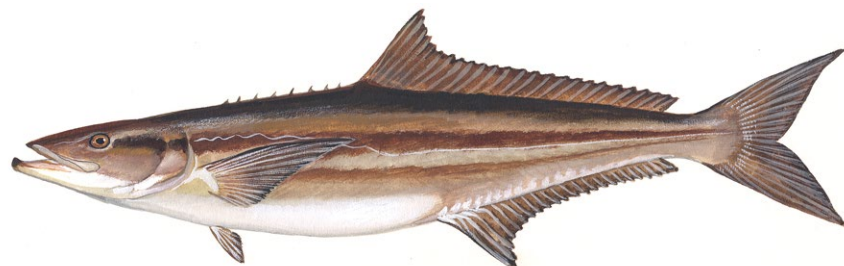




Atlantic Cobia FMP Review: Fishing Year 2022



Coastal Pelagics Management Board
August 2, 2023

Overview



1. Status of the Fishery Management Plan
2. Status of the Stock
3. Status of the Fishery
4. Implementation of Compliance Requirements
5. PRT Comments and Recommendations

Status of the FMP



- **Amendment 1 (2019) and Addendum I (2020)**
- Sole management of Atlantic cobia by ASMFC
- 2021-2023 Total Harvest Quota: 80,112 fish
- Allocation: 96% recreational; 4% commercial

- Commercial
 - 33” FL or 37” TL minimum size
 - 2 per person; 6 per vessel
 - Non-*de minimis* states monitor commercial landings in-season against commercial closure trigger
 - Sets aside 4% of commercial quota for *de minimis* states

Status of the FMP



- Recreational
 - 36” FL or 40” TL minimum size
 - 1 per person; 6 per vessel
 - Recreational quota allocated to state harvest targets (*non-de minimis* only)
 - States evaluate average harvest against target during specifications process
 - 1% designated for *de minimis*
 - Recreational *de minimis*
 - Adopt same measures as nearest *non-de minimis* state; OR
 - 33” FL or 37” TL; 1 fish per vessel

Status of the Stock



- SEDAR 58 (2020) with terminal year 2017
- Atlantic cobia not overfished and overfishing not occurring
- Next SEDAR assessment tentatively in 2025 (terminal year of 2023 or 2024)

Note: Atlantic cobia stock extends from Georgia north

Status of the Fishery



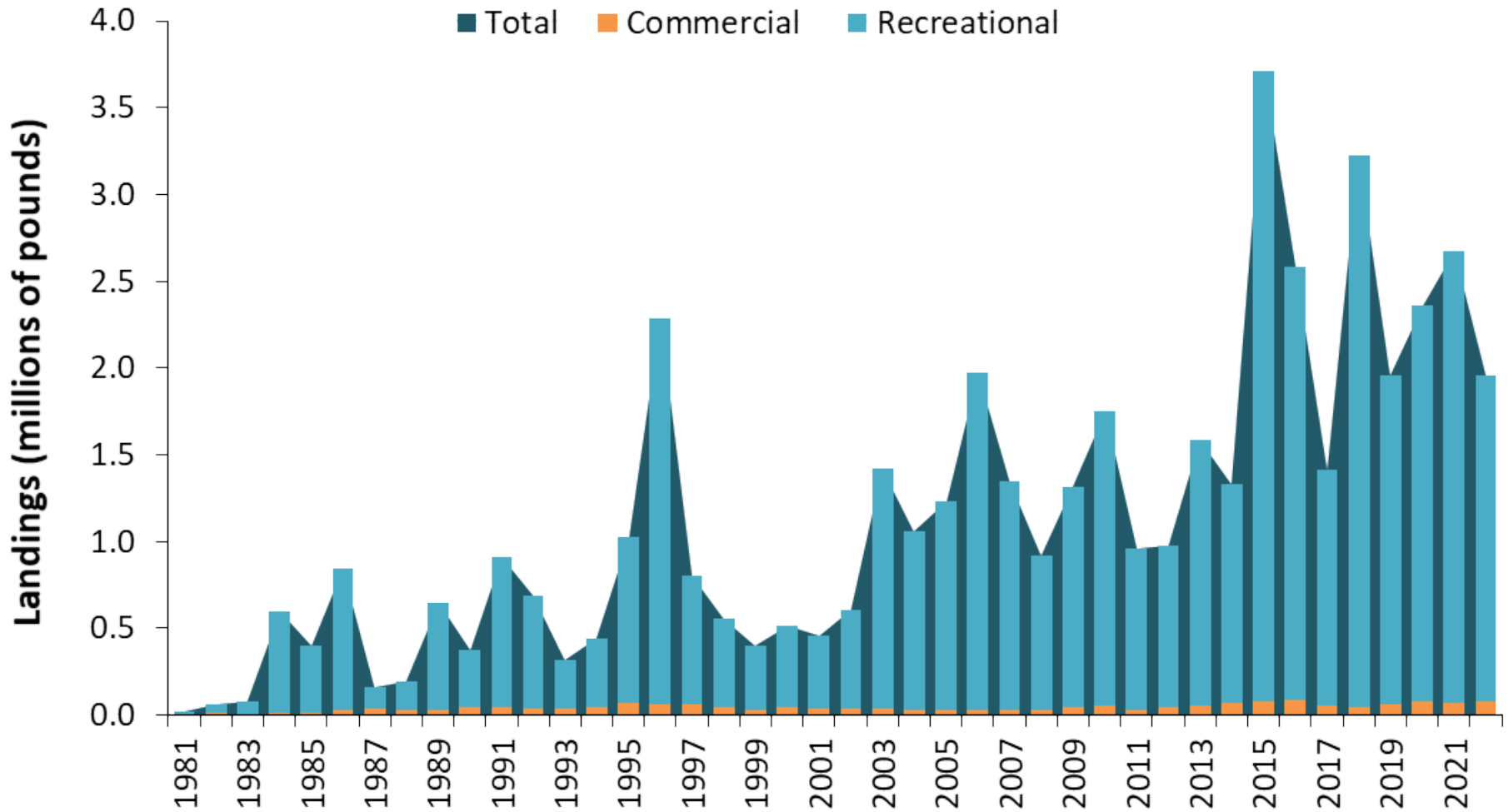
- Total 2022 landings: 1.96 million pounds
 - Commercial (3.8%); Recreational (96.2%)
 - 27% decrease from 2021
- 2022 Commercial landings: 75,418 pounds
 - 13% increase from 2021
 - Virginia (51%) and North Carolina (43%)
 - Total non-*de minimis* landings (VA, NC, SC) reached the commercial closure trigger, fishery closed December 16 – December 31, 2022

Status of the Fishery



- 2022 Recreational Landings: 1.9 million pounds (69,800 fish)
 - 28% decrease by weight from 2021
 - By number, Virginia (57%) and North Carolina (18%)
 - 2013-2022 average: 2.1 million pounds (74,000 fish)
 - 1981-2022 average: 1.1 million pounds (39,000 fish)
- 2022 Recreational Live Releases: 189,608 fish
 - 2018-2022 average 77% released alive per year
 - 2013-2017 average 65% released alive per year

Cobia Landings



2022 Implementation



- PRT found no inconsistencies from the FMP
- No changes to recreational cobia measures in 2022
 - *De minimis* states either adopted Virginia's measures (nearest *non-de minimis* state) or adopted the standard *de minimis* measure

Recreational *De Minimis*



- 1% of the recreational quota is designated to *de minimis* states (no state-specific targets)
- Recreational harvest in 2 of 3 years is less than 1% of annual coastwide recreational landings
- RI, NJ, DE, MD, FL requested; all meet qualifications except Maryland
- MD noted variability in landings year to year (**1.8%** in 2020; **5.6%** in 2021; **0%** in 2022), and requested to continue under *de minimis* until 2023 harvest can be evaluated
 - **The PRT agreed with this rationale**

Commercial *De Minimis*



- Commercial *de minimis* states are not required to monitor cobia landings in-season
- Commercial landings in 2 of 3 years is less than 2% of annual coastwide commercial landings
- RI, NJ, DE, MD, GA, and FL requested and met *de minimis* standards

PRT Recommendations



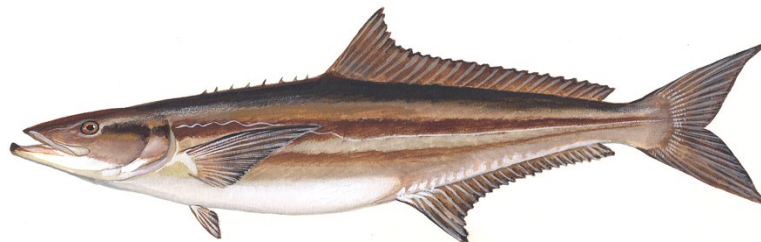
- The PRT recommends the Board approve all *de minimis* requests, including MD
- Multiple states could exceed *de minimis* thresholds over the next few years, particularly if cobia landings continue to increase in the Mid-Atlantic
- Management implications:
 - Commercial: requiring in-season monitoring in more states
 - Recreational: adding new states to calculation of state recreational harvest targets; current allocation based on landings data through only 2015
- When discussing new specifications and the next stock assessment, Board could discuss whether these recreational updates are warranted

PRT Recommendations



- PRT noted New York's recent cobia commercial landings: 6.9% of coastwide commercial landings in 2020, 2.6% in 2021, and 2.0% in 2022
- New York's current regulations meet the FMP requirements for the commercial fishery
- PRT recommends New York declare an interest in Atlantic cobia
 - Depending on future landings, in-season commercial monitoring may need to be considered in the future

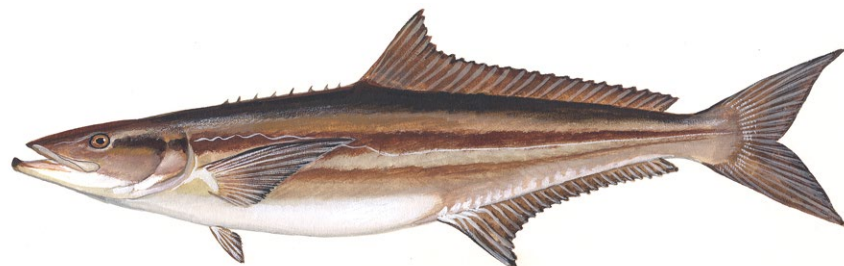
Questions?



Board action for consideration: Approve Atlantic cobia FMP Review for fishing year 2022, state compliance reports, and de minimis requests.



Atlantic Cobia Harvest Quota for 2024-2026: Technical Committee Report



Coastal Pelagics Management Board
August 2, 2023

Current Quota



- 2021-2023 Total Harvest Quota: 80,112 fish
 - Allocation: 96% recreational; 4% commercial
 - 76,908 fish for recreational
 - 73,116 lbs for commercial
 - Set after last stock assessment based on projections for through 2024
 - Originally set for 2020-2022
 - Extended through 2023 to align with Addendum I changes
- Board needs to set a specification for up to three years starting in 2024

New Harvest Specification



- TC requested updated projections from SEFSC
 - Updated landings for 2019-2022
 - Requested through 2026 rather than 2024 if feasible
- New projections not scientifically justified
 - 9-year projection period (2018-2026) well beyond recommended 5-year limit for projections
 - Majority of removals now outside of South Atlantic; inconsistent with projection model used
 - SEFSC Recommendation: extend current quotas
 - Similar harvest levels in projections as observed
 - Previous projections had relatively flat trends

New Harvest Specification



- From 2019-2022
 - Avg. Harvest: 2.2 million lbs.
 - Only one year (2021) above projected harvest value of 2.4 million lbs.

Year	Projected Harvest for Current Quota (lbs)	Realized Total Harvest (lbs)
2019	2,410,848	1,958,484
2020	2,410,848	2,357,391
2021	2,410,848	2,670,132
2022	2,410,848	1,958,977

TC Recommendation



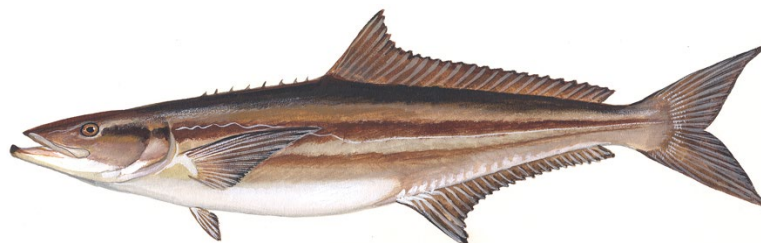
- TC Considerations:
 - Lack of new information
 - Realized harvest below projection levels
 - Current harvest quota had low projected probability of being overfished (0.25)
- **TC recommends setting the 2024-2026 Atlantic cobia harvest quota at the status quo level of 80,112 fish**
 - **Recreational quota of 76,908 fish**
 - **Commercial quota of 73,116 lbs.**
- Upcoming 2025 stock assessment could inform future total harvest quota levels

2025 Stock Assessment



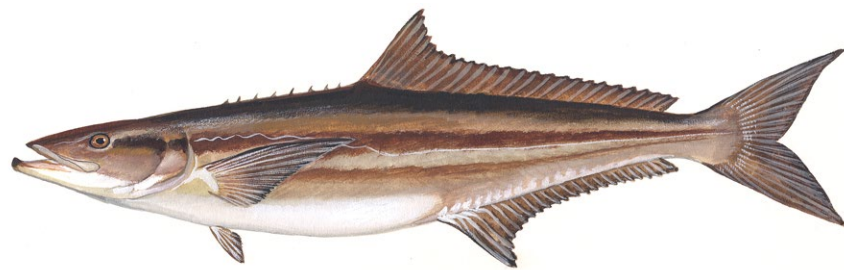
- Scheduled as update assessment but modeling approach & methods likely to change due to data concerns
 - Data challenges
 - Changes in distribution of cobia landings
- Collaborative effort between SEFSC & ASMFC Cobia Stock Assessment Subcommittee (to be formed)
- States tasked with compiling available datasets
- Scheduled completion approx. October 2025
 - If completed early enough, could inform 2026 harvest quota specification

Questions?





Atlantic Cobia Recreational Allocation



Coastal Pelagics Management Board
August 2, 2023

Recreational Allocations



- Addendum I Sector Allocation:
96% recreational; 4% commercial
- Amendment 1 percent allocations to the recreational fishery based on historical landings (numbers of fish)
 - 50% 10-year average 2006-2015
 - 50% 5-year average 2011-2015
 - 1% set-aside for landings in *de minimis* states

Recreational Allocations by State



State	Allocation Percentage
Georgia	9.4%
South Carolina	12.1%
North Carolina	38.1%
Virginia	39.4%
<i>De Minimis</i>	1.0%
Total	100%

Recreational Landings Trends



- Some states are at risk of falling out of *de minimis* over the next several years
- SEFSC noted:

“Recent trends evident in the MRIP data indicate the total removals of Cobia have shifted northward such that the area outside of the South Atlantic, from Virginia to Massachusetts, now represents the bulk of the recreational removals”

Potential Reallocation - Process



- Reallocation will be required if a state falls out of recreational *de minimis*
- Reallocation of recreational quota among states can be accomplished through an addendum to Amendment 1
- Reallocation action if desired, would align with stock assessment update scheduled for 2025
 - Assessment may inform 2026 or 2027 measures


Potential Reallocation - Timelines



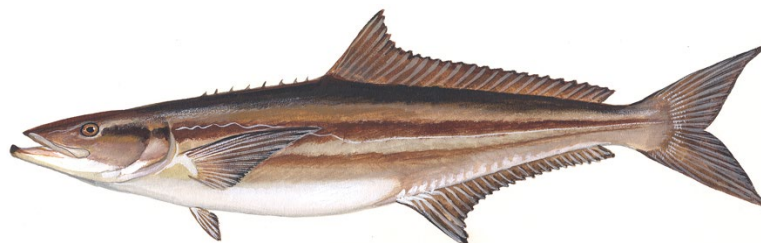
Summer-Fall 2023	Task TC to: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Identify relevant trends in state/regional landings• Summarize landings relative to current harvest targets including <i>de minimis</i> landings
Mid-2024	Initiate draft addendum to consider recreational allocations
Late 2024-Early 2025	Approve draft addendum for public comment and conduct public hearings
Mid-2025	Consider selecting final measures and approval of addendum
 2026	Implement new recreational management measures based on new allocations and state harvest targets

Potential Reallocation - Timelines



Summer 2023	Task TC to: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Identify relevant trends in state/regional landings• Summarize landings relative to current harvest targets including <i>de minimis</i> landings
Early 2024	Initiate draft addendum to consider recreational allocations
Mid 2024	Approve draft addendum for public comment and conduct public hearings
Late 2024	Consider selecting final measures and approval of addendum
 2025	Implement new recreational management measures based on new allocations and state harvest targets
2026	Potential change to harvest quota based on stock assessment results and resulting change to state harvest targets and management measures

Questions?



Spanish Mackerel SAFMC SSC Peer Review and Recommendations

ASMFC Summer Meeting

August 2023

John Carmichael

SAFMC

SEDAR 78 Operational Assessment



NOAA
FISHERIES

Southeast Fisheries
Science Center
Sustainable Fisheries
Division
Atlantic Fisheries Branch

SEDAR 78 – U.S. Atlantic Spanish Mackerel Stock Assessment



© Erik H. Williams

South Atlantic Fisheries Management Council
Scientific and Statistical Committee
August 4, 2022

U.S. Department of Commerce | National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration | National Marine Fisheries Service

- Terminal Year 2020
 - Recreational update with FES estimates
 - Concerns with MRIP Spikes, Shore
 - Shortened time series – year 1 1986
- Growth Model
 - abandoned sex specific growth models
- Natural Mortality
 - updated for revised growth parameters

SSC Reviews

- August 2022 – Reported at the September 2022 Council Meeting
 - Initial Peer Review
 - Requested revisions before providing catch advice
- October 2022 – Reported at the December 2023 Council Meeting
 - Reviewed updated sensitivity runs with revised MRIP estimates
 - Convened working group to develop a plan for addressing remaining concerns
- January 2023 – Reported at the March 2023 Council Meeting
 - Approved TORs for addressing remaining assessment concerns
 - Requested additional analyses be conducted by SEFSC
- April 2023 – Reported at the June 2023 Council Meeting
 - No new runs provided
 - Stock status and fishing level recommendations provided using available information, equilibrium conditions
- July 2023 – Reviewed equilibrium values

Assessment Concerns

- Age comps are not accounted for in the assessment for all sectors (commercial cast net and handline).
- Substantial regional differences in how fishery is prosecuted, and lack of adequate sample sizes across sectors creates large data gaps in the assessment. Sampling effort may not be aligned with stock distribution.
- Recreational catch increase in 2020 is uncertain and potentially influential. Notable shift to shore mode. PSE may be biased.
- M fixed at S28 value, perceived to be too low, max age questioned, and approach is out of date.
- Steepness fixed at S28 value, SRR uncertain, Steepness estimates from similar species do not appear to be available.
- Projections are not sufficiently robust and influenced greatly by uncertain data in terminal year (2020); indications of declining stock not consistent with observations or recent data.

**SEDAR 28 (2012) included data through 2010.*

March 2023: No further assessment work

SEFSC Memo to SAFMC, March 2023:

Regarding Spanish Mackerel (SEDAR 78), the Center has taken note of the SSC recommendations regarding natural mortality, assumed recruitment and catch estimates, and agrees that those issues should be considered during the next scheduled stock assessment. However, as the proposed revisions are exploratory in nature and require extensive rework, they cannot be accomplished in a timely fashion. Therefore, the Center recommends the SSC develop its ABC advice based on the assessment and supporting analyses completed to date.

Council direction to SSC, for April 2023:

- Provide catch level recommendations for Council consideration in June 2023

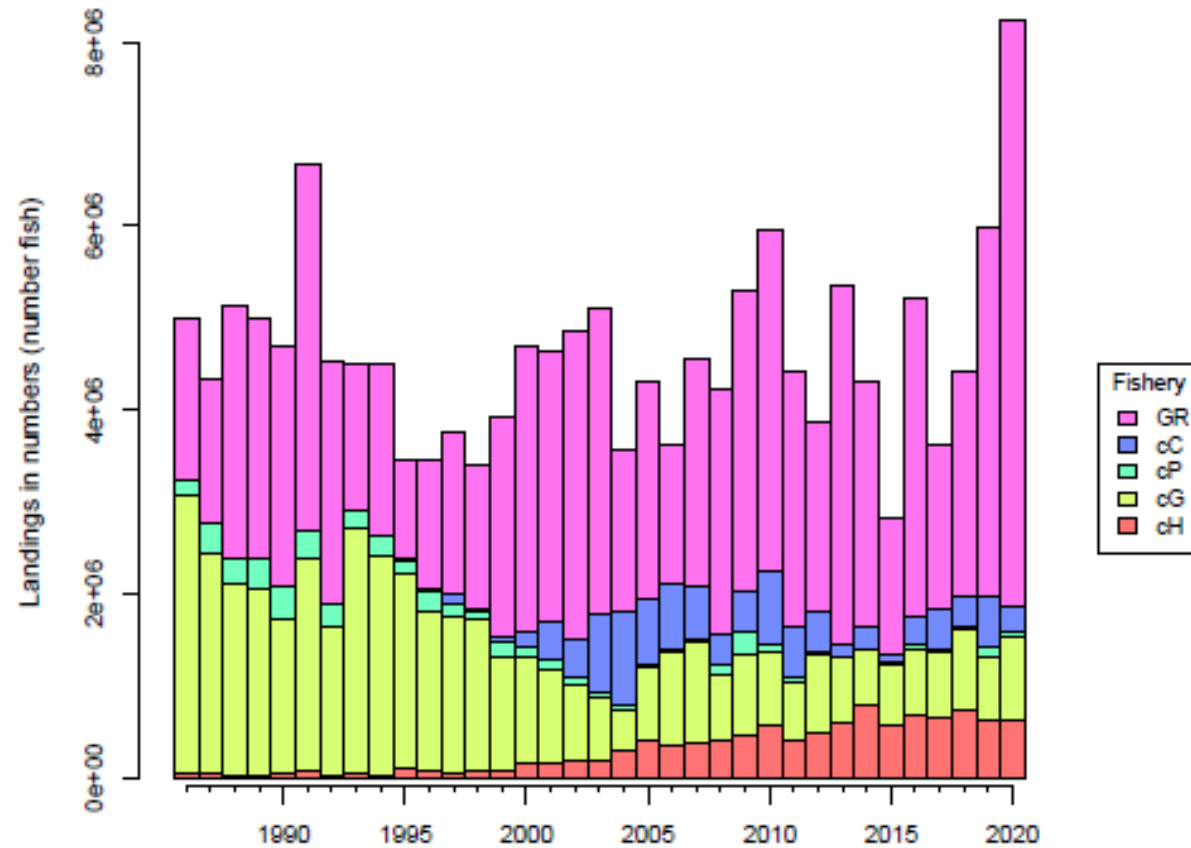
SSC Recommendation – April 2023

- Dissatisfied with lack of any new model runs addressing deficiencies
- Did not make a BSIA evaluation on existing model
- Did not support stock projections
- Concluded that the S78 base model is adequate for determining stock status: **stock is neither overfished nor overfishing**
- Recommended ABC based on equilibrium Yield at 75% FMSY

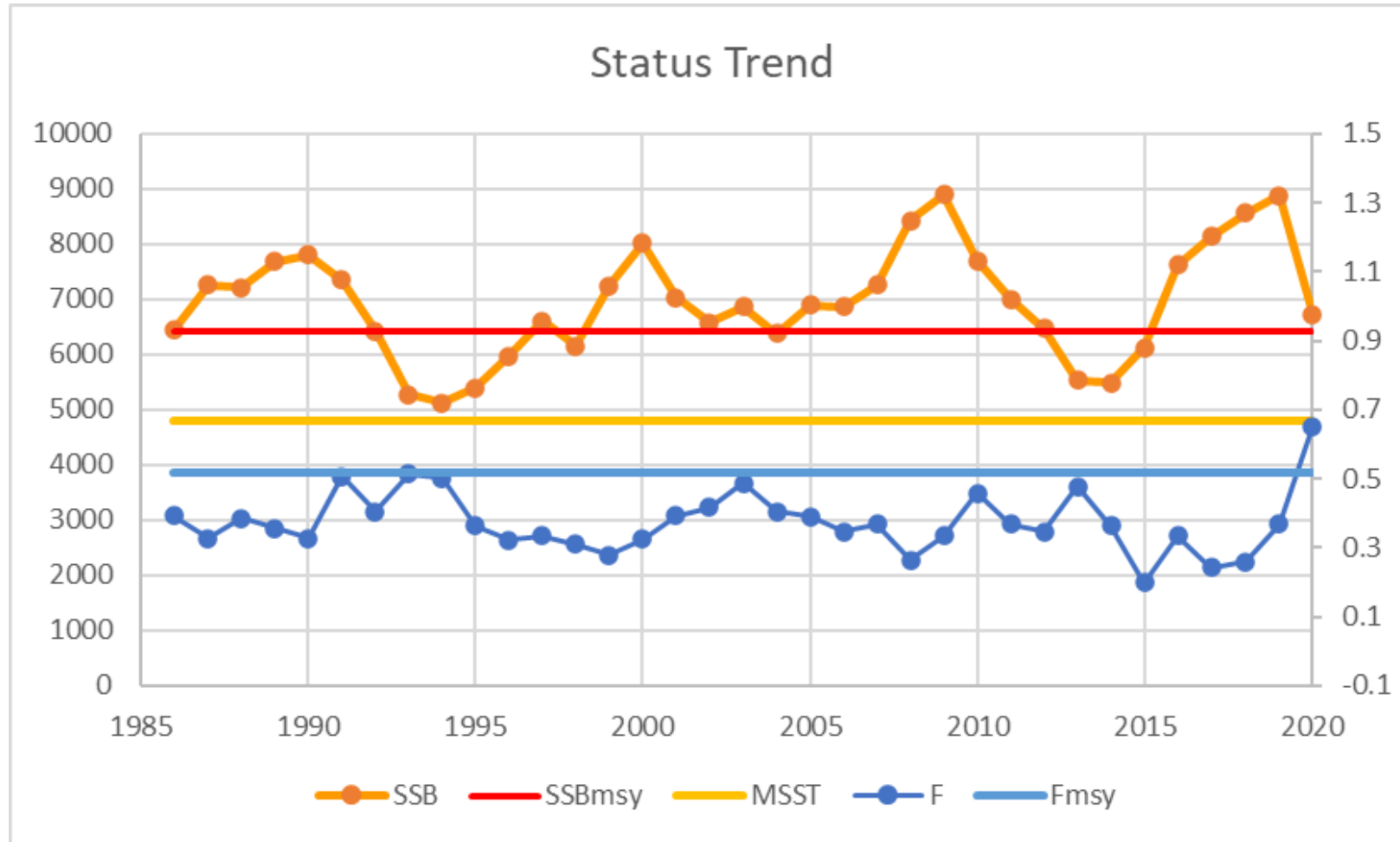
Values provided for July 27 SSC meeting review

Landings in Numbers

Figure 27. Estimated landings in numbers by fishery from the catch-age model. *cH* refers to commercial handline, *cP* to commercial pound net, *cG* to commercial gill net, *cC* to commercial cast net, and *GR* for recreational.

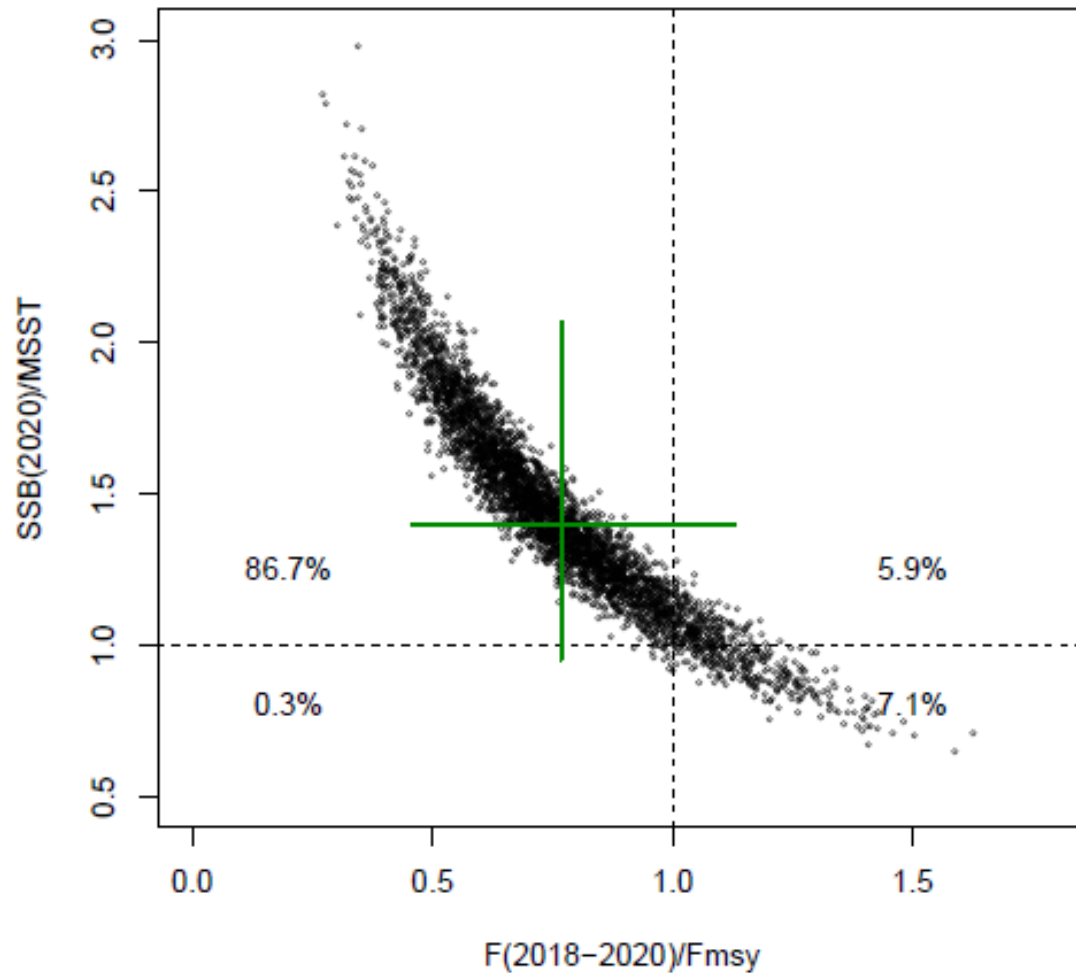


Status Trend – SSB and Fishing Mortality



- Above MSST all years, SSBmsy most years (estimated at end of July)
- Below Fmsy most years
- Note stock is “overfishing” in 2020

Stock Status (figure 38)



- Not Overfished
- Not Overfishing
- Based on average of the last 3 years of assessment – 2018 - 2020

Reference Point and ABC Recommendations

Table 1. Equilibrium values from the SEDAR 78 base stock assessment model run for Atlantic Spanish Mackerel. Values include fishing mortality (F), total biomass (B), spawning stock biomass (SSB), recruits (R), landings (L), and discards (D).

Equilibrium Values	F_{MSY}	$75\%F_{MSY}$
F (y^{-1})	0.516	0.387
B (mt)	19588	23246
SSB (mt)	6406	8186
R (1000's)	22792	23852
L (1000 lbs whole wgt)	8210	8024
L (1000's)	5413	4977
D (1000 lbs whole wgt)	581	469
D (1000's)	1147	916

OFL and ABC

- OFL
 - Equilibrium Yield at F_{msy}
 - 8,210,000 pounds (whole weight)
- ABC
 - Equilibrium Yield at 75% F_{msy}
 - 8,024,000 pounds (whole weight)
- Constant values over time, until next assessment

ABC Allocation (PRELIMINARY!)

	NEW	CURRENT
ABC	8,024,000	6,063,000

*Existing ABC = MSY
estimated in SEDAR 28*

ALLOCATION	Commercial	Recreational
ALLOCATE %	55%	45%
ACL	4,413,200	3,610,800
NOW	3,330,000	2,727,000
LANDINGS	Commercial	Recreational
22/23 FY	2,613,189	1,026,766
21/22 FY	3,575,816	1,626,985

*MSY estimate from
SEDAR 78 = 8,201,000
pounds, landings*

Commercial – Northern and Southern Zones

Allocation	Northern	Southern
%	20	80
quota NOW	662,670	2,667,330
quota NEW	882,640	3,530,560

Landings	Northern	Southern
22/23	875,124	1,738,065
21/22	1,097,579	2,478,237

Council Next Steps

1. Develop a Framework Amendment to update catch levels
 - interim action to incorporate FES estimates and address SSC recommendations
 - will not revise sector or regional allocations
 - Requires an amendment
 - Prefer to get port meeting input first
 - Not based on historic time series, so not impacted by FES change
2. Request a benchmark assessment ASAP (2026)
3. Conduct Port Meetings in 2024 to obtain broad fishery input
4. Develop a comprehensive amendment to address fishery issues identified through the port meetings

Port Meetings

- **Focus Species:** King and Spanish Mackerel
- **Attendees:** open to all members of the public (commercial, for-hire, recreational, and others) participating in the King and Spanish Mackerel fisheries.
- **Location:** key communities through the Gulf of Mexico and along the Atlantic coast up to the southern end of Massachusetts.
- **ASMFC Ask:**
 1. Staff participation on the planning team.
 2. Help with outreach throughout the Mid-Atlantic and New England regions.
 - Staff and Commission member participation at port meetings.