

FINAL
SUMMARY REPORT
MACKEREL COBIA COMMITTEE
SOUTH ATLANTIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL
Saint Augustine, Florida
June 13, 2023

The Committee approved minutes from the March 2023 meeting and the agenda.

Atlantic Spanish Mackerel Stock Assessment (SEDAR 78)

At the March 2023 Council meeting, the Council discussed a letter from the Southeast Fisheries Science Center (SEFSC) stating that the revisions to SEDAR 78 requested by the SSC in January are exploratory in nature and require extensive rework. As such, they cannot be accomplished in a timely fashion. The SEFSC recommended the SSC develop ABC advice based on the current assessment. The SSC met again in April 2023 and determined that SEDAR 78 was sufficient for providing stock status and for providing catch level recommendations using model output but not projections. Dr. Jeff Buckel provided the Committee details of the SSC discussion and catch level recommendations relative to Atlantic Spanish mackerel.

The Committee discussed how to move forward with an amendment to address the new catch level recommendations and possible modifications to management measures for Atlantic Spanish mackerel. The Committee directed staff to begin work on a framework amendment to update catch levels, but to hold off on development of a full plan amendment to address management measures until after mackerel port meetings have been completed.

MOTION 1: DIRECT STAFF TO BEGIN A FRAMEWORK AMENDMENT TO UPDATE ATLANTIC SPANISH MACKEREL CATCH LEVELS BASED ON SEDAR 78 AND SSC RECOMMENDATIONS.

APPROVED BY COMMITTEE

APPROVED BY COUNCIL

Mackerel Advisory Panel Report

The Mackerel Cobia Advisory Panel met on April 21st, 2023 via webinar. The AP Chair, Ira Laks, provided a summary of Advisory Panel discussion and recommendations. The Committee noted the importance of AP member attendance given the critical topics that will be presented to the AP for discussion at upcoming meetings. The importance of attendance will be noted prior to and during the fall AP meeting.

Mackerel Port Meetings

Based on recommendations from the Mackerel Cobia Advisory Panel, the Council directed staff to begin work on a plan to conduct port meetings for king and Spanish mackerel to gain a comprehensive understanding of the fisheries to improve management efforts. Staff presented a discussion document for the Council to review the current CMP FMP goals and objectives, port meeting goals and objectives, draft timeline, and proposed planning team. The Committee provided the following input:

- Gather more information on CMP FMP Objective 6 (minimize waste and bycatch in the fishery) during port meetings. Discuss why king or Spanish mackerel may be discarded by each sector and how stakeholders would like discards to be considered in management.

- Do not present Objective 5 (Atlantic Spanish mackerel allocations) during port meetings because it requests the use of data that is no longer supported, and it is the Council’s intent to remove the objective during the next update.
- Add the following to the goals and objectives for port meetings:
 - Identification of underserved communities and equity and environmental justice concerns.
 - Consideration of interjurisdictional management and cooperation with other councils and the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (ASMFC).
- Consider whether the Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission (GSMFC) may be beneficial partners if port meetings are conducted throughout the Gulf of Mexico.

DIRECTION TO STAFF: DO NOT BRING OBJECTIVE 5 OUT FOR DISCUSSION DURING PORT MEETINGS AS IT IS NO LONGER A VIABLE OBJECTIVE.

DIRECTION TO STAFF: ESTABLISH A PORT MEETING PLANNING TEAM AS DESCRIBED IN THE DISCUSSION DOCUMENT.

King Mackerel Tournament Landings

At their December 2022 meeting the Council requested NMFS provide information on king and Spanish mackerel tournament landings over the last ten years and how those landings were accounted for against the annual catch limit. The SEFSC worked with the state agencies to provide these landings and present them to the Council. The Committee provided the following input:

- The Committee would like more information on what charities are receiving money through the sale of donated tournament fish.
- Stakeholders have expressed concerns to the Committee about the king mackerel stock and the role tournaments may be playing in fishery. The Committee requested that the Mackerel Cobia AP discuss these tournaments, their importance to communities and how the sale of fish from these tournaments affects their fishing activities.

Topics for the Fall Mackerel Cobia Advisory Panel Meeting

The Mackerel Cobia Advisory Panel (AP) is scheduled to meet in Charleston, SC this fall. The Committee approved the following topics for discussion:

- Atlantic Spanish mackerel catch level recommendations,
- Mackerel Port Meetings,
- King mackerel tournament landings,
- Citizen Science update,
- Atlantic king mackerel fishery performance report update.

The Committee also noted that the fall meeting may be an appropriate time for the ASMFC’s Spanish mackerel AP to meet jointly with the Council’s Mackerel Cobia AP.

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 2: ADOPT THE FOLLOWING TIMING AND TASKS:

1. Begin work on a framework amendment to update Atlantic Spanish mackerel catch levels based on SEDAR 78 and SSC recommendations.
2. Continue development of port meetings including organizing a planning team to facilitate collaboration with other councils and commissions.
3. Convene an in-person meeting of the Mackerel Cobia AP this fall to discuss the topics listed above and note the importance of attendance.

APPROVED BY COUNCIL