

FINAL
SUMMARY REPORT
MACKEREL COBIA COMMITTEE
SOUTH ATLANTIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL
Jekyll Island, GA
March 8, 2018

The Committee approved minutes from the December 2017 meeting and the agenda.

Status of Commercial Catches versus Quota for Species under ACLs

The Committee received an update on commercial landings for Atlantic king mackerel, Atlantic Spanish mackerel and Atlantic and Florida east coast cobia from SERO staff.

King mackerel tournament sales vs. commercial ACL update

The ban on the sale of king and Spanish mackerel caught under the bag limit in Amendment 20A became effective on August 7, 2014. An exception was made for king or Spanish mackerel harvested or possessed under the bag limit during a fishing tournament, which may be donated to a dealer who will sell those fish and donate the proceeds to a charity. This exception is allowed only if the tournament organizers have a permit from a state to conduct that tournament. At the December 2017 meeting, the Committee discussed Atlantic king mackerel tournament sales, which are currently counted against the commercial ACL; and states were requested to bring information on Atlantic king mackerel tournament sales over the last three years to the March 2018 meeting for discussion. The Committee reviewed those landings relative to the commercial and Atlantic recreational king mackerel ACLs. The Committee also discussed how the Marine Recreational Information Program (MRIP) accounts for tournament landings.

DIRECTION TO STAFF TO LOOK INTO HOW MRIP ACCOUNTS FOR TOURNAMENTS WHEN CALCULATING LANDING AND EFFORT ESTIMATES

Update on the state implementation plans for ASMFC's Interstate Plan for Atlantic Cobia

Bob Beal, Executive Director of the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission, briefed the Committee on the status of the interstate management plan. In November 2018, ASMFC approved management measures for Atlantic cobia in state waters. Recreational and commercial possession and size limits follow those set up in CMP Framework Amendment 4. State-by-state recreational harvest allocations are based on the federal ACL of 620,000 pounds. These allocations are soft harvest targets, with landings monitored every three years. Recreational harvest will be reduced by 1% for de minimis states. State implementation plans were submitted for review in January 2018. ASMFC's South Atlantic State/Federal Fisheries Management Board approved regulations for Georgia, South Carolina, North Carolina, Virginia, Potomac River Fisheries Commission, Maryland, Delaware, and New Jersey in February 2018. The North Carolina Marine Fisheries Commission has submitted an additional plan for approval by the South Atlantic State Board. Virginia Marine Resources Commission has requested approval of management options based on length and weight data collected via their Sportfish Collection Project.

These state implementation plans are scheduled to become effective April 2018.

Additionally, clarification was provided regarding the recreational payback provision in the draft FMP shared with Council members in September 2017. The final ASMFC Interstate FMP does not include a payback requirement for overages in the recreational fishery. If a state exceeds their 3-year harvest target, that state would be required to adjust its management measures to prevent future overages, but the state's share will not be reduced.

CMP Amendment 31 (Atlantic Cobia Management)

In December 2017, the Committee reviewed a draft document for Coastal Migratory Pelagics Amendment 31 which contains one action with a range of alternatives for management of Atlantic migratory group cobia including: a complementary plan with ASMFC as well as removal of Atlantic cobia from the management unit. In December 2017, the Committee chose a preferred alternative (Alternative 2: Remove Atlantic cobia from the CMP FMP) and approved the document for public hearings. Council staff presented a summary of comments received during the public hearings. Majority of comments supported removing Atlantic cobia from the federal management unit and taking final action at the March 2018 meeting. There were a few comments expressing concern about timing related to the upcoming stock ID workshop. Council staff reviewed a decision document for the actions and alternatives approved by the Council. The Committee discussed enforcement of Atlantic cobia in federal waters under Preferred Alternative 2, and the timing for Amendment 31 relative to the upcoming Stock ID Workshop for Atlantic cobia and the amount of time the State of South Carolina may need to get regulations approved in state waters given that have to go through the S.C. Legislature.

The following motions were approved:

MOTION #1: ACCEPT THE IPT'S RECOMMENDED WORDING CHANGE FOR PURPOSE AND NEED

The purpose is to reduce complexity of management and facilitate improved coordination of management of Atlantic cobia in state and federal waters.

The need is to provide for effective management of Atlantic cobia and fair and equitable access to harvest opportunities without reducing protection to the stock.

APPROVED BY COMMITTEE

APPROVED BY COUNCIL

MOTION #2: APPROVE COASTAL MIGRATORY PELAGICS AMENDMENT 31 FOR FORMAL SECRETARIAL REVIEW AND DEEM THE CODIFIED TEXT AS NECESSARY AND APPROPRIATE. GIVE STAFF EDITORIAL LICENSE TO MAKE ANY NECESSARY EDITORIAL CHANGES TO THE DOCUMENT/CODIFIED TEXT AND GIVE THE COUNCIL CHAIR AUTHORITY TO APPROVE THE REVISIONS AND RE-DEEM THE CODIFIED TEXT.

APPROVED BY COMMITTEE (6 IN FAVOR, 5 OPPOSED, 1 ABSTENTION)

SUBSTITUTE MOTION: REQUEST STAFF MAKE THE REQUESTED REVISIONS TO AMENDMENT 31, ADDRESS NOAA GC CONCERNS AND BRING THE DOCUMENT BACK TO THE COUNCIL IN JUNE 2018 FOR FINAL ACTION.

SUBSTITUTE MOTION BECOMES MAIN MOTION
APPROVED BY COUNCIL (8 IN FAVOR, 5 OPPOSED)

CMP Framework Amendment 6 (Atlantic King Mackerel Trip Limits)

The new regulations for king mackerel established in CMP Amendment 26 became effective on May 11, 2017, including updated commercial trip limits for the Atlantic Southern zone. Stakeholders and the AP/Sub-Panel have recommended that the Council consider revising the trip limits to allow for a higher trip limit north of the Volusia/Brevard county line, which would mirror trip limits prior to Amendment 26. In September 2017, Council staff reviewed a document with options for alternatives to be included in a framework amendment addressing Atlantic king mackerel commercial trip limits. In December 2017, the Council approved CMP Framework Amendment 6 for scoping at the March 2018 Council meeting. Council staff summarized scoping comments and presented an options paper.

The following motions were approved:

MOTION #3: SELECT ACTION 1, ALTERNATIVE 3 AS THE PREFERRED

Alternative 3: Adjust the commercial trip limits for Atlantic king mackerel in the Atlantic Southern Zone for Season 1:

- Season 1
 - March 1- March 31
 - North of Flagler/Volusia line: 3,500 lbs
 - South of Flagler/Volusia line: 75 fish
 - April 1 – September 30
 - North of Volusia/Brevard line: 3,500 lbs
 - South of Volusia/Brevard line: 75 fish until 75% of the Season 1 quota is met, and then the trip limit is 50 fish until Sept 30

APPROVED BY COMMITTEE

APPROVED BY COUNCIL

Other Business

Note: Council staff drafts the timing and task motion based on Committee action. If points require clarification, they will be added to the draft motion. The Committee should review this wording carefully to be sure it accurately reflects their intent prior to making the motion.

Timing and Task(s)

MOTION # X: ADOPT THE FOLLOWING TIMING AND TASKS:

1. Determine how the Marine Recreational Information Program deals with tournament landings when making landing and effort estimates.

2. Prepare CMP Amendment 31 for discussion at the April 2018 Gulf Council meeting.

3. Make the requested revisions to CMP Amendment 31, address NOAA GC concerns and bring the document back to the council in June 2018 for final action.
4. Send a letter to ASMFC asking how they intend to deal with regulations in federal waters under CMP Amendment 31, Action 1, Preferred Alternative 2 (removal of Atlantic cobia from the CMP FMP).
5. Develop draft CMP Framework Amendment 6 with approved actions and alternatives to be approved for public hearings at the June 2018 meeting.

APPROVED BY COUNCIL