

**FINAL**  
**SUMMARY REPORT**  
**MACKEREL COBIA COMMITTEE**  
**SOUTH ATLANTIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL**  
**Jekyll Island, GA**  
**March 6, 2019**

The Committee approved minutes from the October 2018 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.

**Status of Amendments Under Formal Review**

SERO staff briefed the Committee on the status of CMP Amendment 31 (Atlantic cobia management) which was submitted for formal review on July 13, 2018 and CMP Framework Amendment 6 (King mackerel trip limits) which as submitted for formal review on November 9, 2018. The final rule for CMP Amendment 31 published on February 19, 2019 with an effective date of March 21, 2019. The proposed rule for CMP Framework 6 is anticipated to publish soon.

**King mackerel commercial trip limits in the Atlantic southern zone during season two**

The Committee reviewed stakeholder and Mackerel Cobia Advisory Panel (MCAP) concerns about the low commercial trip limit in the Atlantic Southern Zone during season two (October to the end of February). During the winter months, fishermen are only able to fish a small number of days due to the weather. Additionally, due to changes in the fishery, more fish are on the market during this time of the year, resulting in lower prices. The following motion was approved:

**MOTION #1: BEGIN A FRAMEWORK AMENDMENT TO ADDRESS ATLANTIC KING MACKEREL COMMERCIAL TRIP LIMITS IN THE SOUTHERN ZONE DURING SEASON TWO.**

APPROVED BY COMMITTEE

APPROVED BY COUNCIL

The Committee directed staff to work with the MCAP to determine a range of trip limit alternatives for inclusion in the framework amendment.

**Spanish mackerel closures in the Atlantic northern zone**

The Committee reviewed concerns expressed by the MCAP regarding increased participation in the commercial Spanish mackerel fishery and closures that have occurred recently in the Atlantic northern zone (NY through NC) and southern zone (SC through Miami-Dade/Monroe, Florida). The Committee discussed options to address commercial closures and directed staff to take the issue to the MCAP for discussion.

**CMP Framework Amendment 7 (Modifications to Gulf cobia size limits)**

The Committee reviewed CMP Framework Amendment 7 which, if approved by the Secretary of Commerce, will raise the recreational and commercial minimum size limit for Gulf migratory group cobia within the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council's jurisdiction. The Committee discussed timing of the upcoming SEDAR assessment for Gulf cobia and directed staff to discuss CMP Framework Amendment 7 with the MCAP.

**Discussion of Agenda Items for Mackerel Cobia Advisory Panel Meeting**

The Committee discussed the next MCAP and possible agenda topics. The Committee directed staff to convene a meeting of the MCAP via webinar prior to the June 2019 meeting to discuss commercial Atlantic king mackerel trip limits in the southern zone, management measures to prevent early closure of the commercial Spanish mackerel fishery, and recent changes to the minimum size limit for Gulf cobia via CMP Framework Amendment 7.

**Other Business**

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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:** ADOPT THE FOLLOWING TIMING AND TASKS:

1. Begin a framework amendment to address Atlantic king mackerel commercial trip limits in the southern zone during season two.
2. Hold a meeting of the Mackerel Cobia Advisory Panel via webinar prior to the June Council meeting to discuss Atlantic king mackerel commercial trip limits, closures in the commercial Spanish mackerel fishery, and CMP Framework Amendment 7.

APPROVED BY COUNCIL