



SOUTH ATLANTIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

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Charlie Phillips, Chair | Captain Mark Brown, Vice Chair
Gregg T. Waugh, Executive Director

AGENDA

Mackerel Cobia Advisory Panel and Cobia Sub-Panel

Crowne Plaza Hotel
4831 Tanger Outlet Boulevard
North Charleston, SC

Other than the starting and ending times of the meeting, times indicated on the agenda are approximate, and the order of business may be adjusted as necessary to accommodate the completion of agenda items. Interested parties should be aware that discussions may start earlier or later than indicated.

Public comment will be solicited at the beginning and at the end of the meeting. Those wishing to comment should indicate such in the manner requested by the Chair, who will then recognize individuals to provide comment.

Monday, April 16, 2018 – 8:30 A.M. to 5:00 P.M.

Tuesday, April 17, 2018 – 8:30 A.M. to 1:00 P.M.

Approval of Agenda – Ira Laks

Approval of April 2017 AP minutes – Ira Laks

1. Update on CMP Amendments under development (*Attachment 1a-1b*)
 - a. Framework Amendment 6 (King mackerel trip limits)
 - b. Amendment 31 (Atlantic cobia management)
 - c. Discuss and provide recommendations, as appropriate – Ira Laks
2. Update on SEDAR Stock ID Workshop for Atlantic cobia (*Attachment 2a-2b*) – Julia Byrd, SEDAR Staff
3. SEAMAP Coastal Trawl Survey Update (*Attachment 3*) – Dr. Tracey Smart
4. United States Coast Guard Enforcement Priorities
 - a. Overview – USCG Representative
 - b. Discuss and provide recommendations, as appropriate – Ira Laks
5. Regulatory reform for CMP species (*Attachment 4*).
 - a. Overview – Brian Chevront
 - b. Discuss and provide recommendations, as appropriate – Ira Laks

6. Fishery Performance Reports (*Attachments 5a-6b*)
 - a. Overview of king mackerel information document and questionnaire – Christina Wiegand
 - i. Discuss and provide recommendations, as appropriate – Ira Laks
 - b. Overview of Spanish mackerel information document and questionnaire – Christina Wiegand
 - i. Discuss and provide recommendations, as appropriate – Ira Laks
7. Spanish mackerel gill net size and measurement recommendations
 - a. Overview – Christina Wiegand
 - b. Discuss and provide recommendations, as appropriate – Ira Laks
8. Citizen Science research needs (*Attachment 7*)
 - a. Overview – Amber Von Harten
 - b. Discuss and provide recommendations, as appropriate – Ira Laks

Other Business – Ira Laks

Adjourn – Ira Laks

Advisory Panel Members:

Ira Laks, Chair
 Stephen Swann, Vice Chair
 Stephen Donalson
 Steve English
 Skip Feller
 Ryan Howard
 Bill Kelly

Robert Olsen
 Greg Peralta
 Gary Robinson
 Tom Roller
 Randy McKinley
 Keith Bowen
 Dr. Chris Elkins

Cobia Sub-Panel Members:

Wes Blow
 Bill Gorham
 Bill Weeks
 Patrick Link
 Collins Doughtie

Attachments

Attachment 1a: CMP Amendment 31 Summary

Attachment 1b: CMP Framework Amendment 6 Summary

Attachment 2a: Introduction to SEDAR Presentation

Attachment 2b: SEDAR Updates

Attachment 3: SEAMAP Coastal Trawl Survey Presentation

Attachment 4: CMP Regulations Recommended for Removal

Attachment 5a: King Mackerel Information Document

Attachment 5b: King Mackerel Discussion Questions

Attachment 6a: Spanish Mackerel Information Document

Attachment 6b: Spanish Mackerel Discussion Questions

Attachment 7: Citizen Science Research Needs Draft Document

Staff: Christina Wiegand

OVERVIEW

Mackerel Cobia Advisory Panel and Cobia Sub-Panel

The Committee will approve of minutes from April 2017 meeting and agenda.

1. **Update on recent Coastal Migratory Pelagics amendments – (*Attachment 1a-1b*)**

Description: Council staff will brief the AP and Sub-Panel on developing amendments.

Framework Amendment 6 (King mackerel trip limits): The new regulations for king mackerel established in CMP Amendment 26 became effective on May 11, 2017, including updated commercial trip limits for the Atlantic Southern zone. Stakeholders and the AP/Sub-Panel have recommended that the Council consider revising the trip limits to allow for a higher trip limit north of the Volusia/Brevard county line, which would mirror trip limits prior to Amendment 26. To address those trip limits, the Council approved CMP Framework Amendment 6 for scoping at the March 2018 Council meeting. The Council received several comments both online and during public comment at the meeting in support of moving forward with the framework amendment. Based on those comments, the Council directed staff to continue developing the amendment for review at the June 2018 meeting.

Amendment 31 (Atlantic cobia management): At their June 2017 meeting, the Council directed staff to begin work on a plan amendment to address Atlantic cobia and evaluate options for a complementary plan with the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (ASMFC) as well as removal of Atlantic cobia from the federal management unit. In December 2017, the Council reviewed a draft document and selected their preferred alternative: remove Atlantic migratory group cobia from the Coastal Migratory Pelagics Fishery Management Plan. At their March 2018 meeting, the Council discussed enforcement of Atlantic cobia in federal waters under the preferred alternative and the timing for Amendment 31 relative to the upcoming Stock ID Workshop for Atlantic cobia. The Council decided to delay taking final action on the amendment until the June 2018 meeting when preliminary results from the Stock ID Workshop would be available for consideration. They have also requested more information regarding how ASMFC intends to handle regulations in federal waters under the preferred alternative.

Required Advisory Panel Action: Provide input as appropriate.

2. **Update on SEDAR Stock ID Workshop for Atlantic cobia – (*Attachment 2*)**

Description: In May 2017, the SEDAR Steering Committee recommended conducting a Benchmark Assessment for Atlantic cobia, which will include a Stock ID evaluation process to develop stock structure recommendations in advance of the Data Workshop. The Stock ID evaluation is a multi-step process that includes the Gulf Council, South Atlantic Council, Mid-Atlantic Council, and Atlantic States Commission.

The Stock ID process will include a Stock ID Workshop (April 10-12, 2018) and a Stock ID Review Workshop (June 5-7, 2018), with the final Stock ID resolution complete by the end of August 2018. The Stock ID Workshop will review all available data on cobia stock structure and develop recommendations on biological and assessment unit stock(s). The

Stock ID Review Workshop will provide an independent peer review of the Stock ID Workshop recommendations. SEDAR staff will provide an update on the Stock ID Workshop.

Planning for the remaining stages of the assessment (Data, Assessment, and Review) is underway now. The SSC will be asked to review a schedule and Terms of Reference at its May 2018 meeting, and the SAFMC will be asked to make appointments and approvals at their June 2018 meeting. The tentative schedule has the remaining stages of the assessment taking place in late 2018 through 2019 with results available to the Council in late-2019 or mid-2020.

SEDAR staff would like to identify potential Mackerel Cobia AP members or other stakeholders who may be interested in participating in the remaining stages of this assessment.

Required Advisory Panel Action: None.

3. **SEAMAP Coastal Trawl Survey Update – (Attachment 3)**

Description: Dr. Tracey Smart will deliver a presentation summarizing trends in abundance of king and Spanish mackerel sampled through the SEAMAP-SA Coastal Trawl Survey.

Required Advisory Panel Action: None.

4. **United States Coast Guard enforcement priorities**

Description: Representatives from the U.S. Coast Guard (USCG) Sector Charleston, contacted Council staff in late 2017 to request input on law enforcement priorities for fisheries under the Council's jurisdiction, particularly off the South Carolina and Georgia coasts. AP members are encouraged to provide information, such as specific areas of high fishing activity and/or timeframes, that would assist the USCG to focus enforcement efforts related to Living Marine Resources (LMR). A USCG representative will provide a brief overview and request specific input from the AP.

Required Advisory Panel Action: Provide input as appropriate.

5. **Regulatory reform for CMP species – (Attachment 4)**

Description: On February 24, 2017 the President issued Executive Order 13777 as part of efforts to lower regulatory burdens on the American people by implementing and enforcing regulatory reform. The NMFS requested that each of the fishery management councils identify a process to review/evaluate existing regulations by the end of December 2017. Each Council is to conduct the review/evaluation and provide recommendations on rules to be removed by the end of June 2018. The Council is reaching out to all its APs to get their recommendations. Attachment 4 contains the initial attempts by Council staff to identify regulations that could be considered for removal.

Required Advisory Panel Action: Provide input on Coastal Migratory Pelagics regulations that may be outdated or unnecessary.

6. **Fishery Performance Reports – (Attachments 5a-6b)**

Description: The intent of the Fishery Performance Reports (FPRs) is to assemble information from AP members' experience and observations on the water and in the

marketplace to complement scientific and landings data. The FPRs will be provided to the Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC), the Socio-Economic Panel (SEP), and the Council to assist in their discussions. With input from the AP, a FPRs was completed for Atlantic cobia last year. During this meeting AP members will be asked to provide input on FPRs for king mackerel and Spanish mackerel.

Required Advisory Panel Action: Provide input for development of FPRs.

7. **Spanish mackerel gill net size and measurement recommendations**

Description: The minimum mesh size for Spanish mackerel gillnets is 3.5 inches (8.9 cm), stretched mesh. At the April 2017 meeting, the AP and Sub-Panel discussed revising the minimum mesh size, and ways to clarify/standardize how mesh size is measured. It was noted that the mesh size specification was put into place when there were no trip limits and no quotas in place, and that there is now a minimum size limit of 12 inches. Because there have been changes in the fishery over the years, the way that mesh size is measured requires a tool that may or may not be available. Clarification of the mesh size requirements and standardization of how mesh is measured will be discussed with the Law Enforcement AP at their April 2018 meeting.

Required Advisory Panel Action: Provide input for discussion with Law Enforcement AP.

8. **Citizen Science research priorities – (Attachment 7)**

Description: As part of the Council’s Citizen Science program development efforts, the Citizen Science Action teams have been working on developing different components of the program including how to establish appropriate topics and research ideas that could be addressed using citizen science. To help outline citizen science topics and research ideas for the Program, the Teams used the Council’s Research & Monitoring Plan to inform the development of a draft Citizen Science Research Needs document. The draft document outlines specific topics and research needs for projects developed under the Program. Staff will review how the document was developed, its intended use, and the content of the document. The AP will have an opportunity to provide feedback and guidance on additional topics/research needs to be considered for inclusion in the document.

Required Advisory Panel Action: Provide input as appropriate.