



SOUTH ATLANTIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

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Jessica McCawley, Chair | Kerry Marhefka, Vice Chair

John Carmichael, Executive Director

AGENDA

Mackerel Cobia Advisory Panel Meeting

Town & Country Inn and Suites

2008 Savannah Hwy

Charleston, SC 29407

Monday, November 2, 2026 – 1:30 P.M. to 5:00 P.M.

Welcome and Introductions

Approval of Agenda – Thomas Newman

Approval of March 2025 Meeting Minutes – Thomas Newman

Public Comment

Report from the Council's Mackerel Cobia Committee Chair – Tom Roller

1. Update on Active Council Amendments (***Attachment 1***) – Christina Curtis
(1:30pm – 2:00 pm)
2. Council Citizen Science Program Update (***Attachment 2***) (2:00pm – 2:45pm)
 - a) Overview – Julia Byrd
 - b) Discuss and provide recommendations, as appropriate – Thomas Newman

BREAK (2:45pm – 3:00pm)

3. SEAMAP Coastal Trawl Survey (***Attachment 3***) (3:00pm – 3:30pm)
 - a) Overview – Dr. Julie Vecchio
 - b) Discuss and provide recommendations, as appropriate – Thomas Newman
4. Atlantic King Mackerel Fishery Performance Report (***Attachment 4***) (3:30pm – 5:00pm)
 - a) Fishery Overview – Dr. Chip Collier
 - b) Fishery Performance Report Questions – Christina Curtis
 - c) Discuss and provide recommendations, as appropriate – Thomas Newman

Tuesday, November 3, 2026 – 9:00 A.M. to 5:00 P.M.

5. Atlantic Spanish Mackerel Fishery Performance Report (*Attachment 5*) (9:00am – 10:45am)
 - a) Fishery Overview – Dr. Chip Collier
 - b) Fishery Performance Report – Christina Curtis
 - c) Discuss and provide recommendations, as appropriate – Thomas Newman

BREAK (10:45am – 11:00am)

6. Overview of the in season catch estimate process (*Attachment 6*) (11:00am – 12:00pm)
 - a) Overview – SEFSC Staff
 - b) Discuss and provide recommendations, as appropriate – Thomas Newman

LUNCH (12:00pm – 1:30pm)

7. CMP Amendment 38 (Atlantic Spanish mackerel fishing year and tournament sales) and Update on Mackerel Port Meetings (*Attachment 7*) (1:30pm – 3:30pm)
 - a) Overview – Christina Curtis
 - b) Discuss and provide recommendations, as appropriate – Thomas Newman

BREAK (3:30pm – 3:40pm)

- Update on MREP FES Revisions (3:40pm – 4:10pm)
 - a) Overview – Dr. Chip Collier
 - b) Discuss and provide recommendations, as appropriate – Thomas Newman
- 8. Update on SEDAR Assessments for Atlantic king and Spanish mackerel (*Attachment 8*) (4:10pm – 4:40pm)
 - a) Overview – Emily Ott
 - b) Gather volunteers to participate in upcoming assessments – Thomas Newman

Other Business (4:40pm – 5:00pm)

Public Comment

Adjourn

Mackerel Cobia Advisory Panel Members

Thomas Newman, Chair
Kevin Aman, Vice Chair
Tony Benevento
Stanford Carter
Stephen English
Lynn Gokey
Chuck Griffin
Alana Harrison
William Jones
Melissa Leone
Charlie Locke
John Mallette
Michael Oppegaard
Jot Owens
William Palmer
Steven Saunders
Robbie Waddick
Bill Weeks
Nathan Everett, Mid-Atlantic Representative
Cory Gwinn, Mid-Atlantic Representative

Staff: Christina Curtis

Attachments

Attachment 1: Active Amendments Document
Attachment 2: Citizen Science Program Update Presentation
Attachment 3: SEAMAP Coastal Trawl Survey Presentation
Attachment 4: King Mackerel Fishery Performance Report Discussion Document
Attachment 5: Spanish Mackerel Fishery Performance Report Discussion Document
Attachment 6: SEFSC In-Season Catch Estimate Process Presentation *(available at meeting)*
Attachment 7: Coastal Migratory Pelagics Amendment 38 Discussion Document
Attachment 8: SEDAR Update Presentation

OVERVIEW

Mackerel Cobia Advisory Panel Meeting

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

1. Update on Active Council Amendments (*Attachment 1*)

Discussion: Staff will provide an update on active amendments relevant to the Coastal Migratory Pelagics Fishery Management Plan.

Advisory Panel Action: None.

2. Council Citizen Science Program Update (*Attachment 2*)

Discussion: Council staff will provide an update on recent Citizen Science Program activities, including updates on the FISHstory project analysis efforts; the SAFMC Release project; and a project idea aiming to partner with fishermen to collect bottom temperature data.

Advisory Panel Action: Discuss and provide feedback on FISHstory and project idea aiming to partner with fishermen to collect bottom temperature data. Identify an additional AP member interested in serving on the Citizen Science Projects Advisory Panel.

3. SEAMAP Coastal Trawl Survey (*Attachment 3*)

Discussion: Dr. Tracey Smart with South Carolina Department of Natural Resources will develop a presentation summarizing trends in abundance of Atlantic king mackerel and Atlantic Spanish mackerel sampled through the SEAMAP-SA Coastal Trawl Survey.

Advisory Panel Action: None

4. Atlantic King Mackerel Fishery Performance Report (*Attachment 4*)

Discussion: Fishery Performance Reports (FPR) have been developed with Council Advisory Panels for several South Atlantic species. The intent of the FPRs is to assemble information from AP members' experience and observations on the water and in the marketplace to complement scientific landings data. FPRs are provided to the Scientific and Statistical Committee, Social and Economic Panel, and the Council to assist in their discussions. FPRs for Atlantic king mackerel were completed by the Mackerel AP in 2018 and 2019. The AP is asked to update their feedback in advance of a stock assessment for Atlantic king mackerel that is scheduled to begin in 2027.

Advisory Panel Action: Provide information to update the FPR for Atlantic king mackerel.

5. Atlantic Spanish Mackerel Fishery Performance Report (*Attachment 5*)

Discussion: Fishery Performance Reports (FPR) have been developed with Council Advisory Panels for several South Atlantic species. The intent of the FPRs is to assemble information from AP members' experience and observations on the water and in the marketplace to complement scientific landings data. FPRs are provided to the Scientific and Statistical Committee, Social and Economic Panel, and the Council to assist in their discussions. FPRs for Atlantic Spanish mackerel were completed by the Mackerel AP in 2018 and 2021. The AP is asked to update their feedback in advance of a stock assessment for Atlantic Spanish mackerel that is scheduled to begin in 2027.

Advisory Panel Action: Discuss and provide input, as appropriate.

6. Overview of the In-Season Catch Estimation Process (*Attachment 6*)

Discussion: In-season catch monitoring is critical for implementing management measures in a timely manner, including trip-limit step-downs, in-season closures, and transfers of quota between management zones. Southeast Fisheries Science Center staff will provide an overview of how commercial catch of Atlantic Spanish mackerel and other fisheries is monitored and projected throughout the fishing season to support in-season management.

Advisory Panel Action: Discuss and provide input, as appropriate.

7. Coastal Migratory Pelagics Amendment 38 and Mackerel Port Meetings Update (*Attachment 7*)

Discussion: At the urging of the AP, the Council hosted a series of port meetings along the Atlantic coast throughout 2024. Based in part on feedback received during port meetings, in June 2026 Council directed staff to begin work on an amendment to address the commercial fishing season for Atlantic Spanish mackerel and sale of tournament caught Atlantic king and Atlantic Spanish mackerel. Additionally, in September 2026 the Council directed staff to look at revising the abbreviated framework process for coastal migratory pelagic species. Council staff will present an update on mackerel port meetings and items for discussions relative to the topics proposed to be addressed in Amendment 38 to the CMP FMP.

Advisory Panel Action: Discuss and provide input, as appropriate.

• Update on MREP FES Revisions

Discussion: Council staff will provide updates on the Fishing Effort Survey (FES) follow-up study findings and implementation status of the improved design. The revised FES aims to produce more accurate data by mitigating overreporting of fishing trips through revising the question sequence and administering the survey monthly as opposed to every two months, helping with angler recall. For more detailed information, [see this presentation](#) given to the Council's Scientific and Statistical Committee by NOAA Fisheries Office of Science and Technology.

Advisory Panel Action: None

8. Update on SEDAR Assessments for Atlantic King and Spanish Mackerel (*Attachment 8*)

Discussion: SEDAR staff will provide a refresher on the SEDAR process and provide an update on upcoming assessments for planned for Atlantic king mackerel and Atlantic Spanish mackerel.

Advisory Panel Action: Gather volunteers to participate in upcoming assessments.