



# SOUTH ATLANTIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

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Jessica McCawley, Chair | Mell Bell, Vice Chair  
Gregg T. Waugh, Executive Director

## AGENDA Mackerel Cobia Committee

Westin Jekyll Island  
110 Ocean Way  
Jekyll Island, GA 31527

**Wednesday, March 6, 2019 – 1:30 P.M. – 3:45 P.M. (Times subject to change)**

Approval of Agenda – Doug Haymans

Approval of October 2018 Committee minutes – Doug Haymans

1. Status of Commercial Catches vs. ACLs – Rick DeVactor, NMFS SERO (*Attachment 1*)
2. Status of Amendments under Formal Review – Rick DeVactor, NMFS SERO
  - a. CMP Amendment 31 (Atlantic cobia) – sent to NMFS on 7/13/2018
  - b. CMP Framework 6 (King mackerel trip limits) – sent to NMFS 11/9/2018
3. King mackerel commercial trip limits in the Atlantic southern zone during season two (*Attachments 2a and 2b*).
  - a. Overview – Christina Wiegand
  - b. **Committee Action:** Discuss and take action as needed – Doug Haymans
4. Spanish mackerel closures in the Atlantic northern zone (*Attachments 3a and 3b*).
  - a. Overview – Christina Wiegand
  - b. **Committee Action:** Discuss and take action as needed – Doug Haymans
5. CMP Framework Amendment 7 (Modifications to Gulf cobia size limits) (*Attachment 4*).
  - a. Overview – Christina Wiegand
  - b. **Committee Action:** Discuss and take action as needed – Doug Haymans
6. Discussion of Agenda Items for Mackerel Cobia Advisory Panel Meeting (*Attachment 5*)
  - a. Overview – Christina Wiegand
  - b. **Committee Action:** Action as needed – Doug Haymans

Other Business – Doug Haymans

Adjourn – Doug Haymans

### **Committee Members**

Doug Haymans, Chair  
Steve Poland, Vice-Chair  
Robert Beal  
Anna Beckwith  
Mel Bell  
Roy Crabtree  
Tim Griner  
Jessica McCawley  
Spud Woodward  
Rob O'Reilly, Mid-Atlantic Liaison  
Dewey Hemilright, Mid-Atlantic Liaison  
Tony DiLernia, Mid-Atlantic Liaison

### **Attachments**

**Attachment 1:** NMFS SERO Commercial ACL Report for CMP species.

**Attachment 2a:** Atlantic king mackerel summary.

**Attachment 2b:** Atlantic king mackerel Fishery Performance Report.

**Attachment 3a:** Atlantic Spanish mackerel summary.

**Attachment 3b:** Atlantic Spanish mackerel Fishery Performance Report.

**Attachment 4:** CMP Framework Amendment 7 (Gulf cobia).

**Attachment 5:** Mackerel Cobia Advisory Panel Meeting Report, April 2018.

**Staff:** Christina Wiegand

# **OVERVIEW**

## **Mackerel and Cobia Committee**

The Committee will approve of minutes from October 2018 meeting and the agenda for the March 2019 Committee meeting.

**1. Status of commercial catches vs. ACLs – (*Attachment 1*)**

**Description:** The Committee will receive an update on commercial landings for Atlantic king mackerel, Atlantic Spanish mackerel, and Atlantic and Florida east coast zone cobia.

**Committee Action:** None required.

**2. Status of amendments submitted for formal review**

**Description:** SERO staff will brief the Committee on the status of CMP Amendment 31 (Atlantic cobia management) which was submitted for formal review on July 13, 2018 and CMP Framework Amendment 6 (King mackerel trip limits) which as submitted for formal review on November 9, 2018.

**Committee Action:** None required.

**3. King mackerel commercial trip limits in the Atlantic southern zone during season two (*Attachments 2a and 2b*)**

**Description:** Fishermen in Florida and the Mackerel Cobia Advisory Panel have expressed concerns about the low commercial trip limit in the Atlantic Southern Zone during season two (October to the end of February). During the winter months, fishermen are only able to fish a small number of days due to the weather. Additionally, due to changes in the fishery, more fish are on the market during this time of the year, resulting in lower prices. When the weather is decent, AP members feel it would be helpful if fishermen had access to a higher trip limit to make trips worthwhile. Current season two trip limits are as follows:

- **North** of the Flagler/Volusia line: 3,500 pounds year-round.
- **South** of the Flagler/Volusia line to the Miami-Dade/Monroe line:
  - *October 1 – January 31 (Season 2):* 50-fish
  - *February 1 – end of February (Season 2):* 50-fish, unless NMFS determines that less than 70% of the Season 2 quota has been landed, then, 75-fish.

**Committee Action:** Discuss and take action as needed.

**4. Spanish mackerel closures in the Atlantic northern zone (*Attachments 3a and 3b*)**

**Description:** The Mackerel Cobia Advisory Panel has expressed concern about increased participation in the commercial Spanish mackerel fishery. Additionally, stakeholders have expressed concerns about early closures in the Atlantic northern zone (NY through NC) and the potential for closures in the southern zone. During the 2017-2018 fishing season, the southern zone (SC to the Miami-Dade/Monroe County line) transferred 100,000 pounds of quota to the northern zone. Nonetheless, the northern zone closed to commercial harvest of Spanish mackerel on November 7, 2018. During the 2018-2019 season there was not transfer of quota between zones. The northern zone closed on November 4, 2018 and the southern zone closed on February 5, 2019. The fishing season for Spanish mackerel runs from March 1<sup>st</sup> to the end of February.

**Committee Action:** Discuss and take action as needed.

**5. CMP Framework Amendment 7 (Modifications to Gulf cobia size limits) (Attachment 4)**

**Description:** The Gulf migratory group of cobia occurs from Texas to the Florida/Georgia state line. Each Council manages Gulf cobia within their respective jurisdictions. Anglers attending Gulf Council meetings have been reporting a decrease in the presence of cobia and asked the Gulf Council to address this as a potential problem with the status of the Gulf cobia stock. To address those concerns, the Gulf Council developed CMP Framework Amendment 7 and approved it for formal review at their October 2018 meeting. If approved by the Secretary of Commerce, CMP Framework Amendment 7 will increase the recreational and commercial minimum size limit for Gulf cobia from 33 inches fork length (FL) to 36 inches FL in the Gulf Council's jurisdictional area. Currently, the minimum size limit for Gulf cobia off the east coast of Florida (South Atlantic Council jurisdiction) is 33 inches FL.

**Committee Action:** Discuss and take action as needed.

**6. Discussion of Agenda Items for Mackerel Cobia Advisory Panel Meeting (Attachment 5)**

**Description:** The Committee will discuss when to hold the next Mackerel Cobia Advisory Panel meeting. Additionally, in order to optimize the level of input the Council desires from its advisory panels, the Committee is asked to provide guidance on items to include on the next Mackerel Cobia Advisory Panel agenda.

**Committee Action:** Discuss and provide guidance to staff.

**Other Business**