

Overview

Mackerel Cobia Committee

Marina Inn at Grande Dunes
8121 Amalfi Place
Myrtle Beach, South Carolina

September 14-15, 2016

Following approval of the agenda and the June 2016 minutes, the Mackerel Cobia Committee will receive an update on (A) the status of commercial catches versus the respective ACLs/quotas for Atlantic king mackerel, Spanish mackerel, and cobia, and (B) a status update on Coastal Migratory Pelagics (CMP) Amendment 26.

Next, Southeast Fisheries Science Center (SEFSC) and Southeast Regional Office (SERO) staff will provide (C) presentations on the process and timing for receiving commercial reports, transfer of information from SEFSC to SERO for quota monitoring, and making landings information available to the public. This agenda item will also include a briefing on 2015 commercial landings for Atlantic cobia.

Following will be summary reports and decisions regarding Atlantic king mackerel and Atlantic cobia from (D) the Gulf Council meetings in June 2016 and August 2016; (E) the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission meeting in August 2016; and (F) the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council meeting in August 2016.

The Committee will next receive a (G) presentation on South Carolina distinct population segments of cobia by South Carolina Department of Natural Resources staff.

Next, Council staff will provide (H) an overview of public comments received during CMP Framework 4 hearings in August 2016. The Committee will next review (I) Framework Amendment 4 (Atlantic cobia management measures). The Committee may discuss requesting emergency action for some measures in Framework Amendment 4.

The Committee will review (J) Framework Amendment 5 (modify permit restrictions), followed a review of (K) Amendment 29 (Gulf king mackerel quota sharing). Lastly, the Committee will address issues under Other Business if necessary.

A. Status of Landings for Coastal Migratory Pelagic Species (*Attachment 1*)

The Committee will receive status updates on commercial landings for Atlantic Group king mackerel, Spanish mackerel, and cobia.

REQUIRED COMMITTEE ACTION: Discuss and take action as necessary.

B. Status of Amendments Approved for Secretarial Review

- CMP Amendment 26 (king mackerel ACLs, allocations, stock boundary, incidental catch)
–submitted for formal review on July 7, 2016

C. NMFS SEFSC and SERO Presentations (Attachments 2a/2b)

Dr. Bonnie Ponwith (SEFSC Director) and SERO staff will brief the Committee on the process and timing for receiving commercial reports, transfer of information from SEFSC to SERO for quota monitoring, and making landings information available to the public (**Attachment 2a**). Dr. Ponwith will also provide an update on 2015 commercial landings of Atlantic cobia, which exceeded the commercial annual catch limit (ACL) (**Attachment 2b**).

D. Gulf Council Meeting Reports (Attachment 3)

The Mackerel Committee of the Gulf Council met in June 2016 and August 2016. Council staff will provide an overview of Gulf Council decisions for Framework Amendment 5 and Amendment 29.

E. Atlantic State Marine Fisheries Commission Meeting Report (Attachment 4)

In August 2016, the South Atlantic State/Federal Fisheries Management Board of the ASMFC reviewed options for cobia management and recommended that the ASMFC start work on an interstate cobia management plan. Council staff will provide an overview of the ASMFC decision and next steps in development of the management plan.

F. Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council Report (Attachment 5)

Rob O'Reilly (MAFMC representative) will report on MAFMC decisions at their August 2016 regarding cobia management.

G. Presentation on South Carolina Distinct Population Segments of Cobia (Attachment 6)

Mike Denson, SC DNR, will provide a presentation on ongoing genetic research and the distinct population segments (DPSs) of the Atlantic cobia identified in Port Royal Sound. Cobia management in state waters for South Carolina was recently modified to designate a southern management zone south of Jeremy Inlet, with a bag limit of 1/person and catch-and-release only for May 1-May 31, to reduce catch of inshore spawning cobia. The presentation (**Attachment 6**) will be provided to the Committee at the meeting.

H. Summary of Public Comments for Framework Amendment 4 (Attachments 7a-7d)

Council staff will review public input received in reference to Atlantic cobia and actions in CMP Framework Amendment 4. **Attachment 7a** includes a summary overview of public input, including comments at public hearings (**Attachment 7b**), online comments, and written correspondence (**Attachment 7c**). The question log from the webinar is in **Attachment 7d**. The summary will be updated as needed to incorporate changes in state management of cobia, and online comments are available at: <https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1S5QbP6scTY90n8L-ASneF2z9AwEv6LVLfnj6BmcD1IM/edit?usp=sharing>.

I. CMP Framework Amendment 4 (Attachments 8a-8c)

Framework Amendment 4 (**Attachment 8a**) includes actions to modify or establish management measures for Atlantic cobia, including recreational harvest limits (bag and vessel limits), increased minimum size limit, changes to the fishing year, changes to the recreational accountability measure, and a step-down for commercial harvest. Council staff will present the

decision document for Framework Amendment 4 (**Attachment 8b**) and draft codified text (**Attachment 8c**, available at the meeting).

REQUIRED COMMITTEE ACTION: Review, modify document if necessary, and approve for formal review.

J. CMP Framework Amendment 5 (Attachments 9a-9c)

Framework Amendment 5 (**Attachment 9a**) includes one action to modify regulations to remove restrictions on commercial king mackerel and Spanish mackerel permits that prohibit retaining the bag limit on recreational (non-commercial and non-charter/headboat) trips on federally permitted vessels when commercial harvest is closed in that zone. King mackerel and Spanish mackerel are the only two species with this restriction on federally permitted vessels. Council staff will present the decision document for Framework Amendment 5 (**Attachment 9b**) and draft codified text (**Attachment 9c**, available at the meeting).

REQUIRED COMMITTEE ACTION: Review, modify document if necessary, and approve for formal review.

K. CMP Amendment 29 (Attachments 10a/10b)

Amendment 29 (**Attachment 10a**) includes actions to establish a quota sharing system for Gulf king mackerel, modify Gulf king mackerel accountability measures to apply under the potential quota sharing system. The Gulf Council is administrative lead on the amendment. Council staff will present the decision document for Amendment 29 (**Attachment 10b**), and the Committee will discuss and take action as necessary.

REQUIRED COMMITTEE ACTION: Review, modify document if necessary, and select preferred alternatives.

L. Other Business

The Committee will address items under Other Business as appropriate.

REQUIRED COMMITTEE ACTION: Discuss and take action as necessary