



SOUTH ATLANTIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

4055 Faber Place Drive, Suite 201, North Charleston SC 29405
Call: (843) 571-4366 | Toll-Free: (866) SAFMC-10 | Fax: (843) 769-4520 | Connect: www.safmc.net

Trish Murphey, Chair | Jessica McCawley, Vice Chair
John Carmichael, Executive Director

AGENDA

Mackerel Cobia Committee

Villas by the Sea Resort
1175 N. Beachview Drive
Jekyll Island, GA 31527

Thursday, March 6, 2025 – 1:30 P.M. – 3:00 P.M. (Times subject to change)

Approval of Agenda

Approval of Minutes (March 2024)

1. Giant Manta Ray ESA Section 4(d) Rule Development Update (1:30 pm – 1:45 pm)
 - a. Presentation (*Attachment 1*) - Jennifer Lee, SERO PRD
2. Mackerel Port Meetings Report (1:45pm – 2:45pm)
 - a. Overview (*Attachment 2a – 2c*) – Christina Wiegand
 - b. **Committee Action:** Review port meetings report and provide recommendations for amendment development and timing.
3. Mackerel Cobia Advisory Panel Spring 2025 Meeting Topics (2:45pm – 3:00pm)

Other Business

Adjourn

Committee Members

Tom Roller, Chair
Carolyn Belcher, Vice Chair
Robert Beal
Gary Borland
Amy Dukes
Tim Griner
Judy Helmey
Jimmy Hull
Kerry Marhefka
Jessica McCawley
Trish Murphey
Lt. Tom Pease
Charlie Phillips
Robert Spottswood, Jr.
Andy Strelcheck
Mid-Atlantic: Skip Feller and Joe Grist

Attachments

Attachment 1: Giant Manta Ray ESA Section 4(d) Rule Development Presentation

Attachment 2a: Mackerel Port Meetings Presentation

Attachment 2b: Mackerel Port Meetings Draft Report

Attachment 2c: Mackerel Port Meetings Draft Report – Appendix A (Individual Meeting Summaries)

Staff Lead: Christina Wiegand (christina.wiegand@safmc.net)

OVERVIEW

Mackerel and Cobia Committee

The Committee will approve the minutes from the March 2024 meeting and the agenda for the March 2025 Committee meeting.

1. Giant Manta Ray ESA Section 4(d) Rule Development (*Attachment 1*)

Description: The east coast of central and northern Florida serves as an important reproductive habitat for giant manta rays. Recreational anglers in this region target cobia by seeking out giant manta rays that cobia often follow, casting at or near them. This activity may result in entanglement or injury to giant manta rays. NOAA Fisheries is considering developing protective regulations under section 4(d) of the Endangered Species Act for giant manta ray to manage activities to help preserve and recover the species. SERO Protected Resources Division staff will provide an update on potential rule development.

Committee Action: none.

2. Mackerel Port Meetings (*Attachments 2a - 2c*)

Description: In 2024, at the urging of their Mackerel Cobia Advisory Panel, the Council hosted a series of 16 in-person and six virtual port meetings along the Atlantic coast. Port meetings attendees discussed their perspectives with other fishery participants and local Council members. Council staff will review the final report from this effort and provide options for moving forward with development of any desired management actions.

Committee Action: Review port meetings report and provide recommendations for amendment development and timing.

3. Mackerel Cobia Advisory Panel Spring 2025 Meeting

Description: The Mackerel Cobia Advisory Panel is scheduled to meet in Charleston, South Carolina, on March 31 and April 1, 2025. The following items are recommended for inclusion on the agenda:

- Giant Manta Ray ESA Section 4(d) Rule Development
- Mackerel Port Meetings Report
- For-Hire Reporting Improvement Amendment
- For-Hire Limited Entry Amendment
- Lines of Communication Practice Run
- Citizen Science Program Update
- Research and Monitoring Plan Review

Committee Action: approve agenda items for the upcoming Mackerel Cobia Advisory Panel meeting.

Other Business