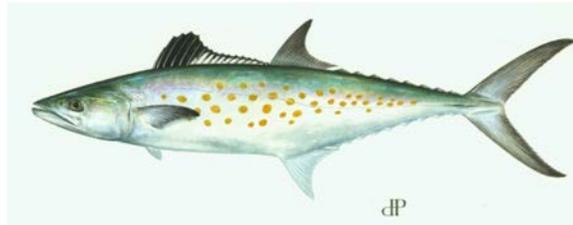


DECISION DOCUMENT

for

SOUTH ATLANTIC and GULF COASTAL MIGRATORY PELAGICS JOINT FRAMEWORK ACTIONS 2014



**Wilmington, NC
December 2013**

Framework Actions

1. Modify the Annual Catch Limit (ACL) for Atlantic migratory group Spanish mackerel
2. Modify the Annual Catch Limit (ACL) for Gulf migratory group Spanish mackerel

Expected Schedule

December 2013 – South Atlantic Council approves for scoping

January 2014 – Scoping meetings

February 2014 – Gulf Council reviews

March 2014 – South Atlantic Council approves for Secretarial Review

April 2014 - Gulf Council approves for Secretarial Review

Summer 2014 - Implementation

The current management objectives in the joint mackerel FMP as amended are:

1. The primary objective of this FMP is to stabilize yield at MSY, allow recovery of overfished populations, and maintain population levels sufficient to ensure adequate recruitment.
2. to provide a flexible management system for the resource which minimizes regulatory delay while retaining substantial Council and public input in management decisions and which can rapidly adapt to changes in resource abundance, new scientific information, and changes in fishing patterns among user groups or by areas.
3. to provide necessary information for effective management and establish a mandatory reporting system for monitoring catch.
4. to minimize gear and user group conflicts.
5. to distribute the TAC of Atlantic migratory group Spanish mackerel between recreational and commercial user groups based on the catches that occurred during the early to mid-1970s, which is prior to the development of the deep water run-around gillnet fishery and when the resource was not overfished.
6. to minimize waste and bycatch in the fishery.
7. to provide appropriate management to address specific migratory groups of king mackerel.

Purpose for Actions

The purpose of this amendment is to revise the ACLs for Atlantic migratory group Spanish mackerel and Gulf migratory group Spanish mackerel based on the results of the stock assessment completed in 2012.

Need for Actions

The need for this amendment is to ensure the annual catch limits are based on the best available and most recent information, and ensure overfishing does not occur in the coastal migratory pelagics fishery.

Committee Actions

- 1) Modify the draft Purpose and Need as necessary.
- 2) Approve the Purpose and Need.

Action 1. Modify the Annual Catch Limit (ACL) for Atlantic migratory group Spanish mackerel

Alternative 1 (No Action). Retain the ACL, OY and ACT for Atlantic migratory group Spanish mackerel:

Current ABC = 5,690,000 lbs ww, recommended by the SSC based on the third highest point over a ten-year period (equivalent to the 80th percentile) for the time series ranging from 1999-2008. The recreational ACT equals sector ACL[(1-PSE) or 0.5, whichever is greater. Where PSE is an average from MRFSS based on landings in weight from 2005-2009.

ACL = OY = ABC = 5,690,000 lbs ww
Commercial ACL (55%) = 3,130,000 lbs ww
Recreational ACL (45%) = 2,560,000 lbs ww
Recreational ACT = 2,320,000 lbs ww

Alternative 2. Revise the ACL (including sector ACLs) and ACT for Atlantic migratory group Spanish mackerel for 2014 and 2015. The ABC recommended by the SSC is 6,063,000 lbs (ww). Set ACL = ABC, and the recreational ACT = ACL[(1-PSE) or 0.5, whichever is greater. The ABC, ACL, and recreational ACT values are based on landed catch only; discards are accounted for in specifying the ABC in terms of landed catch and not total kill. The average PSE from MRIP for 2005-2009 is 13.34. The values would remain until modified.

ACL = OY = ABC = 6,063,000 lbs ww
Commercial ACL (55%) = 3,330,000 lbs ww
Recreational ACL (45%) = 2,727,000 lbs ww
Recreational ACT = 2,363,218 lbs ww

Alternative 3. Revise the ACL (including sector ACLs), OY and ACT for Atlantic migratory group Spanish mackerel for 2014 and 2015. The ABC recommended by the SSC is 6,060,000 lbs (ww). Set ACL = ABC, and the recreational ACT = ACL[(1-PSE) or 0.5, whichever is greater. The ABC, ACL, and recreational ACT values are based on landed catch only; discards are accounted for in specifying the ABC in terms of landed catch and not total kill. The average PSE from MRIP for 2005-2009 is 13.34. The values would remain until modified.

Option a. ACL = OY = 90% ABC = 5,450,000 lbs ww
Commercial ACL (55%) = 2,999,700 lbs ww
Recreational ACL (45%) = 2,454,300 lbs ww
Recreational ACT = 2,126,896 lbs ww

Option b. ACL = OY = 80% ABC = 4,848,000 lbs ww
Commercial ACL (55%) = 2,666,400 lbs ww
Recreational ACL (45%) = 2,181,600 lbs ww
Recreational ACT = 1,890,575 lbs ww

At the June 2013 Council meeting, the SSC provided their recommendation to use 5-year projections at P*=50% for OFL and at P*=40% for ABC. When the South Atlantic Council received the projections from the Southeast Fisheries Science Center (SEFSC) at the June 2013 meeting, the South Atlantic Council approved the following motion to request the SSC review the Spanish mackerel projections and

revisit the recommendations for OFL and ABC. The Council asked the SSC to consider basing OFL and ABC on equilibrium projections of Maximum Sustainable Yield (MSY), in light of effects of selectivity and recruitment patterns on short-term yield estimates. Additional language was added to provide guidance and clarification to the SSC: ‘Considering the high degree of confidence that the stock is not only not-overfished nor undergoing overfishing, but that current biomass is high ($SSB/MSST = 2.29$) and exploitation is low ($F/F_{msy} = 0.53$) and that the stock has not experienced overfishing over the assessment period, the Council believes that use of a less risk-averse reference point such as the equilibrium MSY, (6.063 mp) as OFL for 2013-2015 is justified. Due to the exploitation history and stock status, the Council believes such a reference point does not significantly increase the probability of overfishing during these years’.

In October 2013 the SSC provided the following values for OFL and ABC for Atlantic group Spanish mackerel:

Year	OFL (Landings- lbs ww)	ABC (Landings- lbs ww)
2014	7,030,000	6,063,000
2015	6,620,000	6,063,000
2016	6,519,000	6,063,000

Upon submission and approval of Amendment 20B, the Atlantic group Spanish mackerel commercial ACL would be allocated to the Northern Zone (north of the NC/SC line) and Southern Zone. The alternatives above would result in the following allocations:

Alternative 2. ACL = ABC = 6,063,000 lbs (ww)
 Commercial ACL (55%) = 3,334,560 lbs
 Northern Zone ACL (21%) = 700,277 lbs
 Southern Zone ACL (79%) = 2,634,374 lbs

Alternative 3.
 Option a. ACL = 90% ABC = 5,456,700 lbs (ww)
 Commercial ACL (55%) = 3,001,185 lbs
 Northern Zone ACL (21%) = 630,249 lbs
 Southern Zone ACL (79%) = 2,370,936 lbs

Option b. ACL = 80% ABC = 4,850,400 lbs (ww)
 Commercial ACL (55%) = 2,667,720 lbs
 Northern Zone ACL (21%) = 560,221 lbs
 Southern Zone ACL (79%) = 2,107,499 lbs

Committee Actions

- 1) Select alternatives to include in Action 1, revise language as needed, and approve the alternatives for Action 1.
- 2) Does the Committee want to select a preferred alternative/option?

Action 2. Modify the Acceptable Biological Catch (ABC) and Annual Catch Limit (ACL) for Gulf migratory group Spanish mackerel

Alternative 1 (No Action). Retain the current ABC and ACL for Gulf of Mexico migratory group Spanish mackerel:

Current ABC = 5,150,000 lbs ww.

ACL=ABC=5,150,000 lbs ww (commercial and recreational sectors combined into a single Gulf-wide ACL in CMP Amendment 18 [GMFMC/SAFMC 2011])

Alternative 2. Revise ABC and ACL (including sector ACLs) for Gulf of Mexico migratory group Spanish mackerel for 2014 through 2016 as shown below, and set ACL=ABC=OY.

Table 2.2. ABC/ACLs for 2014-2016 from the SEDAR 28 Gulf Spanish mackerel stock assessment and the Gulf Council/SSC-approved projections for Gulf of Mexico migratory group Spanish mackerel. ‘WW’ = whole weight, and ‘mp’ = million pounds.

Year	ABC ww	Total ACL ww
2014	12.7 mp	12.7 mp
2015	11.8 mp	11.8 mp
2016	11.3 mp	11.3 mp

Alternative 3. Set the ACL (including sector ACLs) for Gulf of Mexico migratory group Spanish mackerel for 2014 through 2016 at 75% of the ABC.

Table 2.3. ABC/ACLs for 2014-2016 from the SEDAR 28 Gulf Spanish mackerel stock assessment and the Gulf Council/SSC-approved projections for Gulf of Mexico migratory group Spanish mackerel. ‘WW’ = whole weight, and ‘mp’ = million pounds.

Year	ABC ww	Total ACL ww
2014	12.7 mp	9.525 mp
2015	11.8 mp	8.85 mp
2016	11.3 mp	8.475 mp

Approve for Public Hearings

- 1) Approve the amendment for public hearings to be held in January 2014.
- 2) Discuss Mid-Atlantic hearing options.