

**SUMMARY REPORT  
MACKEREL COMMITTEE  
June 16, 2016  
Cocoa Beach, FL**

The Committee adopted the agenda and approved the minutes of the March 2016 meeting. Council staff provided an update on actions by states and the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (ASMFC) in regard to cobia management in recent months. Next, Council staff reviewed public input received during the public Q&A meeting in May 2016, and via email and the online comment form.

Framework Amendment 4 (Atlantic cobia)

**The Committee voted on the following motions as recommendations to the Council:**

**MOTION 1.** Approve the Purpose and Need as written.  
APPROVED BY COUNCIL.

The purpose of this amendment is to revise the management measures for Atlantic migratory group cobia to ensure consistent, stable and equitable fishing opportunities for all participants in the Atlantic cobia fishery.

The need for this amendment is to respond to changing fishery characteristics for Atlantic migratory group cobia, while increasing social and economic benefits of the CMP fishery through sustainable fishing opportunities and harvest of Atlantic migratory group cobia.

**MOTION 2.** Add Action 1-1 to public hearing document.  
APPROVED BY COUNCIL.

**Action 1-1: Modify the recreational harvest limits for Atlantic cobia**

**Alternative 1 (No Action).** Do not modify the possession limit of 2 fish per person per day for Atlantic cobia that are not sold.

**Alternative 2.** Establish a recreational bag limit for Atlantic cobia.

**Option 2a.** 1 fish per person per day

**Option 2b.** 2 fish per person per day

**Alternative 3.** Establish a recreational vessel limit for Atlantic cobia.

**Option 3a.** 1 fish per vessel per day

**Option 3b.** 2 fish per vessel per day

**Option 3c.** 3 fish per vessel per day

**Option 3d.** 4 fish per vessel per day

**Option 3e.** 5 fish per vessel per day

**Option 3f.** 6 fish per vessel per day

**MOTION 3.** Add Action 1-2 to public hearing document.  
APPROVED BY COUNCIL.

**Action 1-2: Modify the minimum size limit for recreational harvest of Atlantic cobia**

**Alternative 1 (No Action).** Do not modify the minimum size limit of 33 inches fork length (FL) for recreational and commercial harvest of Atlantic cobia.

**Alternative 2.** Modify the minimum size limit for Atlantic cobia for recreational and commercial harvest of Atlantic cobia.

**Option 2a.** 34 inches FL

**Option 2b.** 35 inches FL

**Option 2c.** 36 inches FL

**Option 2d.** 37 inches FL

**Option 2e.** 38 inches FL

**Option 2f.** 39 inches FL

**Option 2g.** 45 inches FL

**Option 2h.** 50 inches FL

**MOTION 4.** Under Action 1-1, select Option 2a as Preferred.  
APPROVED BY COUNCIL.

**Alternative 2.** Establish a recreational bag limit for Atlantic cobia.

**Option 2a.** 1 fish per person per day

**MOTION 5.** In Action 1-1, select Option 3c as Preferred.  
APPROVED BY COUNCIL.

**Alternative 3.** Establish a recreational vessel limit for Atlantic cobia.

**Option 3c.** 3 fish per vessel per day

**MOTION 6.** In Action 1-2, select Option 2c as Preferred.  
APPROVED BY COUNCIL.

**Alternative 2.** Modify the minimum size limit for Atlantic cobia for recreational and commercial harvest of Atlantic cobia.

**Option 2c.** 36 inches FL

**MOTION 7.** Add alternative in Action 2 for Apr 1- Mar 31.  
APPROVED BY COUNCIL.

**Alternative 4.** Modify the fishing year for Atlantic cobia to be April 1 through March 31.

**MOTION 8.** Add Action 2 with **recreational** fishing year.  
APPROVED BY COUNCIL.

**Action 2: Modify the recreational fishing year for Atlantic cobia**

**Alternative 1 (No Action).** Do not modify the current fishing year of January 1 through December 31.

**Alternative 2.** Modify the fishing year for Atlantic cobia to be May 1 through April 30.

**Alternative 3.** Modify the fishing year for Atlantic cobia to be June 1 through May 31.

**Alternative 4.** Modify the fishing year for Atlantic cobia to be April 1 through March 31.

**MOTION 9.** In Action 2, select Alternative 2 as the preferred.  
APPROVED BY COUNCIL.

**Alternative 2.** Modify the fishing year for Atlantic cobia to be May 1 through April 30.

**MOTION 10.** Add Action 3 to the public hearing document.  
APPROVED BY COUNCIL.

**Action 3: Modify the recreational accountability measures for Atlantic cobia**

**MOTION 11.** In Action 3, select Alternative 2/ Sub-alternative 2b as preferred.  
APPROVED BY COUNCIL.

**Alternative 2.** If recreational landings, as estimated by the Science and Research Director, exceed the recreational ACL, then during the following fishing year, recreational landings will be monitored for a persistence in increased landings. If necessary, the Regional Administrator shall publish a notice to reduce the length of the following fishing season to ensure that recreational landings meet the recreational ACT but do not exceed the recreational ACL, based on the recreational landings in the previous year. The length of the recreational season will not be reduced if the Regional Administrator determines, using the best scientific information available, that a reduction is unnecessary. The ACT for 2016 and subsequent fishing years is 500,000 lbs, as established in CMP Amendment 20B.

**Sub-alternative 2b.** The Regional Administrator will reduce the length of the following fishing year only if the total ACL (commercial ACL and recreational ACL) is exceeded.

**MOTION 12.** Add an alternative to Action 3 that reflects the recreational AM for Atlantic king mackerel:

If the recreational ACL and total ACL are exceeded, the RA publishes a notice to reduce the vessel limit for the subsequent fishing year.

APPROVED BY COUNCIL.

**MOTION 13.** Add Action 4 with Alternatives 1-4.  
APPROVED BY COUNCIL.

**Action 4: Establish a commercial trip limit for Atlantic cobia**

**Alternative 1 (No Action).** Do not modify the possession limit of 2 fish per person per day.

**Alternative 2.** Establish a commercial trip limit for Atlantic cobia of 2 fish per person per day. The trip limit will decrease to 1 fish per person per day when 75% of the commercial ACL has been met.

**Alternative 3.** Establish a commercial trip limit for Atlantic cobia of 6 fish per vessel per day. The trip limit will decrease to 3 fish per vessel per day when 75% of the commercial ACL has been met.

**Alternative 4.** Establish a commercial trip limit for Atlantic cobia of 2 fish per person per day, with no more than 6 fish per vessel per day. The trip limit will decrease to 1 fish per person per day, with no more than 3 per vessel per day when 75% of the commercial ACL has been met.

**MOTION 14.** Approve Framework Amendment 4 for public hearings.  
APPROVED BY COUNCIL.

**Framework Amendment 5 (revise permit restrictions)**

**The Committee voted on the following motions as recommendations to the Council:**

**MOTION 15.** Add South Atlantic to Framework Amendment 5.  
APPROVED BY COUNCIL.

**MOTION 16.** Accept the Purpose and Need.  
APPROVED BY COUNCIL.

The purpose of this action is to eliminate permit restrictions unique to commercial king and Spanish mackerel permit holders in the Gulf, [South Atlantic](#), and [Mid-Atlantic](#) regions.

The need for this proposed action is to standardize vessel permit restrictions applicable after a commercial quota closure, remove restrictions on recreational fishing, and reduce the potential for regulatory discards in ~~the Gulf migratory group king mackerel component~~ of THE king and Spanish mackerel component of the CMP fishery.

**MOTION 17.** Add Action 1 and alternatives.  
APPROVED BY COUNCIL.

**Action 1: Modify Permit Restrictions for Commercial King and Spanish Mackerel Permit Holders**

**Alternative 1:** No Action – Do not modify permit restrictions for commercial king or Spanish mackerel permit holders. The recreational bag limit may not be retained aboard a vessel with an applicable federal commercial permit when the commercial season is closed and, for king mackerel, in the zone in which that commercial vessel is fishing.

**Alternative 2:** Allow retention of the recreational bag limit of king mackerel on a vessel with a federal commercial king mackerel permit that is fishing recreationally when the Gulf of Mexico commercial king mackerel zone in which the vessel is fishing is closed.

**Alternative 3:** Allow retention of the recreational bag limit of Spanish mackerel on a vessel with a federal commercial Spanish mackerel permit that is fishing recreationally in the South Atlantic or Mid-Atlantic when the Gulf of Mexico commercial Spanish mackerel zone in which the vessel is fishing is

### Amendment 29 (Gulf king mackerel allocations)

Council staff briefed the Committee on Amendment 29. After the Gulf Council makes changes in June and August, the South Atlantic Council will review the actions and alternatives in September 2016.

### Updates

SERO staff provided a briefing on the status of commercial and recreational landings. Next, SERO reported that CMP Amendment 26, which was approved in March 2016, is still in preparation by the Councils.

Council staff updated the Committee on the April 2016 Gulf Council meeting. The Gulf Council took final action on Amendment 26 but also directed staff to develop a plan amendment to consider changes the recreational and commercial allocations of the Gulf king mackerel (Amendment 29). The Gulf Council also plan to start work on a framework amendment to revise restrictions on commercial permits, which the Committee discussed under Framework Amendment 5 and Amendment 29.

### **TIMING AND TASKS**

- 1) Explore adding an alternative that would designate a certain number of fishing days per state for recreational harvest of Atlantic cobia.
- 2) Prepare Framework Amendment 4 for public hearings.
- 3) Prepare Framework Amendment 5 for the Gulf Council meeting.
- 4) Include language in the Framework 4 public hearing document that the Council is exploring latitudinal season openings for cobia management.
- 5) Send public hearing document to ASMFC for their August meeting.

**MOTION 18. ADOPT TIMING AND TASK MOTION.**  
**APPROVED BY COUNCIL.**