

Mackerel Cobia Advisory Panel Structure Summary
South Atlantic Fishery Management Council
April 2021

At their September 2020 meeting, the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council (Council) reviewed appointments to the Mackerel Cobia Advisory Panel (MC AP) and discussed the need to ensure the MC AP is representative of the entire Coastal Migratory Pelagics (CMP) fishery, including a representative for the cobia fishery off the east coast of Florida. The Council further discussed the structure of the MC AP during their December 2020 meeting and requested staff bring back a paper discussing different options for restructuring MC AP, including options for collaborating with the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (ASMFC).

The CMP FMP and Current Membership:

- The CMP fisheries are jointly managed with the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council. Additionally, ASMFC manages Spanish mackerel in state waters along the Atlantic coast. Management of the king mackerel and Spanish mackerel fisheries through the CMP FMP extends through the Mid-Atlantic region.
 - Management of king and Spanish mackerel is broken up into two zones with quotas being allocated to each.
 - Northern Zone: New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Delaware, Maryland, Virginia, and North Carolina.
 - Southern Zone: South Carolina, Georgia, east Florida to the Miami-Dade/Monroe County line.
 - The Council manages Gulf cobia along the east coast of Florida.
- Currently, there are no state or sector specific seats currently on the AP except for a designated non-governmental organization (NGO) seat.

Table 1. Summary of Mackerel Cobia Advisory Panel members by state and sector.

State*	Charter	Recreational	Commercial	NGO	Research	Total
North Carolina	2	1	2	1	1	7
South Carolina	1	1	0	0	0	2
Georgia	1	0	0	0	0	1
Florida	1	2	4	0	0	7
Total	5	4	6	1	1	17

*Not included, the MAFMC Appointee from Virginia Beach, Virginia.

Mackerel Cobia Advisory Panel Discussion at the November 2020 Meeting:

- For-hire fishermen in the Mid-Atlantic region are required to have a CMP for-hire permit if targeting any CMP species. As landings continue to increase farther north, it will be important to make sure that individuals from that region are able to provide information on what the fishery is like in their area.
 - Now that there are fishermen actively targeting Spanish mackerel in the New England region, it may be helpful to have participation from fishermen in that area as well.

- The Mid-Atlantic Council has two representatives that serve on the Council's Mackerel Cobia Committee. The MC AP should have the same representation.

South Atlantic Council Discussion at the March 2021 Meeting:

- The Council does not support adding a member from the New England region because we do not manage CMP species in that region.
- The Council expressed concern about adding a Gulf representative because the fisheries are so diverse that it would be hard to find one person to represent the entire CMP fishery.
 - Ensure that Gulf Council and South Atlantic Council APs have had a chance to discuss an issue in advance of either chair going to the other Council's AP meeting.
 - Joint AP meetings could be considered on a case-by-case basis.
- There is currently no need to add an additional representative for the Mid-Atlantic region, working with ASMFC should help with additional representation from that region.
- The Council supported holding joint-MC AP and ASMFC Spanish Mackerel AP meetings to discuss Spanish mackerel issues as needed. Members of the MC AP that do not participate in the Spanish mackerel fishery would not be required to attend.
 - The Gulf Council could send representatives to these meetings as well.
 - Working with ASMFC would help improve representation throughout the Mid-Atlantic region and possibly the New England states (ASMFC is still working on populating APs under their new board structure).
 - Should be flexible enough to adjust to changing fisheries.