

FINAL
SUMMARY REPORT
MACKEREL COBIA COMMITTEE
SOUTH ATLANTIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL
Wrightsville Beach, North Carolina
December 8, 2022

The Committee approved minutes from the September 2022 meeting and the agenda.

Update on amendments recently submitted to NMFS

At the December 2021 meeting, the Council approved CMP Amendment 32 (Gulf cobia catch levels and management measures) for formal review. The Gulf Council approved CMP Amendment 32 for final action at their October 2021 meeting. The document was transmitted to NMFS on February 18, 2022, and the proposed rule published on July 7, 2022. The final rule published on October 21, 2022 and regulations were effective on November 21, 2022. At the March 2022 meeting the Council approved CMP Amendment 34 (Atlantic king mackerel catch levels and management measures) for formal review. The document was transmitted to NMFS on August 5, 2022.

Mackerel Cobia Advisory Panel Report

The Mackerel Cobia Advisory Panel met on October 5th and 6th, 2022 in Charleston, South Carolina. The AP Chair, Ira Laks, provided a summary of Advisory Panel discussion and recommendations on items being discussed at this meeting as well as other items relevant to the Coastal Migratory Pelagics fishery.

CMP Amendment 33 – Updates to Gulf king mackerel management based on SEDAR 38 Update 2020

Staff presented an update on Amendment 33, which would modify sector allocations for Gulf king mackerel. At their October meeting, the Gulf Council passed a motion to stop work on Amendment 33. Additionally, the Gulf Council recommended additional modifications to CMP Fishery Management Plan Objectives. Both councils must concur on the goals and objectives of the CMP FMP before any modifications can be adopted. The Council agreed that it was important to continue discussing the CMP FMP Objectives, but did not want to finalize anything until port meetings had been completed.

Atlantic Spanish Mackerel Management

At the September 2022 meeting, the Council requested the SEFSC rerun the SEDAR 78 assessment model with new landings to address uncertainty with MRIP estimate in the terminal year. The SSC reviewed the changes at their October 2022 meeting. SSC Chair, Jeff Buckel, presented the SSC's recommendations and proposed path forward. Additionally, in September 2022, the Council requested staff apply the allocation decision tool to the Atlantic Spanish mackerel fishery, considering both sector and regional commercial allocations. Staff explained that because catch level recommendations were not provided following the October 2022 SSC meeting, the Atlantic Spanish mackerel annual catch limit (ACL) remained in MRIP CHTS. The data that goes into the allocation decision tool is in MRIP FES, making it challenging to

complete the necessary analyses and interpret the results. The Committee ultimately decided to wait and discuss the allocation decision tool once catch level recommendations are available.

The Committee also expressed their frustration with the Atlantic Spanish mackerel assessment (SEDAR 78) and the importance of having accurate catch level recommendations to move forward with needed management discussions.

MOTION 1: DIRECT THE SSC TO PROVIDE CATCH LEVEL RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ATLANTIC SPANISH MACKEREL AT THEIR APRIL 2023 MEETING, EITHER FROM THE UPDATED ASSESSMENT OR USING A DATA-LIMITED APPROACH. APPROVED BY COUNCIL

Little Tunny White Paper

On September 19, 2022, the Council received a letter from the American Saltwater Guides Association requesting the Council consider re-adding little tunny to the CMP FMP. In response to the letter, the Council directed staff to develop a white paper examining false albacore with respect to the Magnuson Stevens Act criteria for conservation and management. Staff presented the white paper to the Council for discussion.

The Committee provided the following direction to staff:

DIRECTION TO STAFF: HAVE THE AP DEVELOP A FISHERY PERFORMANCE REPORT FOR LITTLE TUNNY EVERY THREE YEARS. IN THE FISHERY OVERVIEW INCLUDE THE FOLLOWING:

- LANDINGS
 - STATE VS. FEDERAL ALONG THE ATLANTIC COAST.
 - INCLUDE INFORMATION ON LANDING SOURCE FOR FEDERAL LANDINGS (MRIP OR LARGE PELAGICS)
 - INTERNATIONAL
- CPUE
- LENGTH DISTRIBUTION

Mackerel Port Meetings

During their October 2022 meeting, the Mackerel Cobia Advisory Panel requested the Council conduct port meetings to gain a comprehensive understanding of the commercial and recreational king and Spanish mackerel fisheries to improve management efforts for these fisheries. Council staff presented a draft plan for conducting port meetings. The Committee was in support of conducting port meetings but did not want them to begin until catch level recommendations for Atlantic Spanish mackerel have been provided.

The Committee provided the following direction to staff:

DIRECTION TO STAFF: BEGIN DEVELOPING A PLAN FOR CONDUCTING PORT MEETINGS.

- INCLUDE THE GULF COUNCIL AND ASMFC IN DISCUSSIONS.
- INCLUDE BOTH THE MID-ATLANTIC AND NEW ENGLAND REGIONS

Other Business

After hearing public comment regarding king mackerel tournaments on Wednesday (December 7, 2022) the Committee requested staff provide information on regulations surrounding fish caught during tournaments in each state and how those fish are accounted for when looking at landings relative to sector annual catch limits.

DIRECTION TO STAFF TO PROVIDE INFORMATION ON HOW KING AND SPANISH TOURNAMENT LANDINGS ARE ADDRESSED.

- REQUEST NMFS PROVIDE THE WEIGHT/NUMBER OF TOURNAMENT FISH OVER THE LAST 10 YEARS.

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 2: ADOPT THE FOLLOWING TIMING AND TASKS:

1. Provide updated landings information and conduct a fishery performance report for little tunny once every three years for review.
2. Begin developing a plan for conducting port meetings along with Atlantic coast, seeking input from the Gulf Council and Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission.
3. Provide a brief summary of federal regulations as they relate to king and Spanish mackerel fishing tournaments and work with NMFS to gather the weight/number of tournament fish over the last ten years.
4. Work with the SSC and SEFSC to provide the information necessary to develop catch level recommendations at the April 2023 SSC meeting.

APPROVED BY COUNCIL