

**FINAL**  
**SUMMARY REPORT**  
**MACKEREL COBIA COMMITTEE**  
**SOUTH ATLANTIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL**  
**Cape Canaveral, Florida**  
**June 10, 2025**

The Committee approved the minutes from the March 2025 meeting and the agenda.

**Mackerel Cobia Advisory Panel Report**

The Mackerel Cobia Advisory Panel met in Charleston, South Carolina, on March 31 and April 1, 2025. Advisory Panel Chair, Thomas Newman, provided a summary of meeting discussions and recommendations.

**Gulf Council CMP Stakeholder Engagement Effort**

The Gulf Council held three public virtual seminars in the fall of 2024 which specifically addressed issues related to Spanish mackerel, king mackerel, and cobia. The engagement questions asked during the virtual seminars were also asked during the February 2024 CMP and December 2024 Reef Fish advisory panel meetings. The purpose of these engagement sessions was to gather feedback from industry stakeholders on the health and status of CMP stocks as a complementary effort to the South Atlantic Council's Mackerel Port Meetings. Emily Muehlstein, Gulf Council staff, provided a summary of the stakeholder feedback collected.

**Mackerel Port Meetings Next Steps**

In 2024, at the urging of their Mackerel Cobia Advisory Panel, the Council hosted a series of 16 in-person and six virtual port meetings along the Atlantic coast. Port meetings attendees discussed their perspectives with other fishery participants and local Council members. In March 2025, Council staff reviewed the draft report and high-level themes from this effort. The Council requested detailed information from port meetings on a suite of management options to be brought to the June 2025 meeting. Council staff presented this information in addition to a refresher on the results of SEDAR 78 (Atlantic Spanish mackerel).

The Committee provided the following directions for staff:

**DIRECTION TO STAFF:** POSTPONE WORK ON FRAMEWORK AMENDMENT 13 UNTIL THE RESULTS OF THE FES PILOT STUDY ARE RECEIVED AND WORK WITH THE SEFSC TO SEE IF THE NEXT ATLANTIC SPANISH MACKEREL ASSESSMENT CAN OCCUR SOONER IN THE SEDAR SCHEDULE.

**DIRECTION TO STAFF:** CONSIDER RECOMMENDATIONS FROM PORT MEETINGS IN CONJUNCTION WITH AN UPDATED ATLANTIC SPANISH MACKEREL STOCK ASSESSMENT.

**DIRECTION TO STAFF:** BEGIN TO LOOK AT THE POTENTIAL PORT MEETING RESPONSE ACTIONS AS REGULATORY VS DEREGULATORY, BRING THIS BACK TO THE COMMITTEE ONCE THE FES PILOT STUDY IS AVAILABLE.

Additionally, it was noted that North Carolina Division of Marine Fisheries and Florida Fish and Wildlife Commission will continue to communicate and better coordinate on the potential for yearly commercial quota transfers for Atlantic Spanish mackerel between the Northern Zone and Southern Zone.

### **Other Business**

The Committee acknowledged that the Mackerel Cobia AP requested to discuss conservation and management needs for Atlantic bonito. However, the Committee felt that the South Atlantic Council may not be the ideal management body for Atlantic bonito. Additionally, the Committee noted that the Council has limited resources and is currently responding to several recent executive orders aimed at reducing burdens on domestic fishing and increasing production.

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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 1:** ADOPT THE FOLLOWING TIMING AND TASKS:

1. Work with the SEFSC to see if the next Atlantic Spanish mackerel assessment can occur sooner than currently proposed in the SEDAR schedule.
2. Look at the potential port meeting response actions to determine if they are regulatory vs. deregulatory. Bring this information to the Mackerel Committee once the FES pilot study is available.

APPROVED BY COUNCIL