

FINAL
SUMMARY REPORT
MACKEREL COBIA COMMITTEE
SOUTH ATLANTIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL
Jekyll Island, GA
March 3, 2020

The Committee approved minutes from the December 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.

Status of Amendments Under Formal Review

SERO staff updated the Committee on recent actions related to coastal migratory pelagics. CMP Framework Amendment 8, which addresses commercial king mackerel trip limits in the Southern Zone during season two, was submitted to NMFS on February 19, 2020. A proposed rule is currently under development.

CMP Framework Amendment 9 (Spanish mackerel trip limits)

In September 2019, in order to address recent closure in the commercial Spanish mackerel fishery, the Council directed staff to begin work on an amendment that would modify Spanish mackerel trip limits and accountability measures. During their December 2019 meeting, Robert Beal, Executive Director of the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (ASMFC), clarified that the ASMFC Interstate Fisheries Management Plan for Spanish Mackerel does not require states to close their waters to commercial harvest of Spanish mackerel when a federal closure occurs. Based on the information provided by ASMFC, the Committee determined that it was no longer necessary to immediately address Spanish mackerel accountability measures, but that a trip limit reduction in the Northern Zone would help to extend the commercial Spanish mackerel season in federal waters. The Council approved the amendment for public hearings which were held via webinar on January 22nd and 23rd, 2020.

Staff presented a draft document for the Committee to consider for formal review. Additionally, staff noted that the analysis predicts the range of alternatives would only extend the commercial Spanish mackerel season in the Northern Zone by two to five days. In addition, North Carolina Division of Marine Fisheries (NC DMF) will be issuing proclamations with new regulations for the commercial small mesh gill net fishery, including yardage limits and attendance requirements. Based on this information, the Committee chose to discontinue work on this amendment until results from the upcoming stock assessment are available. The Spanish mackerel operational stock assessment is currently in the planning stage and is tentatively scheduled to begin in 2021.

The following motion was passed:

MOTION #1: DISCONTINUE WORK ON CMP FRAMEWORK AMENDMENT 9 UNTIL THE STOCK ASSESSMENT.

APPROVED BY COMMITTEE

APPROVED BY COUNCIL