

FINAL
SUMMARY REPORT
MACKEREL COBIA COMMITTEE
SOUTH ATLANTIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL
Charleston, NC
September 19, 2019

The Committee approved minutes from the June 2019 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 Florida east coast cobia from SERO staff.

DIRECTION TO STAFF TO INCLUDE EXPANDED LANDINGS IN FUTURE COMMERCIAL CATCH UPDATES AND TO NOT INCLUDE ATLANTIC COBIA LANDINGS IN FUTURE REPORTS.

Status of Amendments Under Formal Review

SERO staff briefed the Committee on the status of CMP Framework 6. The proposed rule published on March 26, 2019 and comments the final rule published on September 10, 2019 with an effective date of September 11, 2019. The request for emergency action for the commercial king mackerel fishery was sent to NMFS on June 21, 2019, the document is currently up at NOAA Headquarters.

CMP Framework Amendment 8 (king mackerel commercial trip limits during season two)

At the June 2019 meeting, the Council requested NMFS take emergency action to increase in the commercial trip limit from 50-fish to 75-fish in the Atlantic southern zone, south of the Flagler/Volusia County line, Florida during season two of the 2019/2020 commercial fishing year. Framework Amendment 8 will permanently address season two commercial king mackerel trip limits. Staff presented a draft public hearing document for the Council to consider.

DIRECTION TO STAFF TO UPDATE THE DOCUMENT TO REFLECT SHIFTING BOUNDARIES BETWEEN THE GULF AND ATLANTIC STOCKS OF KING MACKEREL AND ASSOCIATED TRIP LIMITS PRIOR TO CMP AMENDMENT 26.

The following motions were passed by the Committee:

MOTION #1: ACCEPT THE IPT'S RECOMMENDED CHANGES TO THE PURPOSE AND NEED STATEMENT.

The *purpose* is to **modify increase** the commercial trip limit for Atlantic king mackerel in the Atlantic Southern Zone during Season 2 (October 1 to the end of February).

The *need* is to provide a commercial trip limit sufficient to support fishing activity and revenue opportunity while constraining harvest to the annual catch limit and providing for year-round access.

APPROVED BY COMMITTEE

APPROVED BY COUNCIL

MOTION #2: ACCEPT THE IPT'S RECOMMENDED CHANGES TO THE ACTION/ALTERNATIVES LANGUAGE, REMOVING REFERENCE TO SEASON 1
Alternative 1 (No Action): The commercial trip limits for Atlantic king mackerel in Season 2 south of the Flagler/Volusia line (29°25'N) to the Miami-Dade/Monroe line (25°20'24"N) are:

North of the Flagler/Volusia line (29°25'N): 3,500 pounds year-round.

South of the Flagler/Volusia line (29°25'N) to the Miami-Dade/Monroe line (25°20'24"N):

- ~~March 1 – March 31 (Season 1): 50 fish*~~
- ~~April 1 – September 30 (Season 1): 75 fish, unless NMFS determines that 75% or more of the Season 1 quota has been landed, then, 50 fish*~~
- October 1 – January 31 (Season 2): 50-fish
- February 1 – end of February (Season 2): 50-fish, unless NMFS determines that less than 70% of the Season 2 quota has been landed, then, 75-fish.

Alternative 2: ~~Adjust~~ **Increase** the commercial trip limits for Atlantic king mackerel in the Atlantic Southern Zone for Season 2 south of the Flagler/Volusia line (29°25'N) to the Miami-Dade/Monroe line (25°20'24"N):

North of the Flagler/Volusia line (29°25'N): 3,500 pounds year-round.

South of the Flagler/Volusia line (29°25'N) to the Miami-Dade/Monroe line (25°20'24"N):

- ~~March 1 – March 31 (Season 1): 50 fish*~~
- ~~April 1 – September 30 (Season 1): 75 fish, unless NMFS determines that 75% or more of the Season 1 quota has been landed, then, 50 fish*~~
- October 1 – January 31: 75-fish
- February 1 – end of February: 75-fish, unless NMFS determines that less than 70% of the Season 2 quota has been landed, then, 100-fish.

Alternative 3: ~~Adjust~~ **Increase** the commercial trip limits for Atlantic king mackerel in the Atlantic Southern Zone for Season 2 south of the Flagler/Volusia line (29°25'N) to the Miami-Dade/Monroe line (25°20'24"N):

North of the Flagler/Volusia line (29°25'N): 3,500 pounds year-round.

South of the Flagler/Volusia line (29°25'N) to the Miami-Dade/Monroe line (25°20'24"N):

- ~~March 1 – March 31 (Season 1): 50 fish*~~
- ~~April 1 – September 30 (Season 1): 75 fish, unless NMFS determines that 75% or more of the Season 1 quota has been landed, then, 50 fish*~~
- October 1 – January 31: 100-fish
- February 1 – end of February: 100-fish, unless NMFS determines that less than 70% of the Season 2 quota has been landed, then, 150-fish.

Alternative 4: Adjust Increase the commercial trip limits for Atlantic king mackerel in the Atlantic Southern Zone for Season 2 south of the Flagler/Volusia line (29°25'N) to the Miami-Dade/Monroe line (25°20'24"N):

~~North of the Flagler/Volusia line (29°25'N): 3,500 pounds year-round.~~

~~South of the Flagler/Volusia line (29°25'N) to the Miami-Dade/Monroe line (25°20'24"N):~~

- ~~• March 1 – March 31 (Season 1): 50 fish*~~
- ~~• April 1 – September 30 (Season 1): 75 fish, unless NMFS determines that 75% or more of the Season 1 quota has been landed, then, 50 fish*~~
- October 1 – January 31: 150-fish
- February 1 – end of February: 150-fish, unless NMFS determines that less than 70% of the Season 2 quota has been landed, then, 175-fish.

APPROVED BY COMMITTEE

APPROVED BY COUNCIL

MOTION #3: ADD AN ALTERNATIVE FOR A SEASON 2 TRIP LIMIT OF 100-FISH WITH NO STEP-UP AND SELECT AS THE PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE

APPROVED BY COMMITTEE

APPROVED BY COUNCIL

MOTION #4: APPROVE COASTAL MIGRATORY PELAGICS FRAMEWORK AMENDMENT 8 FOR PUBLIC HEARINGS.

APPROVED BY COUNCIL

Spanish Mackerel White Paper

During the June 2019 meeting the Council directed staff to prepare a white paper with a thorough analysis of effort in the commercial Spanish mackerel fishery and a discussion of possible avenues to control effort, including: a limited access commercial permit, a limited access gillnet endorsement in the southern zone, and collaboration with state agencies. Staff presented the results contained in the white paper for discussion.

The following motions were passed by the Committee:

MOTION: REVISE SPANISH MACKEREL ACCOUNTABILITY MEASURES SO THAT THE SPANISH MACKEREL FISHERY WILL CLOSE WHEN THE TOTAL ACL IS MET OR PROJECTED TO BE MET. WHEN THE COMMERCIAL SECTOR QUOTA IS MET A STEPDOWN TO 500-LBS WILL OCCUR.

MOTION TO AMEND

REVISE SPANISH MACKEREL ACCOUNTABILITY MEASURES SO WHEN THE NORTHERN ZONE COMMERCIAL SECTOR QUOTA IS MET A STEPDOWN TO 500-LBS WILL OCCUR.

THE NORTHERN ZONE COMMERCIAL SPANISH MACKEREL FISHERY WILL CLOSE WHEN THE TOTAL ACL (COMMERCIAL AND RECREATIONAL COMBINED) IS MET OR PROJECTED TO BE MET.

MOTION TO AMEND BECOMES MAIN MOTION (9-1-0)

MOTION #5: REVISE SPANISH MACKEREL ACCOUNTABILITY MEASURES SO WHEN THE NORTHERN ZONE COMMERCIAL SECTOR QUOTA IS MET A STEPDOWN TO 500-LBS WILL OCCUR.

THE SPANISH MACKEREL FISHERY WILL CLOSE WHEN THE TOTAL ACL (COMMERCIAL AND RECREATIONAL COMBINED) IS MET OR PROJECTED TO BE MET.

APPROVED BY COMMITTEE

APPROVED BY COUNCIL

MOTION #6: MOVE TO ANALYZE AND DEVELOP ALTERNATIVES FOR TRIP LIMITS FOR THE NORTHERN ZONE COMMERCIAL SECTOR OF 1,500, 2,000, 2,500 POUNDS.

APPROVED BY COMMITTEE

APPROVED BY COUNCIL

MOTION: SEND A LETTER TO THE STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA DMF WITH THESE MOTIONS.

MOTION FAILS (3-4-3)

Port Meetings for King and Spanish Mackerel

During the June 2019 meeting the Council reviewed a request from the Mackerel Cobia Advisory Panel to conduct port meetings to gain a comprehensive understanding of the commercial and recreational king and Spanish mackerel fisheries. The Council requested staff discussion of port meetings to be added to the September agenda. Staff presented information to guide discussion of the who, what, when, where, and why of port meetings.

The Committee discussed holding port meetings after the completion of stock assessments for king mackerel (update) and Spanish mackerel. In the interim states could engage with stakeholders to get more information on the mackerel fisheries.

DIRECT STAFF TO POSTPONE WORK ON PORT MEETINGS UNTIL AFTER THE SPANISH MACKEREL STOCK ASSESSMENT.

Gulf Framework Action to Modify Federal For-Hire Trip Limits

At their August 2019 meeting, the Gulf Council reviewed options to modify the possession limits for anglers on for-hire vessels on trips exceeding 24 hours in duration. Presently, anglers on these trips may possess two daily bag limits for species managed under the Reef Fish and Coastal Migratory Pelagics FMPs; however, the second daily bag limit may not be possessed until after 24 hours have elapsed. Gulf Council staff updated the Committee on the development of the amendment. The Committee will revisit this issue next time a full CMP or Snapper Grouper amendment is discussed.

Agenda Items for the Mackerel Cobia Advisory Panel Meeting

The next Mackerel Cobia Advisory Panel will be held on October 7th and 8th, 2019 in Charleston, South Carolina. The Committee is asked for the following items to be included on the Mackerel Cobia Advisory Panel agenda:

1. Update on recently submitted CMP Amendments
2. Framework Amendment 8 (king mackerel trip limits, season two)
3. Spanish mackerel commercial effort white paper
4. FISHstory Update/Zooniverse Demo
5. Discussion of limited entry for the commercial Spanish mackerel fishery and a limited access Spanish mackerel gillnet endorsement for the Atlantic southern zone.
6. Background discussion on the recreational fishery.
7. Updated to the king mackerel, Spanish mackerel, and Florida east coast zone cobia Fishery Performance Report.

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 #7: ADOPT THE FOLLOWING TIMING AND TASKS:

1. Continue work on CMP Framework Amendment 8 and prepare FOR PUBLIC HEARINGS AND a final draft for the approval at the December 2019 Council meeting.
 2. Begin work on a framework amendment to address Spanish mackerel accountability measures and commercial trip limits in the Northern Zone FOR REVIEW IN DECEMBER 2019 AND FINAL ACTION DURING A WEBINAR BEFORE THE MARCH 2020 MEETING.
 3. Prepare for the October 2019 Mackerel Cobia Advisory Panel Meeting
- APPROVED BY COUNCIL