



THE SOUTH ATLANTIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

King and Spanish Mackerel Port Meetings

Mackerel Cobia Advisory Panel Discussion Document

November 2023

Background

During their April 2019 meeting and their October 2022 meeting, the Mackerel Cobia Advisory Panel (AP) passed motions requesting the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council (South Atlantic Council) set up a series of port meetings to gather more information on the Atlantic king and Spanish mackerel fisheries. The South Atlantic Council acknowledged the importance of gaining a comprehensive understanding of the commercial and recreational king and Spanish mackerel fisheries and how port meetings may provide an effective avenue to achieve that understanding. During their December 2022 meeting, the South Atlantic Council directed staff to begin developing a plan for conducting port meetings throughout the South Atlantic, Gulf of Mexico, Mid-Atlantic and New England regions.

In August 2023, the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (Atlantic States Commission) received an overview of the plan to conduct a series of port meetings for king and Spanish mackerel. Atlantic States Commission members are willing to participate in both the development and





implementation of port meetings for the mackerel fisheries. There was wide agreement that port meetings would provide information beneficial for the management process and essentially functions as pre-scoping for the forthcoming plan amendment addressing management of Atlantic Spanish mackerel. Additionally, they recommend involving the Atlantic Spanish Mackerel Technical Committee (TC) in the planning process.

The Fishery Management Plan (FMP) for Coastal Migratory Pelagic (CMP) Resources in the Gulf of Mexico and Atlantic Regions (CMP FMP) is a joint management plan between the South Atlantic Council and the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council (Gulf Council). The Gulf Council also received a port meetings overview during their August 2023 meeting. Gulf Council staff compared participation between public hearings and virtual tools (i.e., Fishermen Feedback, video views, and webinars) and noted the historic low participation to in-person CMP-focused meetings. Given that virtual tools seem to have a wider-reach and capture responses their constituents more efficiently, the Gulf Council recommended moving forward with a virtual approach, but also asked staff to consider ways to enhance feedback from CMP anglers during scheduled Council meetings.



South Atlantic Council Goals and Objectives

- Evaluation of current goals and objectives of the CMP FMP.
- Achieving the maximum economic and social yield from the fishery.
- Maintaining the long-term sustainability of stocks.
- Maintaining the integrity of fishing communities under climate change.
- Achieving the most equitable management structure under climate change.
- Identification of underserved communities and EEJ concerns.
- Consideration of interjurisdictional management and cooperation with other councils and ASMFC.





Discussion Topics

- How species movement/expansion may affect future management, especially how fishermen are responding to these changes and how the permit structure may influence their behavior.
- Dynamics of the commercial fleet, including the mobility of the fleet, market flexibility, and spatial seasonality.
 - Differences in how commercial fishermen interact with the fishery (travel to different areas vs. only participate in one area).
 - Differences in the size of fish being targeted at different times and in different areas.
- How the commercial and recreational sectors utilize and value the king and Spanish mackerel fishery.
 - Is there a big catch and release component to the king and Spanish mackerel fisheries.
- What role do king and Spanish mackerel fishing tournaments play in the fishery. How might these tournaments be affecting the fisheries.
 - Is there acceptance/interest within the recreational industry to move towards catch and release only tournaments.
- How water quality and harmful algal blooms affecting the king and Spanish mackerel fisheries.
- How king and Spanish mackerel fisheries interact with other important fisheries.
- What gears are currently being used in the fishery and how has this changed over time.
- How can the Council better reach underserved stakeholders and identify equity and environmental justice issues within the king and Spanish mackerel fishing communities?

Tentative Timeline

Date	Development of Port Meetings
☑ October 2022	Mackerel Cobia Advisory Panel unanimously passes a motion requesting the Council conduction a series of port meetings to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the king and Spanish mackerel fisheries.
☑ December 2022	South Atlantic Council reviews the Mackerel Cobia Advisory Panel motion and directs staff begin work on a plan to conduct port meetings.





The South Atlantic Fishery Management Council

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	March 2023	South Atlantic Council discusses what information they feel is needed to gain a comprehensive understanding of the king and Spanish mackerel fisheries.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	April 2023	Mackerel Cobia Advisory Panel discusses their goals and objectives for port meetings.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	June 2023	South Atlantic Council reviews input from the Mackerel Cobia Advisory Panel and discusses their goals and objectives for port meetings.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	August 2023	The Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission and the Gulf of Mexico Council are asked to participate in the development and execution of port meetings.
<input type="checkbox"/>	November 2023	Mackerel Cobia Advisory Panel meets and provides input on proposed structure for port meetings and key communities to hold meetings.
<input type="checkbox"/>	December 2022	South Atlantic Council meets and discusses proposed meeting structure and approves key locations so scheduling work can begin.
<input type="checkbox"/>	February 2024	Mock-port meeting held with the Mackerel Cobia Advisory Panel
<input type="checkbox"/>	March 2024	South Atlantic Council approves final plan for conducting port meetings.
	Date	Port Meetings Conducted
<input type="checkbox"/>	April 2024	Port Meetings conducted in: North Carolina
<input type="checkbox"/>	May 2024	Port Meetings conducted in: Florida
<input type="checkbox"/>	June 2024	South Atlantic Council receives an update on port meeting progress.
<input type="checkbox"/>	July 2024	Port Meetings conducted in: South Carolina and Georgia
<input type="checkbox"/>	August 2024	Port Meetings conducted in: Virginia through Delaware
<input type="checkbox"/>	September 2024	South Atlantic Council receives an update on port meeting progress.
<input type="checkbox"/>	October 2024	Port meetings conducted in: New Jersey though Massachusetts
<input type="checkbox"/>	December 2024	South Atlantic Council receives an update on port meeting progress.





<input type="checkbox"/>	Throughout 2024	Gulf Council holds webinars to gather input from king and Spanish mackerel fishermen and updates the Gulf of Mexico Council, as appropriate.
	Date	Summary Report Prepared
<input type="checkbox"/>	Winter 2024	Staff conducts thematic analysis and prepares summary report.
<input type="checkbox"/>	March 2025	Final report presented to the South Atlantic Council and guidance on future actions provided.
<input type="checkbox"/>	April 2025	Final report presented to the Mackerel Cobia Advisory Panel

DRAFT Port Meeting Structure

**Note: this is a draft meeting structure that has not been reviewed by the Council or leadership. It may need to be significantly modified based on Council comment and staff/cost restrictions.*

Port meetings would be conducted in the evenings, from 6:00pm to 8:00pm. Materials provided during the meeting could include a general fact sheet with room for note-taking and various tables and charts presented around the room to spur discussion.

Prelude: As stakeholders arrive at the meeting, there could be space for them to answer a question or two (ex. post-it notes to stick to a flipboard).

Example questions include:

1. What is one thing you hope comes out of port meetings?
2. What is one key thing the Council needs to know about king and Spanish mackerel?

Meeting Introduction: A very brief presentation introducing port meetings, the Council’s goals and objectives, and explaining how the night will operate.

Breakout Groups: A series of breakout groups to elicit information from attendees on the various topics identified by the Council. Example breakout group categories:

1. CMP FMP Goals and Objectives
2. Environmental conditions (species movement, expansion)
3. Changes needed to the current management structure.

Break: Time for attendees to relax and have informal conversations. Also include an interactive activity, such as a sticky wall where stakeholders can





note the year you got into the fishery or key events in the fisheries or a keep/remove poll for the goals and objectives in the CMP FMP.

Sector Dynamics: Two breakout groups, by sector, discussing the dynamics of each fleet. Those that do not participate in a specific sector (ex. ENGOs) can select.

Wrap-Up: Final presentation to recap port meeting goals and objectives, note the next steps/timing, and thank participants.

DRAFT Port Meeting Locations

State	Meeting One	Meeting Two	Meeting Three	Meeting Four
Florida	Fort Lauderdale	Stuart	Cape Canaveral	Saint Augustine
Georgia/South Carolina	Darien	Hilton Head	Georgetown	
North Carolina	Wilmington	Morehead City	Hatteras	
Mid-Atlantic	Virginia Beach	Ocean City	Lewes	Cape May
New England	Montauk	New London	Newport	Barnstable

