

Amendment 32

to the Fishery Management Plan for Coastal Migratory Pelagic Resources in the Gulf of Mexico and Atlantic Region



(Modifications to the Gulf of Mexico Migratory Group
Cobia Catch Limits, Possession Limits, Size Limits,
and Framework Procedure)

Advisory Panel Summary Document

April 2021

Background

Cobia is managed jointly by the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council (South Atlantic Council) and the Gulf of Mexico (Gulf) Fishery Management Council (Gulf Council) (together: “Councils”) under the Fishery Management Plan (FMP) for Coastal Migratory Pelagic Resources in the Gulf of Mexico and Atlantic Region (CMP FMP). Two migratory groups of cobia are managed in the southeastern US: the Atlantic migratory group (Atlantic cobia) and the Gulf migratory group (Gulf cobia). Atlantic cobia was removed from the CMP FMP, because most of Atlantic cobia is landed in state waters (GMFMC and SAFMC 2018). The Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (ASMFC) has assumed management of that stock under the Atlantic Coastal Fisheries Cooperative Management Act. As such, this amendment only addresses management of Gulf cobia.

The updated SEDAR 28 stock assessment for Gulf cobia was completed in July 2020 with a terminal year of 2018 (SEDAR 28 Update 2020). SEDAR 28 Update included updated

recreational catch and effort data derived using MRIP-FES, which formally replaced MRIP-CHTS in 2018. This change resulted in increased estimates of virgin spawning stock biomass, recruitment, and projected yields. The results from SEDAR 28 Update indicated that Gulf cobia is undergoing overfishing with biomass at reduced levels, which puts the stock at risk of becoming overfished without management action. Moreover, SEDAR 28 Update suggests that the stock has experienced overfishing every year from 1975 through 2018, with the exceptions of 1983 and 2009. However, since the stock is not considered to be overfished, a rebuilding plan is not required at this time.

Upon reviewing SEDAR 28 Update, the Gulf Councils’ Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC) determined the results to be the best scientific information available for Gulf cobia, recommending an increasing yield stream for overfishing limits (OFL) and acceptable biological catches (ABCs) for 2021 – 2023 and beyond (**Table 1**). It is worth noting that the increase in the stock catch limits is solely a result of converting the recreational catch and effort data to the MRIP-FES data currency. Had MRIP-FES recreational data been available for SEDAR 28 in 2013, the current ABC recommendations would represent approximately a 33% decrease in yield from SEDAR 28 (SEDAR 2020).

Table 1. Catch limits for Gulf cobia for 2021 – 2023 and beyond, as recommended by the Councils’ SSCs in July 2020. Values are in pounds whole weight and include MRIP-FES recreational estimates.

	OFL*	ABC*
2021	3,030,000	2,340,000
2022	3,210,000	2,600,000
2023	3,310,000	2,760,000

* OFL and ABC values are for Gulf cobia in both the Gulf and FLEC Zones.

Actions in this amendment

Action 1 – Modify the Gulf of Mexico (Gulf) Migratory Group Cobia (Gulf Cobia) Overfishing Limit (OFL), Acceptable Biological Catch (ABC), and Annual Catch Limit (ACL).

Action 2 – Modify the Gulf Cobia Apportionment Between the Gulf Zone and the Florida East Coast (FLEC) Zone and Update the Zones’ ACLs Based on the ACL Selected in Action 1.

Action 3 – Update Commercial and Recreational Sectors’ ACLs Based on the ACL and Apportionments Selected in Action 1 and Action 2

Action 4 – Update and/or Establish Annual Catch Targets (ACT) for the Gulf Cobia Zones Based on the Apportionment Selected in Action 2.

Action 5 – Modify the Gulf Cobia Possession Limit and/or Establish a Trip Limit.

Action 6 – Modify the Gulf Cobia Minimum Size Limit.

Action 7 – Modify the Framework Procedure

Tentative Timing for CMP Amendment 32

	Process Step	Date
✓	Gulf Council directs staff to start work on an amendment to address overfishing of Gulf cobia.	September 2020
✓	Gulf Council reviews draft actions and alternatives and provides direction to staff.	October 2020
✓	South Atlantic Council reviews draft actions and alternatives and provides direction to staff.	December 2020
✓	Gulf Council reviews draft actions and alternatives and provides direction to staff.	January 2021
✓	South Atlantic Council reviews draft actions and alternatives and provides direction to staff.	March 2021
✓	Gulf Mackerel Cobia Advisory Panel reviews amendment	March 2021
	South Atlantic Mackerel Cobia Advisory Panel reviews amendment	April 2021
	Gulf Council reviews draft amendment, selects preferred alternative, and approves for public hearings.	June 2021
	South Atlantic Council reviews draft amendment, selects preferred alternative, and approves for public hearings.	June 2021
	Public Hearings	Summer 2021
	Gulf Council reviews the draft amendment, modifies the document as necessary, and approves for formal review.	August 2021
	South Atlantic Council reviews the draft amendment, modifies the document as necessary, and approves for formal review.	September 2021
	CMP Amendment 32 transmitted for Secretarial Review.	Fall 2021

Opportunities to provide public comment in-person include the scoping webinar, South Atlantic and Gulf Council meetings, and public hearings. There will also be opportunities to submit written comments via the online comment form throughout the process.

Purpose and need statement

The purpose of this plan amendment is to consider modifying Gulf cobia catch limits, modify management measures related to size and possession limits, revise the apportionment between the Gulf Zone and the FLEC Zone for Gulf cobia in response to new information on the stock provided in the SEDAR 28 Update stock assessment, and to clarify language in the CMP Framework Procedure regarding the responsibilities of the Gulf and South Atlantic Councils for management of Gulf cobia.

The need is to end overfishing of Gulf cobia as required by the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act, update existing Gulf cobia catch limits to be consistent with best scientific information available and contemporary data collection methods, and to clarify the Gulf and South Atlantic Councils' responsibilities in the CMP Framework Procedure.

Proposed Actions and Alternatives

Action 1 – Modify the Gulf of Mexico (Gulf) Migratory Group Cobia (Gulf Cobia) Overfishing Limit (OFL), Acceptable Biological Catch (ABC), and Annual Catch Limit (ACL).

Alternative 1: No Action. Retain the Gulf cobia stock OFL, ABC, ACL as implemented in 2015 by Amendment 20B to the Fishery Management Plan for Coastal Migratory Pelagic Resources of the Gulf of Mexico and Atlantic Regions (CMP FMP).

	Gulf Cobia Stock		
Year	OFL	ABC	ACL
2016+	2,660,000	2,600,000	2,600,000
MRIP-FES equivalent	4,870,000	4,500,000	4,500,000

Note: Catch limits in pounds whole weight (lbs ww). The recreational portion of the current OFL, ABC, and ACL are based on Marine Recreational Information Program Coastal Household Telephone Survey (MRIP-CHTS) data. The recreational portion of the MRIP Fishing Effort Survey (FES) equivalent was calculated in the SEDAR 28 Update stock assessment (2020) and is provided for comparison only.

Gulf Council and South Atlantic Council Preferred Alternative 2: Modify the Gulf cobia stock OFL, ABC, and ACL based on recommendation of the Gulf Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC) as presented in July 2020, for an increasing yield stream for 2021 to 2023, and then maintain the 2023 levels for subsequent fishing years or until changed by a management action. The stock ACL is set equal to the stock ABC.

	Gulf Cobia Stock		
Year	OFL	ABC	ACL
2021	3,030,000	2,340,000	2,340,000
2022	3,210,000	2,600,000	2,600,000
2023+	3,310,000	2,760,000	2,760,000

Note: Catch limits in pounds whole weight. The recreational portion of the OFL, ABC, and ACL are based on MRIP-FES data.

Alternative 3: Modify the Gulf cobia stock OFL, ABC, and ACL as a constant catch value for 2021 and subsequent fishing years or until changed by a management action. The stock ACL is set equal to the stock ABC.

	Gulf Cobia Stock		
Year	OFL	ABC	ACL
2021+	3,030,000	2,340,000	2,340,000

Discussion:

- This action affects the Gulf cobia stock, which includes both Gulf and Florida East Coast (FLEC) Zones. This action does not modify the ACL that is apportioned between the Gulf and the FLEC Zones. Modifications to the ACL apportionment are discussed in Action 2.
- The Southeast Data Assessment and Review (SEDAR) 28 Update assessment (2020) indicated that Gulf cobia was not overfished but was undergoing overfishing.
- **Alternative 1** (No Action) retains the existing OFL, ABC, and ACL, all of which are based on the previous Gulf cobia stock assessment (SEDAR 28 2013). Due to the transition in MRIP data currency discussed above, retaining the OFL, ABC and ACL as presented in the MRIP-CHTS data currency in **Alternative 1** is not a viable option.
- **Alternative 2** sets the stock ACL equal to the Gulf SSC’s recommendation for the stock ABC for 2021 – 2023, and then maintains the ABC and ACL at the 2023 level for subsequent years until changed by future management action.
 - Total Gulf cobia landings would have exceeded the **Alternative 2** 2021 ACL in every year but two since ACLs were implemented in 2012 and exceeded the proposed 2021 OFL in four of the eight years since the OFLs were implemented. Therefore, changes to other management measures may be needed to constrain harvest to the ACL and prevent an overage of the OFL.
- While not provided as a recommendation from the SSC, **Alternative 3** would modify the catch limits for Gulf cobia as a constant catch based on the OFL and ABC recommendations for 2021.
 - Total Gulf cobia landings would have exceeded the **Alternative 3** ACL in every year except two since ACLs were implemented in 2012 and exceeded the proposed OFL in four of the eight years since OFLs were implemented. Therefore, changes to other management measures may still be needed to constrain harvest to the ACL and prevent an overage of the OFL.

Action 2 – Modify the Gulf Cobia Apportionment Between the Gulf Zone and the Florida East Coast (FLEC) Zone and Update the Zones’ ACLs Based on the ACL Selected in Action 1.

Alternative 1: No Action. Retain the current Gulf cobia stock ACL apportionment of 64% to the Gulf Zone and 36% to the FLEC Zone based on MRIP-CHTS average landings for Gulf cobia for the years 1998 – 2012.

Alternative 2: Retain the Gulf cobia stock ACL apportionment between the zones at 64% to the Gulf Zone and 36% to the FLEC Zone and use this apportionment to update both Zones’ ACLs based on the Gulf cobia stock ACL(s) in Action 1.

Gulf Council and South Atlantic Council Preferred Alternative 3: Modify the Gulf cobia stock ACL apportionment to be 63% for the Gulf Zone and 37% for the FLEC Zone, based on the MRIP-FES average landings for Gulf cobia for the years 1998 – 2012, and use this apportionment to update the Zone ACLs based on the Gulf Cobia ACL(s) in Action 1.

Alternative 4: Modify the Gulf cobia stock ACL apportionment to be 62% for the Gulf Zone and 38% for the FLEC Zone, based on the MRIP-FES average landings for Gulf cobia for the years 2001 – 2015, and use this apportionment to update the Zone ACLs based on the Gulf Cobia ACL(s) in Action 1.

Alternative 5: Modify the Gulf cobia stock ACL apportionment to be 59% for the Gulf Zone and 41% for the FLEC Zone, based on the MRIP-FES average landings for Gulf cobia for the years 2003 – 2019, and use this apportionment to update the Zone ACLs based on the Gulf Cobia ACL(s) in Action 1.

Discussion:

- This action affects the apportionment of the Gulf cobia stock ACL between the Gulf and FLEC Zones.
- The ACLs and ACTs for Gulf cobia were modified, and a new FLEC Zone designated, in Amendment 20B to the CMP FMP (GMFMC and SAFMC 2014). Amendment 20B established zone allocations of the Gulf cobia ACL of 64% to the Gulf Zone and 36% to the FLEC Zone, based on the combined average landings of Gulf cobia from 1998 – 2012 across its range (Texas east and north to the Florida/Georgia state line).
 - This time period was selected as it included the landings from the most recent 15 years, which also provided the longest time period that could capture long-term dynamics of the stock.
 - The FLEC Zone ACL was further allocated 92% to the recreational and 8% to the commercial sector. These apportionments were based on historic landings using MRIP-CHTS and would remain in effect under **Alternative 1** of this action unless modified by a subsequent action.
- **Alternative 2** would transition recreational data monitoring from MRIP-CHTS to MRIP-FES, but the ACL apportionment would remain the same.
- **Alternative 3** would transition recreational data monitoring from MRIP-CHTS to MRIP-FES, but retains the timeline used in Amendment 20B to calculate the apportionment.

Alternatives 4 and 5 would update the apportionments and catch limits by incorporating transitioning the recreational data from MRIP-CHTS to MRIP-FES and by considering more recent timeframes in the calculation of average landings, using the same number of years (15) as the previous apportionment.

- **Alternative 4:** the years 2001 – 2015.
- **Alternative 5:** the years 2003 – 2019.
 - **Alternative 5** may be biased by recent changes in the management of Gulf cobia.

Action 3 –Update Commercial and Recreational Sectors’ ACLs Based on the ACL and Apportionments Selected in Action 1 and Action 2.

The IPT is currently developing actions and alternatives for this action.

Council Comments:

DIRECTION TO STAFF TO DEVELOP AN ALTERNATIVE TO ADDRESS FLEC ZONE SECTOR ALLOCATIONS (UPDATES CURRENT % BASED ON FES, OTHER TIME PERIODS, IPT TO DISCUSS)

Discussion:

- This action only affects the allocation of the FLEC Zone ACL between the commercial and recreational sectors.
- In Amendment 18 to the CMP FMP, the Gulf and South Atlantic Councils established the ABCs, ACLs, and sector allocations for separate migratory groups of cobia using the Gulf and South Atlantic Councils’ boundary in Monroe County.
 - The South Atlantic Council chose an allocation formula for Atlantic cobia that balanced historical catches (2000-2008) with more recent landings (2006-2008). The resulting allocation was 92% to the recreational sector and 8% to the commercial sector.
- During SEDAR 28 (2013), panelists determined the biological boundary between the Gulf and Atlantic migratory groups to be at the Florida/Georgia border.
 - The portion of the Gulf group cobia ACL attributable to the east coast of Florida and Atlantic side of the Florida Keys was reassigned to the South Atlantic as the FLEC Zone.
 - The South Atlantic Council chose to maintain the current sector allocation percentages (8% to the commercial sector and 92% to the recreational sector) for Gulf Group cobia in the new FLEC Zone.

Action 4 – Update and/or Establish Annual Catch Targets (ACT) for the Gulf Cobia Zones Based on the Apportionment Selected in Action 2.

Alternative 1: No Action. The Gulf Zone ACT equals 90% of the Gulf Zone ACL, based on the Gulf Council’s ACL/ACT Control Rule. The FLEC Zone ACT equals the FLEC Zone ACL multiplied by [(1-Proportional Standard Error [PSE] of the FLEC Zone recreational landings) or 0.5, whichever is greater].

Alternative 2: Use the Gulf Council’s ACL/ACT Control Rule to calculate ACTs for the Gulf Zone and the recreational sector in the FLEC Zone.

Alternative 3: Establish an ACT for the commercial sector in the FLEC Zone using the Gulf Council’s ACL/ACT Control Rule.

Gulf Migratory Group	
Gulf Zone	FL East Coast Zone
Stock ACT = 90% ACL Or use Gulf ACL/ACT Control Rule calculations	Recreational ACT = ACL * [(1-PSE) or 0.5, whichever is greater] Or use Gulf ACL/ACT Control Rule calculations

Currently established ACT calculations for Gulf cobia implemented with CMP Amendment 18 and 20B and proposed ACT calculations under Action 3.

Discussion:

- Under **Alternative 1**, Amendment 18 to the CMP FMP established Gulf cobia buffer of 10% between the ACL and ACT for the Gulf Zone, and the calculation for determining the FLEC Zone recreational sector ACT established in Amendment 20B to the CMP FMP is retained (Recreational ACT = ACL * [(1-PSE) or 0.5, whichever is greater]).
 - The PSE expresses the standard error of an estimate as a percentage of the estimate and is a measure of precision. The ACT considers the five-year average PSE.
- In Amendment 20B, the buffer between the ACT and the ACL for the recreational sector in the FLEC Zone was determined using the time series selected under Alternative 1 of Action 2.
 - For Action 2, Alternatives 2 – 4, the average (5-year) PSE for the recreational data was 0.24, setting the FLEC Zone ACT at 76% of the FLEC Zone ACL.
 - For Action 2, Alternative 5 (using the years 2003 – 2019), PSE for the recreational data was 0.25 setting the FLEC Zone ACT at 75% of the FLEC Zone ACL.
- **Alternatives 2 and 3** would update the calculation for determining the ACT by using the Gulf Council’s ACL/ACT Control Rule. Under this control rule, the ACTs for the Gulf Zone and for the recreational sector in the FLEC Zone would be set 10% below their

respective zone ACLs, based on the PSEs for the most recent four years of landings data (2016 – 2019) and the factors considered in the Gulf Council’s ACL/ACT Control Rule.

- **Alternative 3** provides an option to establish an ACT for the commercial sector in the FLEC Zone, which would also be set 10% below the commercial ACL for the FLEC Zone.
 - If **Alternative 3** is selected for the commercial sector in the FLEC Zone, the AMs for Gulf cobia would need to be updated since the commercial and recreational landings for the FLEC Zone are currently managed to the FLEC Zone’s combined ACL.

Action 5 – Modify the Gulf Cobia Possession Limit and/or Establish a Trip Limit

Alternative 1: No Action. Retain the current recreational and commercial daily possession limit of 2 fish per person, regardless of the number or duration of trips, in the Gulf Zone and the FLEC Zone.

Gulf Council and South Atlantic Council Preferred Alternative 2: Reduce the recreational and commercial daily possession limit to 1 fish per person, regardless of the number or duration of trips.

Gulf Council and South Atlantic Council Preferred Option 2a: in the Gulf Zone
South Atlantic Council Preferred Option 2b: in the FLEC Zone

Gulf Council and South Atlantic Council Preferred Alternative 3: Create a recreational and commercial daily trip limit. Fishermen may not exceed the per person daily possession limit.

Gulf Council and South Atlantic Council Preferred Option 3a: in the Gulf Zone
Gulf Council and South Atlantic Council Preferred Sub-option i: The trip limit for cobia is two fish.

Sub-option ii: The trip limit for cobia is four fish.

Sub-option iii: The trip limit for cobia is six fish.

South Atlantic Council Preferred Option 3b: in the FLEC Zone

South Atlantic Council Preferred Sub-option i: The trip limit for cobia is two fish.

Sub-option ii: The trip limit for cobia is four fish.

Sub-option iii: The trip limit for cobia is six fish.

*Councils may select more than one Alternative, Option, and Sub-option. Selected sub-options under Options 3a and 3b do not need to match.

Council Comments:

- Consider separating the action dealing with possession and vessel limits (Action 4) into two separate actions for clarity.

Discussion:

- The Councils are considering options to reduce the fishing mortality on Gulf cobia and constrain harvest to the ACL.
- Fish that are released after capture are assumed to be subject to a 5% discard mortality rate (SEDAR 28 2013).
- During its September 2020 meeting, the Gulf Council received public testimony recommending that it explore possession limits similar to those established by the State of Florida. The Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) enforces a daily bag limit of one fish per person or two per vessel, whichever is less, for cobia caught in Gulf state waters off Florida. For cobia caught in South Atlantic state waters

off Florida, FWC enforces a daily bag limit of one fish per person or six per vessel, whichever is less.

- Majority of both commercial and recreational trips for both zones harvested less than one cobia per person (the number of anglers exceeds the number of cobia harvested per trip).
- **Alternative 3** would create a recreational and commercial trip limit for Gulf cobia. Anglers would not be permitted to exceed the per person possession limit. For example, if there were three anglers on a vessel, and the daily bag limit was two fish per person (**Alternative 1**) with a two fish vessel trip limit (**Alternative 3, Option 3a, Sub-option i**), then the maximum number of cobia that could be retained on that trip for all anglers combined would be two fish, as opposed to six fish in the absence of a trip limit.

Action 6 – Modify the Gulf Cobia Minimum Size Limit

Alternative 1: No Action. Retain the current recreational and commercial minimum size limit of 36 inches fork length (FL) in the Gulf Zone and 33 inches FL in the FLEC Zone.

Gulf Council and South Atlantic Council Preferred Alternative 2: Retain the current recreational and commercial minimum size limit of 36 inches FL in the Gulf Zone and increase the recreational and commercial minimum size limit to 36 inches FL in the FLEC Zone.

Alternative 3: Increase the recreational and commercial minimum size limit to 39 inches FL.

Option 3a: in the Gulf Zone

Option 3b: in the FLEC Zone

Alternative 4: Increase the recreational and commercial minimum size limit to 42 inches FL.

Option 4a: in the Gulf Zone

Option 4b: in the FLEC Zone

*Councils may select more than one Alternative and Option. The selected size limits are not required to match for both Zones.

Discussion:

- Decreasing the minimum size limit would be expected to increase landings by allowing retention of cobia that are currently being released. Given the overfishing status of Gulf cobia, decreasing the minimum size limit is not being considered in this action.
- Overall, commercial fishermen in both zones and recreational fishermen in the FLEC Zone, harvested larger cobia than Gulf Zone recreational fishermen. However, possible illegal harvest of fish under 33 inches FL is occurring. The use of gaffs to land fish could also be contributing to a currently unaccounted increase in discard mortality.
- Increasing the minimum size limit is expected to reduce fishing mortality in two ways:
 - Anglers would be expected to release cobia that they would otherwise retain under the current regulations.
 - By increasing the probability of a fish reproducing, perhaps more than once, before being selected by the fishery.
- Increasing the minimum size limit would increase regulatory discards of undersized cobia, especially those brought on board by a gaff.
 - May indirectly drive fishing efforts to target more fecund female cobia, which may have a negative effect on the spawning stock biomass. The length at which 50% of cobia are thought to be sexually mature is 33 inches FL, with female cobia being observed to be larger than males of the same age.

Action 7 – Modify the Framework Procedure

Alternative 1: No Action. Retain the current framework procedure for the responsibilities of each Council to set regulations for the Gulf cobia as adopted in Amendment 20B and revised in Amendment 26 to the CMP FMP.

With respect to
Responsibilities of each Council:

1. Recommendations with respect to the Atlantic migratory groups of king mackerel, Spanish mackerel, and cobia will be the responsibility of the South Atlantic Council, and those for the Gulf migratory groups of king mackerel, Spanish mackerel, and cobia will be the responsibility of the Gulf Council, with the following exceptions:
 - a. The South Atlantic Council will have responsibility to set vessel trip limits, closed seasons or areas, or gear restrictions for 1) the east coast of Florida including the Atlantic side of the Florida Keys for Gulf migratory group cobia.
2. For stocks where a stock assessment indicates a different boundary between the Gulf and Atlantic migratory groups than the management boundary, a portion of the ACL for one migratory group may be apportioned to the appropriate zone, but management measures for that zone will be the responsibility of the Council within whose management area that zone is located.
3. Both Councils must concur on recommendations that affect both migratory groups.

Alternative 2: Modify the framework procedure to update the responsibility to each Council for setting regulations for the Gulf cobia.

This pertains to:

Responsibilities of each Council:

1. Recommendations with respect to the Atlantic migratory groups of king mackerel, Spanish mackerel, and cobia will be the responsibility of the South Atlantic Council, and those for the Gulf migratory groups of king mackerel, Spanish mackerel, and cobia will be the responsibility of the Gulf Council, with the following exceptions:
 - a. The South Atlantic Council will have responsibility to set vessel trip limits, closed seasons or areas, or gear restrictions for 1) the east coast of Florida including the Atlantic side of the Florida Keys for Gulf migratory group cobia

Replace with:

- a. The South Atlantic Council will have the responsibility to specify management measures that affect only the east coast of Florida including the Atlantic side of the Florida Keys for Gulf migratory group cobia.
2. For stocks where a stock assessment indicates a different boundary between the Gulf and Atlantic migratory groups than the management boundary, a portion of the ACL for one migratory group may be apportioned to the appropriate zone, but management measures for that zone will be the responsibility of the Council within whose management area that

~~zone is located.~~

Replace with:

2. For stocks where a stock assessment indicates a different boundary between the Gulf and Atlantic migratory groups than the management boundary, a portion of the ACL for one migratory group may be apportioned to a zone in the other Council's jurisdiction.
3. **Both Councils must concur on recommendations that affect both migratory groups**

Replace with:

3. Both Councils must concur on recommendations that affect the whole range for each migratory group. Recommendations specific to each Council's jurisdiction, such as the case for Gulf migratory group of cobia Gulf Zone or Florida East Coast Zone, only need to involve the affected Council.

Council Comments:

- Create a table and provide examples of actions that can be taken by each Council under the proposed revisions to the framework procedure (Action 6).

Discussion:

- The current language for the CMP Framework Procedure was adopted in Amendment 20B to the CMP FMP (GMFMC and SAFMC 2014) and revised in Amendment 26 to the CMP FMP by removing language that referred to the king mackerel Florida East Coast Subzone.
- **Alternative 2** would modify the CMP Framework Procedure for more clarity on what cobia management measures the South Atlantic Council is responsible for concerning Gulf cobia in the FLEC Zone.
 - The South Atlantic Council would be able to independently approve Framework Amendments specifically pertaining to management measures for the FLEC Zone for Gulf cobia. The South Atlantic Council would not be allowed to make unilateral changes to management measures that affect the entire migratory group throughout its range, such as removing the FLEC Zone apportionment of the migratory group from the CMP FMP, or modifying the OFL, ABC, or Gulf group ACL.