

FINAL
SUMMARY REPORT
MACKEREL COBIA COMMITTEE
SOUTH ATLANTIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL
Beaufort, North Carolina
December 5, 2023

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

Mackerel Cobia Advisory Panel Report

The Mackerel Cobia Advisory Panel met on November 7th and 8th, 2023 in Charleston, South Carolina. The AP Chair, Ira Laks, provided a summary of Advisory Panel discussion and recommendations. The Committee expressed their appreciation of the advisory panels' in-depth discussions and indicated that they would ask for input on recreational permitting and reporting, tournament sales, and for-hire limited entry during the mackerel port meetings process.

CMP Framework Amendment 13

Catch level recommendations for Atlantic Spanish mackerel based on SEDAR 78 were provided to the Council in June 2023 and the Council directed staff to begin work on a framework amendment to update catch levels to be consistent with the recommendations. SEDAR 78 includes revised recreational landings that are based on the Marine Recreational Information Program's (MRIP) newer Fishing Effort Survey (FES) method.

Staff presented an options paper with a draft action and alternative language as well as analysis on when the proposed annual catch limits and quotas are anticipated to be met and the number of Atlantic Spanish mackerel landed recreationally per person and per vessel.

The following motions were approved:

**MOTION 1: ADD AN ACTION TO FRAMEWORK AMENDMENT 13 TO CONSIDER MODIFICATION TO THE LONG-TERM OY FOR ATLANTIC SPANISH MACKEREL.
APPROVED BY COMMITTEE
APPROVED BY COUNCIL**

**MOTION 2: ADD AN ACTION TO FRAMEWORK AMENDMENT 13 TO INCLUDE IN-SEASON AND POST-SEASON ACCOUNTABILITY MEASURES FOR THE RECREATIONAL SECTOR.
APPROVED BY COMMITTEE
APPROVED BY COUNCIL**

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 the Committee with a draft structure for port meetings and tentative meeting locations.

The Committee provided the following input on meeting structure:

- One of the Councils goals for Mackerel Port Meetings is to identify underserved communities and address equity and environmental justice concerns. To achieve this goal, staff should consider either adding an additional breakout group on this topic or ensuring that the topic is brought up within the context of other breakout groups.
- It will be important to provide stakeholders with information on port meetings in advance of the meeting so that they can come prepared to provide information on what they want to see come out of Mackerel Port Meetings.

The Committee modified the tentative meeting locations, as follows:

- Hold meetings in both Wanchese and Hatteras, North Carolina.
- Consider holding meetings in Port Judith, Rhode Island (as opposed to Newport, Rhode Island) and New Bedford, Massachusetts (as opposed to Barnstable, Massachusetts).
- Hold a meeting in Pooler, Georgia (as opposed to Hilton Head, South Carolina) and consider holding meetings in Charleston, South Carolina and Murrell's Inlet, South Carolina (as opposed to Georgetown, South Carolina).
- Consider holding a meeting in central New Jersey (as opposed to Cape May, New Jersey).
- When scheduling port meetings, make all efforts to avoid overlapping with scheduled saltwater fishing tournaments.
- There are several national seashores along the coast who might be helpful when trying to conduct outreach on port meetings.

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 3: ADOPT THE FOLLOWING TIMING AND TASKS:

1. Ask the Law Enforcement Advisory Panel to provide input on the sale of tournament caught Atlantic king and Spanish mackerel.
2. Continue work on CMP Framework Amendment 13, bring an updated decision document to the March 2024 Council meeting.
3. Continue development of Mackerel Port Meetings, bringing a final plan for Council approval and implementation to the March 2024 Council meeting.