

SUMMARY REPORT - MACKEREL COMMITTEE

September 18, 2014

Charleston Marriott

Charleston, SC

The Committee adopted the agenda with the addition of two items under Other Business: Doug Haymans requested time to brief the Committee on tournament sales in Georgia; and Chairman Ben Hartig added an item to discuss bag limit sales for king mackerel bycatch in the drift gillnet shark fishery.

The Committee approved the minutes of the June 2014 meeting.

NMFS staff reported on the status of commercial catch and recreational catch, in addition to updates on amendments under review. The final rule packages for Amendment 20B and the South Atlantic CMP Framework Action 2013 are under review at the Regional Office. The proposed rule for Framework Amendment 1 was published on July 31, 2014, and the final rule package is being developed at the Regional Office.

Council staff provided an update on public hearings held in August 2014 and a summary of the comments received.

Framework Amendment 2 (Atlantic Spanish mackerel trip limits in Florida)

The Committee approved the following motions:

1) MOTION: APPROVE MODIFICATIONS FROM THE IPT FOR PURPOSE AND NEED. Approved by Committee. APPROVED BY COUNCIL.

Purpose

IPT RECOMMENDATION: The purpose of this amendment is to ensure the system of trip limits for Atlantic migratory group Spanish mackerel in the proposed Southern Zone is aligned with the current conditions of the fishery through proposed modifications to the current system of trip limits in place for the species.

Need

IPT RECOMMENDATION: The need for this amendment is to respond to new regulations and changing fishery characteristics for Atlantic migratory group Spanish mackerel in the proposed Southern Zone, while increasing social and economic benefits of the CMP fishery through sustainable and profitable harvest of Atlantic migratory group Spanish mackerel in accordance with provisions set forth in Magnuson-Stevens Conservation and Management Act.

2) MOTION: APPROVE THE IPT-SUGGESTED LANGUAGE IN ALTERNATIVES 2-4.
Approved by Committee. APPROVED BY COUNCIL.

Alternative 2. Establish a trip limit of 3,500 lb for the Southern Zone for March 1 - November 30. After December 1, when 75% of the adjusted Southern Zone quota ~~has been landed or projected to be landed~~ is met or projected to be met, the trip limit would be reduced to 1,500 lb until the end of the fishing year or until the Southern Zone quota is met or projected to be met, at which time the commercial sector in the Southern Zone would be closed to harvest of Spanish mackerel.

Alternative 3. Establish a trip limit of 3,500 lbs for the Southern Zone. When 75% of the Southern Zone ~~commercial~~ quota ~~has been landed or projected to be landed~~ is met or projected to be met, the trip limit would be reduced to 500 lbs until the end of the fishing year or until the Southern Zone quota is met or projected to be met, at which time the commercial sector in the Southern Zone would be closed to harvest of Spanish mackerel.

Alternative 4. Establish a trip limit of 3,500 lbs for the Southern Zone. When 75% of adjusted ~~quota of the~~ Southern Zone quota ~~has been landed or projected to be landed~~ is met or projected to be met, the trip limit would be reduced to 1,500 lbs. When 100% of adjusted ~~quota of the~~ Southern Zone quota is ~~reached~~ met or projected to be met., the trip limit is reduced to 500 lbs until the end of the fishing year or until the Southern Zone commercial quota is met or projected to be met, at which time the commercial sector in the Southern Zone would be closed to harvest of Spanish mackerel.

3) MOTION: SELECT ALTERNATIVE 4 AS THE PREFERRED.
Approved by Committee. APPROVED BY COUNCIL.

Alternative 4. Establish a trip limit of 3,500 lbs for the Southern Zone. When 75% of adjusted Southern Zone quota is met or projected to be met, the trip limit would be reduced to 1,500 lbs. When 100% of adjusted Southern Zone quota is met or projected to be met, the trip limit is reduced to 500 lbs until the end of the fishing year or until the Southern Zone commercial quota is met or projected to be met, at which time the commercial sector in the Southern Zone would be closed to harvest of Spanish mackerel.

*75% of the current adjusted Southern Zone quota = 1,692,848 lbs

*100% of the current adjusted Southern Zone quota = 2,257,130 lbs

4) MOTION: APPROVE COASTAL MIGRATORY PELAGICS FRAMEWORK AMENDMENT 2 FOR SECRETARIAL REVIEW, AND DEEM THE CODIFIED TEXT AS NECESSARY AND APPROPRIATE. GIVE STAFF EDITORIAL LICENSE TO MAKE ANY NECESSARY EDITORIAL CHANGES TO THE DOCUMENT/CODIFIED TEXT AND GIVE THE COUNCIL CHAIR AUTHORITY TO APPROVE THE REVISIONS AND RE-DEEM THE CODIFIED TEXT.

Approved by Committee. APPROVED BY COUNCIL.

Amendment 26 (Separate permits) and Future Amendments

Council staff reviewed a discussion paper about considerations for splitting the king mackerel and Spanish mackerel commercial permits into separate permits for each region. In the context of all potential actions for the CMP fishery, including SEDAR 38 outcomes and amendments, the Committee discussed ways to address concerns about effort on the Florida east coast and how to maintain opportunities for fishermen in other areas. Staff proposed that Amendment 24 could include actions for Atlantic Spanish mackerel allocations; Amendment 26 for king mackerel actions and ACL updates; and Amendment 28 for actions to separate permits or the FMPs.

The Committee provided input and direction to staff for upcoming meetings. At the December 2014 meeting, Council staff will present actions and alternatives for Amendment 24 (Spanish mackerel allocations). Further discussion on Amendments 26 and 28 will continue after the Council receives the results of SEDAR 38.

Cobia in South Carolina

Chris McDonough, South Carolina DNR, gave a presentation on the cobia fishery in South Carolina, cobia spawning aggregations, and concern about effort and harvest during known and probable spawning aggregations in both inshore and offshore waters. The Committee discussed the issues and how the issues could fit into the SMZ discussions for snapper grouper species. The Committee could consider action at a later time.

Tournament Sales

Doug Haymans provided an update to the Committee on tournament sales in Georgia. There have been less than 200 fish sold under the Georgia tournament. The Committee may want to discuss dealer requirements in the future.

King Mackerel Bycatch Sales in Shark Drift Gillnet Fishery

Amendment 20A prohibited bag limit sales of king mackerel and Spanish mackerel in the South Atlantic, with the exception of state-permitted tournaments. The drift gillnet portion of the small coastal shark fishery had previously sold king mackerel caught as bycatch. Drift gillnet is not an authorized gear for king mackerel commercial harvest, so possession is limited to the bag limit (2/person/day in Florida waters, 3/person/day north of the GA-FL boundary). The vessels have valid commercial king mackerel permits, and while possession at the bag limit is legal, the vessels cannot sell the king mackerel because the fish are incidental catch from a gear type not authorized for king mackerel.

The Committee discussed actions to allow these vessels with a valid king mackerel commercial permit to sell the incidental king mackerel catch from the shark drift gillnet fishery. NOAA GC advised the Council that the action would require a plan amendment. The Council directed staff to include the action in Amendment 26.

MOTION: ADOPT THE TIMING AND TASK ITEMS AS PRESENTED:

1. PREPARE FRAMEWORK AMENDMENT 2 FOR SUBMISSION TO THE SECRETARY OF COMMERCE.
2. PROVIDE FRAMEWORK AMENDMENT 2 TO THE GULF COUNCIL FOR THEIR REVIEW IN OCTOBER 2014.
3. PENDING GULF COUNCIL APPROVAL, SUBMIT FRAMEWORK AMENDMENT 2 FOR FORMAL REVIEW.
4. STAFF TO DEVELOP POTENTIAL ACTIONS AND ALTERNATIVES FOR AMENDMENT 24 FOR COMMITTEE REVIEW IN DECEMBER 2014.

APPROVED BY COUNCIL.