Discuss and take action as necessary.

6. **CMP Amendment 31 (Attachments 4a – 4c)**

**Description:** In May 2017, the ASMFC’s South Atlantic State/Federal Fisheries Management Board approved a motion to request that the South Atlantic Council transfer sole management of cobia to the ASMFC, which would require that Atlantic cobia be removed from the federal fishery management plan. At their June 2017 meeting, the Council directed staff to start work on an amendment to consider an option to remove Atlantic cobia from federal management and options for complementary management of Atlantic cobia. Council staff will review a summary of scoping comments (**Attachment 4a**) and a comment letter from the Virginia Marine Resources Commission (**Attachment 4b**). Staff will then review the options paper for Amendment 31 (**Attachment 4c**).

**Status of amendment:** A scoping webinar was held on August 15, 2017, and scoping comments were accepted via the online form through August 18, 2017. The Committee review scoping comments and provide guidance during the September 2017 meeting on the action(s) to be included in the amendment and the range of alternatives for analysis. The amendment is scheduled to be approved for public hearings in December 2017. The Council would review public input and consider final approval in March 2018. Because this is a joint amendment, the Gulf Council is expected to take final action in April 2018.

**Required Committee Action:** Review and approve action(s) and alternatives; provide guidance to staff.

7. **Framework to Adjust Atlantic King Mackerel Trip Limits (Attachment 5) Description:**

The new regulations for king mackerel established in CMP Amendment 26 became effective on May 11, 2017, including updated commercial trip limits for the Atlantic Southern zone. The Atlantic Southern Zone now has 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 (March 1- September 30): 50 fish for March 1-31; 75 fish for April 1- September 30
  - Season 2 (October 1 – end of February): 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, at their April 2017 meeting, the Mackerel Cobia Advisory Panel recommended that the Council review the March trip limit or consider a different trip limit for north of the Volusia/Brevard line.

Council staff will review potential options for a framework amendment to adjust the trip limits (**Attachment 5**). A framework amendment would not require action by the Gulf Council.

**Required Committee Action:** Discuss and take action as necessary.

**Other Business**