

Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission

Coastal Pelagics Management Board

January 24, 2024

10:15 – 11:45 a.m.

Hybrid Meeting

Draft Agenda

The times listed are approximate; the order in which these items will be taken is subject to change; other items may be added as necessary.

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|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|
| 1. Welcome/Call to Order (<i>S. Woodward</i>) | 10:15 a.m. |
| 2. Board Consent | 10:15 a.m. |
| • Approval of Agenda | |
| • Approval of Proceedings from October 2023 | |
| 3. Public Comment | 10:20 a.m. |
| 4. Consider Approval of Terms of Reference for the SouthEast Data, Assessment and Review Atlantic Migratory Group (AMG) Cobia Stock Assessment (<i>C. Tuohy & A. Giuliano</i>) Action | 10:30 a.m. |
| 5. Update from Cobia Plan Development Team on Recreational Reallocation Addendum Scoping (<i>C. Tuohy</i>) | 11:00 a.m. |
| 6. Consider Approval of Spanish Mackerel Fishery Management Plan Review and State Compliance Reports for the 2022 Fishing Year (<i>E. Franke</i>) Action | 11:20 a.m. |
| 7. Update from the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council on Mackerel Port Meetings and Coastal Migratory Pelagics Framework Amendment 13 (<i>J. Carmichael</i>) | 11:35 a.m. |
| 8. Elect Vice-Chair Action | 11:40 a.m. |
| 9. Other Business/Adjourn | 11:45 a.m. |

The meeting will be held at The Westin Crystal City, 1800 Richmond Highway, Arlington, VA; 703.486.1111, and via webinar; click [here](#) for details

MEETING OVERVIEW

Coastal Pelagics Management Board

January 24, 2023

10:15 a.m. – 11:45 a.m.

Hybrid Meeting

Chair: Spud Woodward (GA) Assumed Chairmanship: 1/24	Technical Committee Chair: Cobia: Angela Giuliano (MD)	Law Enforcement Committee Rep: Capt. N. Scott Pearce (FL)
Vice Chair: Vacant	Advisory Panel Chair: Craig Freeman (VA)	Previous Board Meeting: October 17, 2023
Voting Members: RI, NY, NJ, DE, MD, PRFC, VA, NC, SC, GA, FL, SAFMC, NMFS (13 votes)		

2. Board Consent

- Approval of Agenda
- Approval of Proceedings from October 2023

3. Public Comment – At the beginning of the meeting, public comment will be taken on items not on the agenda. Individuals that wish to speak at this time must sign-in at the beginning of the meeting. For agenda items that have already gone out for public hearing and/or have had a public comment period that has closed, the Board Chair may determine that additional public comment will not provide additional information. In this circumstance, the Chair will not allow additional public comment on an issue. For agenda items that the public has not had a chance to provide input, the Board Chair may allow limited opportunity for comment. The Board Chair has the discretion to limit the number of speakers and/or the length of each comment.

4. Consider Approval of SouthEast Data, Assessment, and Review (SEDAR) Atlantic Migratory Group (AMG) Cobia Stock Assessment Terms of Reference (10:30-11:00 a.m.) Action

Background

- The AMG Cobia Benchmark Assessment (SEDAR 95) is scheduled to be completed through the SEDAR process in early 2025.
- The Cobia Technical Committee (TC) met on January 4, 2024 to refine the assessment terms of reference (TORs) for approval by the Coastal Pelagics Management Board (**Briefing Materials**).
- Most notably, the Cobia TC suggested reviewing the stock structure and unit stock definition for AMG Cobia through the new assessment.
- Following approval of the TORs, a call for assessment data will occur in February 2024 followed by data scoping webinars scheduled for June-August 2024.

Presentations

- Terms of Reference Presentation by C. Tuohy and A. Giuliano

Board actions for consideration at this meeting

- Approve Terms of Reference for the AMG Cobia Benchmark Assessment (SEDAR 95)

5. Update from Cobia Plan Development Team on Recreational Reallocation Addendum Scoping (11:00-11:20 a.m.)

Background

- In October 2023, the Coastal Pelagics Management Board initiated an Addendum to address recreational reallocation of Atlantic cobia.
- The Coastal Pelagics Management Board specified interest in exploring Addendum alternatives that consider options outside of the current state-by-state quota allocation system, specifically the consideration of the need for fishing opportunity based on the seasonality of the species in various regions.
- The Cobia Plan Development Team met on January 8, 2024 to discuss preliminary scoping of the Addendum and develop questions for Board clarification (**Supplemental Materials**).

Presentations

- Plan Development Team Update by C. Tuohy

Board guidance for consideration at this meeting

- Guidance on the scope of the reallocation draft addendum

6. Consider Approval of Spanish Mackerel Fishery Management Plan Review and State Compliance Reports for the 2022 Fishing Year (11:20-11:35 a.m.) Action

Background

- State Compliance Reports for Spanish mackerel were due on October 1, 2023.
- The Spanish Mackerel Plan Review Team (PRT) reviewed each state report and compiled the annual FMP Review (**Supplemental Materials**).

Presentations

- Overview of the FMP Review Report by E. Franke

Board actions for consideration at this meeting

- Accept 2023 FMP Review and State Compliance Reports for Spanish Mackerel.
- Approve *de minimis* requests for Spanish mackerel.

7. Update from the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council (SAFMC) on Mackerel Port Meetings and CMP Framework Amendment 13 (11:35-11:40 a.m.)

Background

- In June 2023, SAFMC initiated Framework Amendment 13 to the Coastal Migratory Pelagics (CMP) FMP to adjust catch levels for Atlantic Spanish mackerel based on the Scientific and Statistical Committee's recommendations and results of the 2022 stock assessment.
- SAFMC plans to conduct port meetings for king and Spanish mackerel fisheries in 2024 to gain a comprehensive understanding of those fisheries to improve management efforts.
- SAFMC met on December 5, 2023 to approve alternatives for Framework Amendment 13 and review next steps for planning the 2024 Spanish and king mackerel port meetings (**Briefing Materials**).

Presentations

- CMP Framework Amendment 13 and Port Meetings Update by J. Carmichael

8. Elect Vice-Chair (11:40 - 11:45 a.m.) Action

9. Other Business/Adjourn (11:45 a.m.)

Coastal Pelagics Board

Activity level: Moderate

Committee Overlap Score: Moderate

Committee Task List

- Cobia TC – Develop Atlantic Migratory Group (AMG) Cobia Benchmark Stock Assessment (SEDAR 95) terms of reference for Board approval
- Cobia PDT – Continue scoping of recreational reallocation Addendum
- Spanish Mackerel TC – Develop a paper that characterizes the recreational and commercial Spanish mackerel fisheries along the Atlantic Coast
- Spanish Mackerel PRT – October 1: Compliance Reports Due
- Cobia PRT – July 1: Compliance Reports Due

Technical Committee Members:

Cobia TC: Angela Giuliano (MD, Chair), Nichole Ares (RI), Zachary Schuller (NY), Brian Neilan (NJ), Somers Smott (VA), Lee Paramore (NC), Justin Yost (SC), Chris Kalinowsky (GA), Christina Wiegand (SAFMC), Michael Larkin (SERO), Emilie Franke (ASMFC), Chelsea Tuohy (ASMFC)
Spanish Mackerel TC: Reuben Macfarlan (RI), Jamie Darrow (NJ), Harry Rickabaugh (MD), Ingrid Braun (PRFC), Joshua McGilly (VA), McLean Seward (NC), Pearse Webster (SC), Christina Wiegand (SAFMC), Emilie Franke (ASMFC), Chelsea Tuohy (ASMFC)

Plan Review Team Members:

Cobia PRT: Angela Giuliano (MD), Somers Smott (VA), Chris McDonough (SC), Emilie Franke (ASMFC)
Spanish Mackerel PRT: McLean Seward (NC), Pearse Webster (SC), BJ Hilton (GA), Chris Swanson (FL), Christina Wiegand (SAFMC), John Hadley (SAFMC), Emilie Franke (ASMFC)

Plan Development Team Members:

Cobia PDT: Nichole Ares (RI), Zachary Schuller (NY), Brian Neilan (NJ), Angela Giuliano (MD), Somers Smott (VA), Kathy Knowlton (GA), Emilie Franke (ASMFC), Chelsea Tuohy (ASMFC)

SEDAR

SouthEast Data, Assessment, and Review

4055 Faber Place Drive #201
North Charleston, SC 29405

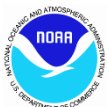
Phone (843) 571-4366
Fax (843) 769-4520
www.sedarweb.org

SEDAR 95 Atlantic Cobia Benchmark Assessment Terms of Reference

DRAFT December 2023

Data Workshop Terms of Reference

1. Review stock structure and unit stock definitions; consider whether changes are required. Consider genetic and/or tagging data and other data sources as available.
2. Review, discuss, and tabulate available life history information available through 2023 as appropriate for inclusion in the stock assessment.
 - Evaluate age, growth, natural mortality, and reproductive characteristics.
 - Provide appropriate models to describe population growth, maturation, and fecundity by age, sex, and/or length by appropriate strata as feasible.
 - Evaluate and discuss the sources of uncertainty and error, and data limitations (such as temporal and spatial coverage) for each data source. Provide estimates or ranges of uncertainty for all life history information.
3. Characterize discard mortality rates.
 - Review available research and published literature.
 - Consider research directed at cobia as well as similar species from similar depths in the southeastern United States and other areas.
 - Provide estimates of discard mortality rate for each assessed stock by fishery, gear type, depth, and other feasible or appropriate strata, if possible.
 - Provide justification for any recommendations that deviate from the range of discard mortality provided in the last benchmark or other prior assessment.
 - Provide estimates of uncertainty around recommended discard mortality rates.
4. Provide measures of relative population abundance that are appropriate for stock assessment.
 - Consider and discuss all available and relevant fishery-dependent and -independent data sources using a terminal year of 2023.
 - Document all programs evaluated, address program objectives, methods, coverage, sampling intensity, and other relevant characteristics.



- Provide maps of fishery and survey coverage.
 - Develop fishery and survey CPUE indices by appropriate strata (e.g., age, size, area, and fishery) and include measures of precision and accuracy.
 - Discuss the degree to which available indices adequately represent fishery and population conditions.
 - Recommend which data sources adequately and reliably represent population abundance for use in assessment modeling.
 - Provide appropriate measures of uncertainty for the abundance indices to be used in stock assessment models.
 - Categorize the available indices with regard to their appropriateness for use in assessment modeling.
5. Provide commercial catch statistics through 2023, including both landings and discards in both pounds and number.
 - Evaluate and discuss the adequacy of available data for accurately characterizing harvest and discard by fishery sector or gear.
 - Provide length and age distributions for both landings and discards if feasible.
 - Provide maps of fishery effort and harvest and fishery sector or gear.
 - Provide estimates of uncertainty around each set of landings and discard estimates.
 6. Provide recreational catch statistics through 2023, including both landings and discards in both pounds and number.
 - Evaluate and discuss the adequacy of available data for accurately characterizing harvest and discard by species and fishery sector or gear.
 - Explore the transition from MRIP-CHTS to MRIP-FES.
 - Explore the Southeast For Hire Integrated Electronic Reporting (SEFHIER) data for potential inclusion in the Atlantic cobia assessment.
 - Explore whether the recreational fleet structure can be realigned into individual fleets as appropriate.
 - Provide length and age distributions for both landings and discards if feasible.
 - Provide maps of fishery effort and harvest and fishery sector or gear.
 - Provide estimates of uncertainty around each set of landings and discard estimates.
 7. Identify and describe ecosystem, climate, species interactions, habitat considerations, and/or episodic events that would be reasonably expected to affect population dynamics.
 - Consider any known evidence regarding ecosystem, climate, species interactions (e.g. predation studies), habitat considerations, species range modifications (expansions or contractions), regime shifts, larval movement between stock boundaries, and/or episodic events (including red tide, upwelling events, and hypoxia) that would reasonably be expected to affect Cobia population dynamics and are appropriate for inclusion in the stock assessment.



8. Incorporate social and economic information that affect stock status and related fishing effort and catch levels as practicable.
9. Provide recommendations for future research in areas such as sampling, fishery monitoring, tagging, genetics, and stock assessment.
10. Review, evaluate, and report on the status and progress of all research recommendations listed in the last assessment and peer review reports concerning this stock.
11. Prepare the Data Workshop report providing complete documentation of workshop actions and decisions in accordance with project schedule deadlines (Section II of the SEDAR assessment report).



Assessment Workshop Terms of Reference

1. Review any changes in data and data sources following the data workshop and any analyses suggested by the data workshop. Summarize data as used in each assessment model. Provide justification for any deviations from Data Workshop recommendations.
2. Develop population assessment models that are compatible with available data and document input data, model assumptions and configuration, and equations for each model considered.
 - Fully document and describe the impacts (on population parameters and management benchmarks) of any changes to the model structure, methods, application or fitting procedures made between this assessment and the prior benchmark (SEDAR 58) assessment.
 - Provide a continuity model consistent with the prior benchmark (SEDAR 58) assessment configuration, if one exists, updated to include the most recent observations, if feasible. Alternative approaches to a strict continuity run that distinguish between model, population, and input data influences on findings, may be considered. Provide additional continuity models that update the prior assessment configurations and terminal years with MRIP-FES landings and discards.
3. Provide estimates of stock population parameters, if feasible:
 - Include fishing mortality, abundance, biomass, selectivity, stock-recruitment relationship (if applicable), and other parameters as necessary to describe the population.
 - Include appropriate and representative measures of precision for parameter estimates.
 - Compare and contrast population parameters and time series estimated in this assessment with values from the previous benchmark (SEDAR 58) assessment, as feasible, and comment on the impacts of changes in data, assumptions, or assessment methods on estimated population conditions.
4. Characterize uncertainty in the assessment and estimated values.
 - Consider uncertainty in input data, modeling approach, and model configuration.
 - Consider and include other sources of uncertainty as appropriate for this assessment.
 - Provide appropriate measures of model performance, reliability, and ‘goodness of fit’.
 - Provide measures of uncertainty for estimated parameters.
5. Provide estimates of yield and productivity, as feasible.
 - Include yield-per-recruit, spawner-per-recruit, and stock-recruitment models.
6. Provide estimates of population benchmarks or management criteria consistent with available data, applicable FMPs, proposed FMPs and Amendments, other ongoing or proposed management programs. Include values for fishing mortality (including assumed discard mortality if appropriate), spawning stock biomass, fishery yield, SPR



and recruitment for potential population benchmarks as appropriate with available data and modeling methods.

- Evaluate existing or proposed management criteria as specified in the management summary.
 - Review and provide recommendations for proxy values (e.g. MSY) when necessary, and provide appropriate justifications.
 - Compare and contrast reference values (e.g. equilibrium yield at $F_{MSYProxy}$) estimated in this assessment with values from the previous benchmark (SEDAR 58) assessment, and comment on the impacts of changes in data, assumptions or assessment methods on reference point differences.
 - Define recent fishing mortality rates ($F_{Current}$) and recent spawning stock biomass ($SSB_{Current}$) that will be compared to management benchmarks to determine management benchmarks as the geometric mean of the most recent three years and the terminal data year, respectively.
7. Incorporate known applicable environmental covariates into the selected model; provide justification if covariates cannot be included at the time of the assessment.
 8. Provide declarations of stock status relative to management benchmarks or alternative data poor approaches if necessary.
 9. Provide uncertainty distributions of proposed reference points, stock status, and yield.
 - Provide the probability of overfishing at various harvest or exploitation levels.
 - Provide a probability density function for biological reference point estimates.
 - If the stock is overfished, provide the probability of rebuilding within mandated time periods as described in the management summary or applicable regulations.
 - Characterize the differences in fishing mortality, virgin biomass, terminal total biomass, terminal spawning stock biomass, and equilibrium yield at $F_{MSYProxy}$ as a result of updating recreational catch and effort data from MRIP-CHTS to MRIP-FES by comparing SEDAR 58 to a continuity model with MRIP-FES landings and discards and SEDAR 58 configuration and terminal year, as feasible.
 10. Project future stock conditions (biomass, abundance, and exploitation) and develop rebuilding schedules if warranted; include estimated generation time.
 - Request estimates of retained landings in numbers and biomass from data providers for interim years between the terminal year and first year of the projections, if available, to be used to project future stock conditions. If estimates of retained landings are unavailable, use the average of the previous three years.
 - Recommend levels of recruitment to be used in the projections.
 - Stock projections (including yields) shall be developed to inform the recommended overfished and overfishing definitions. If data limitations preclude classic projections,



explore alternative models to provide management advice. If an alternative proxy for F_{MSY} is recommended, provide outputs for both the current and recommended proxies.

11. Provide recommendations for future research and data collection.
 - Be as specific as practicable in describing sampling design and sampling intensity.
 - Emphasize items that will improve future assessment capabilities and reliability.
 - Consider data, monitoring, and assessment needs.
12. Review, evaluate, and report on the status and progress of all research recommendations listed in the last assessment and peer review reports concerning this stock.
13. Complete the Assessment Workshop Report in accordance with project schedule deadlines (Section III of the SEDAR Stock Assessment Report).



Review Workshop Terms of Reference

1. Evaluate the data used in the assessment, including discussion of the strengths and weaknesses of data sources and decisions, and consider the following:
 - a) Are data decisions made by the DW and AW panels sound and robust?
 - b) Are data uncertainties acknowledged, reported, and within normal or expected levels?
 - c) Are input data series reliable and applied properly within the assessment model?
2. Evaluate and discuss the strengths and weaknesses of the methods used to assess the stock, taking into account the available data, and considering the following:
 - a) Are methods scientifically sound and robust?
 - b) Are assessment models configured properly and consistent with standard practices?
 - c) Are the methods appropriate for the available data?
3. Evaluate the assessment findings and consider the following:
 - a) Are population estimates (model output – e.g. abundance, exploitation, biomass) reliable, consistent with input data and population biological characteristics, and useful to support status inferences?
 - b) Is the stock overfished? What information helps you reach this conclusion?
 - c) Is the stock undergoing overfishing? What information helps you reach this conclusion?
 - d) Is there an informative stock recruitment relationship? Is the stock recruitment curve reliable and useful for evaluation of productivity and future stock conditions?
 - e) Are the quantitative estimates of the status determination criteria for this stock reliable? If not, are there other indicators that may be used to inform managers about stock trends and conditions?
4. Evaluate the stock projections (or alternative models if data limitations prevent classic projections), including discussing strengths and weaknesses, and consider the following:
 - a) Are the methods consistent with accepted practices and available data?
 - b) Are the methods appropriate for the assessment model and outputs?
 - c) Are the results informative and robust, and useful to support inferences of probable future conditions?
 - d) Are key uncertainties acknowledged, discussed, and reflected in the projection results?
5. Consider how uncertainties in the assessment, and their potential consequences, are addressed.
 - Comment on the degree to which methods used to evaluate uncertainty reflect and capture the significant sources of uncertainty in the population, data sources, and assessment methods
 - Ensure that the implications of uncertainty in technical conclusions are clearly stated



6. Consider the research recommendations provided by the Data and Assessment workshops and make any additional recommendations or prioritizations warranted.
 - Clearly denote research and monitoring that could improve the reliability of, and information provided by, future assessments
 - Provide recommendations on possible ways to improve the SEDAR process
7. Consider whether the stock assessment constitutes the best scientific information available using the following criteria as appropriate: relevance, inclusiveness, objectivity, transparency, timeliness, verification, validation, and peer review of fishery management information.
8. Provide suggestions on key improvements in data or modeling approaches that should be considered when scheduling the next assessment.
9. Prepare a Peer Review Summary summarizing the Panel's evaluation of the stock assessment and addressing each Term of Reference. Develop a list of tasks to be completed following the workshop. Complete and submit the Peer Review Summary Report in accordance with the project guidelines.





THE SOUTH ATLANTIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

Coastal Migratory Pelagics Framework Amendment 13

Atlantic migratory group Spanish mackerel catch levels

Decision Document

December 2023

Background

Framework Amendment 13 to the Fishery Management Plan (FMP) for Coastal Migratory Pelagic (CMP) Resources in the Gulf of Mexico and Atlantic Region (CMP FMP) would change catch limits for Atlantic migratory group Spanish mackerel (Atlantic Spanish mackerel) based on the most recent stock assessment, SEDAR 78. The SEDAR 78 indicated, consistent with the original stock status determined by SEDAR 28, that Atlantic Spanish mackerel are not overfished or undergoing overfishing. Based on the results of SEDAR 78, the SSC made new Atlantic Spanish mackerel catch level recommendations for the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council (Council) to consider (**Table 1**).

SEDAR 78 update includes revised recreational landings that are based on the Marine Recreational Information Program’s (MRIP) newer Fishing Effort Survey (FES) method. In August 2023, NOAA Fisheries published a report, Evaluating Measurement Error in the MRIP Fishing Effort Survey, that summarized results from a small-scale study to evaluate potential sources of bias in the FES. Using data from July to December 2015, the study found that switching the current sequence of survey questions resulted in fewer reporting errors and illogical responses. As a result, effort estimates for shore and private boat anglers were generally 30 to 40 percent lower. NOAA Fisheries is now conducting a large-scale follow up study to gain

a better understanding of differences in effort estimates between the current and revised survey designs. This study will be conducted throughout 2024, with results available the following year.

In September 2023, the Council’s Mackerel Cobia Committee discussed how dependent Framework Amendment 13 is on MRIP-FES data, the federal deadlines associated with completion of the amendment, and whether they were interested in moving forward. Ultimately, the Committee chose to continue work on Framework Amendment 13 noting the importance of moving away from MRIP CHTS to FES to reduce confusion in how the recreational annual catch limit (ACL) is tracked vs. how recreational landings are estimated. Additionally, stakeholders have been awaiting an updated stock assessment for many years and updated catch levels will help guide stakeholder input during upcoming port meetings (see below) for the king and Spanish mackerel fisheries.

Table 1. South Atlantic Scientific and Statistical Committee catch level recommendations for Atlantic migratory group Spanish mackerel, using data resultant from SEDAR 78 (2022).

Criteria		Deterministic		
Overfished evaluation (SSB ₂₀₂₀ /MSST)		1.40		
Overfishing Evaluation (F ₂₀₁₈₋₂₀₂₀ /F _{MSY})		0.77		
MFMT (F _{MSY proxy})		0.516		
SSB _{MSY} (metric tons)		6,406		
MSST (metric tons)		4,804		
MSY (1000 lbs.)		8,210		
Y at 75% F _{MSY} (1000 lbs.)		8,024		
ABC Control Rule Adjustment		10%		
P-Star		40%		
M		0.35		
OFL RECOMMENDATIONS				
Year	Landed (lbs ww)	Discard (lbs ww)	Landed (number)	Discard (number)
2023	8,210,000	581,000	5,413,000	1,147,000
2024	8,210,000	581,000	5,413,000	1,147,000
2025	8,210,000	581,000	5,413,000	1,147,000
2026	8,210,000	581,000	5,413,000	1,147,000
2027	8,210,000	581,000	5,413,000	1,147,000
ABC RECOMMENDATIONS				
Year	Landed (lbs ww)	Discard (lbs ww)	Landed (number)	Discard (number)
2023	8,024,000	469,000	4,977,000	916,000
2024	8,024,000	469,000	4,977,000	916,000
2025	8,024,000	469,000	4,977,000	916,000
2026	8,024,000	469,000	4,977,000	916,000
2027	8,024,000	469,000	4,977,000	916,000

The intent of Framework Amendment 13 to the CMP FMP is to revise the ACL, optimum yield (OY), and recreational annual catch target (ACT) for Atlantic Spanish mackerel based on the SSC’s recommendations.

Actions in this Framework Amendment

Action 1. Revise the acceptable biological catch, annual optimum yield, total annual catch limit, sector annual catch limits, and commercial zone quotas for Atlantic migratory group Spanish mackerel to reflect the updated acceptable biological catch level.

Objectives for this Meeting

- Review annual catch limit analysis.
- Consider whether to set a long-term optimum yield.
- Approve action and alternatives to be analyzed.

Tentative Amendment Timing

	PROCESS STEP	DATE
✓	Council directs staff to start work on an amendment.	June 2023
✓	Council reviews options paper and approves amendment for scoping.	September 2023
✓	Mackerel Cobia Advisory Panel (MC AP) makes recommendations for the Council to consider.	November 2023
	Council reviews MC AP and scoping comments and approves action/alternatives to be analyzed.	December 2023
	Council reviews draft amendment, selects preferred alternatives, and approves for public hearings.	March 2024
	Council reviews the draft amendment, conducts public hearings, and approves for formal review.	June 2024
	CMP Framework Amendment 13 transmitted for Secretarial Review.	Summer 2024
	Regulations implemented	2024/2025

Purpose and Need Statement

The *purpose* of this amendment is to revise the acceptable biological catch, annual catch limits, annual optimum yield? and recreational annual catch target for Atlantic migratory group Spanish mackerel, based on the results of the latest stock assessment.

The *need* for this amendment is to ensure catch limits are based on the best scientific information available and to ensure overfishing does not occur in the Atlantic migratory group Spanish mackerel fishery.

Proposed Action and Alternatives

Action 1. Revise the acceptable biological catch, annual optimum yield?, total annual catch limit, sector annual catch limits, and commercial zone quotas and for Atlantic migratory group Spanish mackerel.

***Purpose of Action:** Update the Atlantic Spanish mackerel catch levels to be consistent with SEDAR 78, SSC recommendations, and the best scientific information available. The Council may consider setting the Atlantic Spanish mackerel total ACL at the same level as the ABC recommended by the SSC or may consider including a buffer between the two values.*

Alternative 1 (No Action). The total annual catch limit and annual optimum yield for Atlantic migratory group Spanish mackerel are equal to the current acceptable biological catch (6,057,000 pounds as landed). The current acceptable biological catch is inclusive of recreational estimates from the Marine Recreational Information Program’s Coastal Household Telephone Survey.

Alternative 2. Revise the acceptable biological catch for Atlantic migratory group Spanish mackerel and set it equal to the most recent recommendation from the Scientific and Statistical Committee. Revise the total annual catch limit and annual optimum yield for Atlantic migratory group Spanish mackerel and set them equal to the recommended acceptable biological catch. Revise the sector annual catch limits and commercial zone quotas based on current allocation percentages. The recommended acceptable biological catch is inclusive of recreational estimates from the Marine Recreational Information Program’s Fishing Effort Survey.

ABC	Buffer	Total ACL	Rec. ACL	Rec. ACT	Comm. ACL	Comm. Northern Zone	Comm. Southern Zone
8,024,000	None	8,024,000	3,610,800	3,112,510	4,413,200	882,640	3,530,560

Note: catch levels are in pounds as landed.

Alternative 3. Revise the acceptable biological catch for Atlantic migratory group Spanish mackerel and set it equal to the most recent recommendation from the Scientific and Statistical Committee. Revise the total annual catch limit and annual optimum yield for Atlantic migratory group Spanish mackerel and set them equal to 95% of the recommended acceptable biological catch. Revise the sector annual catch limits and commercial zone quotas based on current allocation percentages. The recommended acceptable biological catch is inclusive of recreational estimates from the Marine Recreational Information Program’s Fishing Effort Survey.

ABC	Buffer	Total ACL	Rec. ACL	Rec. ACT	Comm. ACL	Comm. Northern Zone	Comm. Southern Zone
8,024,000	5%	7,622,800	3,430,260	2,956,884	4,192,540	838,508	3,354,032

Note: catch levels are in pounds as landed.

Alternative 4. Revise the acceptable biological catch for Atlantic migratory group Spanish mackerel and set it equal to the most recent recommendation from the Scientific and Statistical Committee. Revise the total annual catch limit and annual optimum yield for Atlantic migratory group Spanish mackerel and set them equal to 90% of the recommended acceptable biological catch. Revise the sector annual catch limits and commercial zone quotas based on current allocation percentages. The recommended acceptable biological catch is inclusive of recreational estimates from the Marine Recreational Information Program’s Fishing Effort Survey.

ABC	Buffer	Total ACL	Rec. ACL	Rec. ACT	Comm. ACL	Comm. Northern Zone	Comm. Southern Zone
8,024,000	10%	7,221,600	3,249,720	2,801,259	3,971,880	794,376	3,177,504

Note: catch levels are in pounds as landed.

Discussion

Optimum Yield: OY is the harvest level for a species that achieves the greatest overall benefit, including economic, social, and biological considerations. OY is different from maximum sustainable yield (MSY) in that MSY considers only the biology of the species. MSY constitutes a “ceiling” for OY. OY may be lower than MSY, depending on relevant economic, social, or ecological factors. The South Atlantic Council has typically established annual OY values for coastal migratory pelagic species but could consider establishing a with a long-term OY, as had been discussed for some snapper grouper species.

Sector Allocations: Sector allocations for Atlantic Spanish mackerel were originally established in Amendment 2 to the CMP FMP based on the average ratio of catch from 1979 through 1985, resulting in an allocation of 76% to the

For recent commercial and recreational landings, see the [Atlantic Spanish Mackerel Fishery Overview](#).

commercial sector and 24% to the recreational sector. Amendment 4 to the CMP FMP revised sector allocations to be a 50/50 split. Council members at the time felt that because the resource was overfished from 1979-1985, the recreational sector experienced lower catch rates. Additionally, qualitative information indicated that recreational catch was high during the 1970s and was affected by the increase in commercial effort seen in the mid-1970s. Finally, the capacity and demand of both sectors had expanded such that either group could harvest all the available resource, making a 50/50 allocation the most equitable. The current allocation between the commercial (55%) and recreational sector (45%) was established via a 1998 Framework Action (effective September 1999). The commercial sector was regularly meeting or exceeding their allocation while the recreational sector was not reaching their allocation, so the Council shifted 5% of the sector allocation to the commercial sector.

Recreational ACT: The recreational ACT is based on adjusting the ACL by 50% or one minus the five-year average of the proportional standard error (PSE) from the recreational sector,

whichever is greater. The average PSE for the last five fishing seasons (2018-2022) was 13.8% (**Table 2**). The recreational ACT is utilized in the post-season recreational accountability measure for Atlantic Spanish mackerel. If the recreational landings exceed the recreational ACL and the sum of the commercial and recreational landings exceeds the total ACL, the bag limit may be reduced for the following fishing year by the amount necessary to ensure recreational landings may achieve the recreational ACT, but do not exceed the recreational ACL.

Table 2. The PSEs for Atlantic Spanish mackerel from harvest estimates for all recreational modes.

Fishing Year	2018/2019	2019/2020	2020/2021	2021/2022	2022/2023	5-Year Average
PSE Value	13.3	11.8	15.1	13.8	15	13.8

Commercial Quota Allocations Commercial quota allocations between the Northern Zone and Southern Zone were established in Amendment 20B to the CMP FMP (effective March 2015) and are based on the average proportion of commercial landings in each zone from the 2002/2003 fishing season through the 2011/2012 fishing season, resulting in an allocation of 19.9% to the Northern Zone and 80.1% to the Southern Zone.

Scoping Comments:

No scoping comments were submitted for Framework Amendment 13.

Mackerel Cobia Advisory Panel Comments:

- Allocation between the recreational and commercial sector and the commercial Northern Zone and Southern Zone will need to be addressed.
- There is no need for a buffer between the acceptable biological catch (ABC) and the annual catch limit (ACL).
 - The commercial sector has reliable reporting of Atlantic Spanish mackerel.
 - The recreational annual catch target (ACT) addresses uncertainty in private recreational landings.
- AP members expressed concern about how closures or a reduced bag limit in the commercial and recreational sectors, respectively, may affect dead discard estimates.
- There needs to be a mechanism to accurately account for private recreational landings and it should be similar to how commercial fishermen are required to report their catch.

MOTION 1: SELECT ALTERNATIVE 2 AS THE MACKEREL COBIA AP’S PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE.

Action 1. Revise the acceptable biological catch, annual optimum yield, total annual catch limit, sector annual catch limits, and commercial zone quotas and for Atlantic migratory group Spanish mackerel.

Alternative 2. Revise the acceptable biological catch for Atlantic migratory group Spanish mackerel and set it equal to the most recent recommendation from the Scientific and Statistical Committee. Revise the total annual catch limit and annual optimum yield for Atlantic migratory group Spanish mackerel and set them equal to the recommended acceptable biological catch. Revise the sector annual catch limits and commercial zone quotas based on current allocation percentages. The recommended acceptable biological catch is inclusive of recreational estimates from the Marine Recreational Information Program’s Fishing Effort Survey.

MOTION APPROVED (11-0-1)

Annual Catch Limit Analysis:

Analyses were conducted to determine whether or not closures would occur for the commercial and recreational sectors (**Appendix A** and **Appendix B**, respectively) under alternatives proposed in Action 1. Closures were predicted based on three different landings scenarios:

1. **Highest Landings:** highest single fishing year of landings for the last five years.
 - a. Commercial Northern: 2021/2022
 - b. Commercial Southern: 2018/2019
 - c. Recreational: 2021/2022
2. **Three-Year Average:** average landings for the last three fishing years.
 - a. 2019/2020-2021/2022
3. **Five-Year Average:** average landings for the last five fishing years
 - a. 2017/2018-2021/2022.

The earliest the **commercial Northern Zone** is predicted to close in federal waters is August 21st (**Alternative 4**, highest landings scenario). The latest the commercial Northern Zone is predicted to close is September 12th (**Alternative 2**, five-year average scenario) (**Table 3**).

Table 3. The projected closure dates for the Northern Zone commercial quotas proposed in Amendment 13 for three different landings scenarios.

	Closure Dates			
	Quota	Highest Landings	3-Year Average	5-Year Average
Alternative 2	882,640	3-Sep	6-Sep	12-Sep
Alternative 3	838,508	27-Aug	31-Aug	6-Sep
Alternative 4	794,376	21-Aug	25-Aug	30-Aug

The commercial **Southern Zone** is not predicted to close in federal waters under any of the alternatives and landing scenarios. However, the commercial Southern Zone operates under an adjusted quota trip limit system. The adjusted quota is equal to the total Southern Zone quota

minus 250,000 pounds. The trip limit at the start of the fishing year is 3,500 pounds. Once 75% of the adjusted quota has been met, the trip limit steps down to 1,500 pounds. Once the total adjusted quota has been met, the trip limit steps down to 500 pounds. Finally, once the full Southern Zone quota has been met, the fishery is closed in federal waters. Trip limit step downs are predicted to occur as early as January 5th (**Alternative 4**, highest landings scenario) or as late as January 17th (**Alternative 2**-, three- and five-year average scenarios) (**Table 4**).

Table 4. Spanish mackerel Southern Zone predicted dates when 75% of the Adjusted Southern Zone quota, Adjusted Southern Zone Quota, and Quota are met for the three different predicted landings scenarios.

	75% of Adjusted Southern Zone Quota Met	Adjusted Southern Zone Quota Met	Quota Met
Highest Landings			
Alternative 2	12-Jan	14-Feb	No Closure
Alternative 3	8-Jan	4-Feb	No Closure
Alternative 4	5-Jan	28-Jan	No Closure
3-Year Average			
Alternative 2	17-Jan	26-Feb	No Closure
Alternative 3	14-Jan	15-Feb	No Closure
Alternative 4	10-Jan	5-Feb	No Closure
5-Year Average			
Alternative 2	17-Jan	24-Feb	No Closure
Alternative 3	13-Jan	14-Feb	No Closure
Alternative 4	10-Jan	4-Feb	No Closure

The **recreational sector** is predicted to meet their ACL as early as August 10th (**Alternative 4**, highest landings scenario). The latest the recreational sector is predicted to meet their ACL is October 20th (**Alternative 2**, five-year average scenario) (**Table 5**).

Table 5. The projected closure dates for the recreational ACLs proposed in Framework Amendment 13 for three different landings scenarios.

	ACL	Closure Dates		
		Highest Landings	3-Year Average	5-Year Average
Alternative 2	3,610,800	23-Aug	13-Sep	20-Oct
Alternative 3	3,430,260	17-Aug	5-Sep	10-Oct
Alternative 4	3,249,720	10-Aug	28-Aug	30-Sep

COMMITTEE ACTION

DISCUSS IF AN LONG-TERM OY FOR ATLANTIC SPANISH MACKEREL IS APPROPRIATE.

REVIEW AND APPROVE ACTION AND ALTERNATIVES FOR INCLUSION IN COASTAL MIGRATORY PELAGICS FRAMEWORK AMENDMENT 13.

Appendix A: Predicting Closure Dates for the Atlantic Spanish Mackerel Commercial Sector

Prepared by Mike Larkin, NMFS SERO Staff.

Introduction

In 2022, a stock assessment was conducted for Atlantic migratory group Spanish mackerel (Atlantic Spanish mackerel) (SEDAR 78). Results from the assessment showed Atlantic Spanish mackerel is not overfished and not experiencing overfishing. Following the results of SEDAR 78, the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council (South Atlantic Council) is exploring changes to both the Northern Zone and Southern Zone commercial quotas for Atlantic Spanish mackerel in Framework Amendment 13 to the Fishery Management Plan (FMP) for Coastal Migratory Pelagic (CMP) Resources in the Gulf of Mexico and Atlantic Regions (CMP FMP). The Northern Zone is from the New York/Connecticut/Rhode Island line to the North Carolina/South Carolina line. The Southern Zone is from the North Carolina/South Carolina line to the Miami-Dade/Monroe County line in Florida. Additionally, the commercial quotas are set in pounds as reported (lbs).

Northern Zone

New York/Connecticut/Rhode Island line to the North Carolina/South Carolina line

Commercial landings data were provided from the Southeast Fisheries Science Center (SEFSC) on September 18, 2023. The Northern Zone has experienced closures in federal waters and quota overages in each of the past five fishing years (2017/2018 through 2021/2022). The federal water closures ranged from as early as June 28th to as late as November 7th. While there were closures in federal waters, Atlantic Spanish mackerel commercial landings could continue in state waters. Commercial landings in recent years were reviewed to determine the percentage of the Northern Zone commercial landings that came from federal waters. Both federal and state waters were open in the Atlantic Spanish mackerel Northern Zone from March through May in 2019, 2020, and 2021. Additionally, both federal and state waters were also open in June of 2018, 2019, and 2020. The data during these time periods resulted in the commercial landings in federal waters accounting for less than 1% of the total commercial landings. Therefore, the majority of the Atlantic Spanish mackerel commercial landings in the northern zone occur in state waters.

When federal waters are closed, states are not required to close state waters. However, in recent years, Maryland, Virginia, and North Carolina implemented a reduced 500-pound trip limit in state waters when the Northern Zone federal waters were closed. A comparison was conducted of monthly commercial landings from recent years with the federal waters open compared to the same month with the federal waters closed. For example, the Northern Zone had federal waters open in August of 2018 (156,001 lbs. landed) and was compared to August of 2021 (207,906 lbs. landed) which had federal waters closed. The results show that, in most months, the Northern Zone Atlantic Spanish mackerel commercial landings were higher when federal waters were closed than in the same months in a different year when the federal waters were open (**Table A-1**).

Table A-1. Northern Zone Spanish mackerel commercial landings (pounds) by month for the fishing years of 2017/2018 through 2021/2022.

Fishing Year	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	Federal Waters Closure Date
2017/2018	329	146,252	110,523	140,260	135,799	141,077	169,032	11/7/2017
2018/2019	620	116,562	144,224	88,867	156,001	114,286	204,656	11/4/2018
2019/2020	5,948	190,711	217,661	215,411	155,697	68,487	100,460	8/24/2019
2020/2021	4,704	231,417	284,444	153,912	121,717	104,939	212,162	7/22/2020
2021/2022	6,267	247,611	266,022	188,036	207,906	216,825	208,684	6/28/2021

Cells with no color had federal waters open the entire month. Cells highlighted in yellow had federal waters closed for part of the month. Cells highlighted in red had federal waters closed the entire month. Landings from March and also November through February had low landings (<5,000 lbs.) and excluded to protect confidentiality.

An estimate of future landings is required to explore if the Framework Amendment 13 proposed commercial quotas will be met, and the federal waters closed. The Atlantic Spanish mackerel commercial sector has a fishing year from March 1st to February 29th. Three different scenarios were used for predicting future Northern Zone commercial landings for March through May: 1) using the highest fishing year of commercial landings in the past five years (fishing year 2021/2022), 2) three-year average of landings for the past three fishing years (2019/2020 to 2021/2022), and 3) five-year average of landings for the past five fishing years (2017/2018 to 2021/2022) (**Figure A-1**). Due to closures in the Northern Zone after May a patchwork of monthly commercial landings was used for predicting June through February landings. Predicted June landings came from a three-year average of the June 2018, 2019, and 2020 landings. Predicted July through February landings came from the 2021/2022 fishing year since this is the most recent year of complete commercial landings.

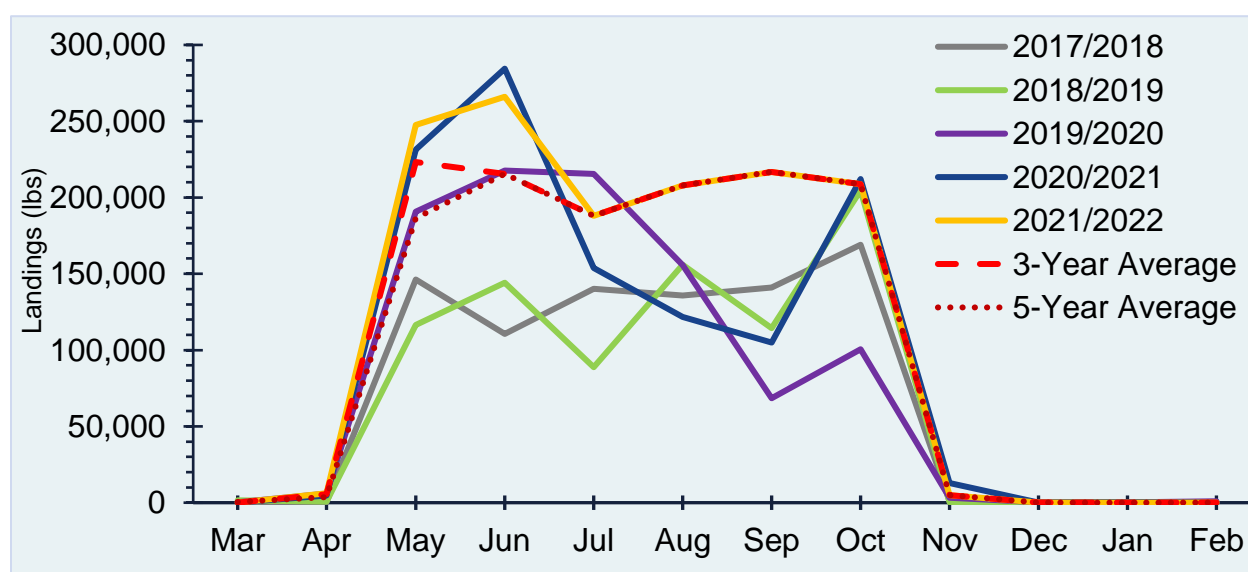


Figure A-1. Spanish mackerel Northern Zone commercial landings by month for the fishing years of 2017/2018 through 2021/2022.

Three different scenarios were used for predicting future Northern Zone commercial landings, and the scenarios are described in the text.

Closure dates were predicted by assuming uniform landings for each day in a month. Then the landings per day were cumulatively summed and compared to the proposed Northern Zone quotas in Framework Amendment 13. A closure date was determined as the day the cumulatively summed landings reached the quota. The predicted closure dates range from August 1st to September 12th (**Table A-2**).

Table A-2. The projected closure dates for the Northern Zone commercial quotas proposed in Amendment 13 for three different landings scenarios.

	Quota	Closure Dates		
		Highest Landings	3-Year Average	5-Year Average
Alternative 1	662,670	1-Aug	5-Aug	11-Aug
Alternative 2	882,640	3-Sep	6-Sep	12-Sep
Alternative 3	838,508	27-Aug	31-Aug	6-Sep
Alternative 4	794,376	21-Aug	25-Aug	30-Aug

Three different scenarios were used for predicting future Northern Zone commercial landings, and the scenarios are described in the text.

Southern Zone

North Carolina/South Carolina line to the Miami-Dade/Monroe County line in Florida

As stated earlier, commercial landings data were provided from the SEFSC on September 18, 2023. The Southern Zone has a specific trip limit reduction procedure that was implemented in Framework Amendment 2 (2015). The trip limit reductions are based on the adjusted Southern Zone quota, which is 250,000 less than the total Southern Zone quota. When 75% of the adjusted Southern Zone quota is reached the trip limit drops from 3,500 lbs. whole weight (ww) to 1,500 lbs. When 100% of the adjusted Southern Zone quota is met the trip limit drops to 500 lbs. When 100% of the total Southern Zone quota is met the fishery in federal waters is closed.

The Southern Zone has a fishing year from March 1st to the end of February. In the past six fishing years (2016/2017 to 2021/2022), the Southern Zone has experienced numerous trip limit reductions and closures in federal waters. The federal water trip limit reductions ranged from as early as December 24th and as late as February 6th. The closures in federal waters ranged from as early as January 5th and as late as February 5th.

An estimate of future landings is required to explore if the Framework Amendment 13 proposed commercial quotas will be met, and the federal waters closed. Three different scenarios were used for predicting future Southern Zone commercial landings for March through November: 1) Using the highest fishing year of commercial landings in the past five years (fishing year 2018/2019), 2) three-year average of landings for the past three fishing years (2019/2020 to 2021/2022), and 3) five-year average of landings for the past five fishing years (2017/2018 to 2021/2022) (**Figure A-2**). Due to both trip limit changes and closures in the Southern Zone after November a patchwork of monthly commercial landings were used for predicting December through February landings. Predicted December landings came from a two-year average of the most recent years that did not have a trip limit reduction (December landings in 2020 and 2021). January landings came from the most recent January landings without a trip limit reduction or

closure (January 2021). February landings came from the most recent February landings without a closure or a trip limit reduction (January 2016).

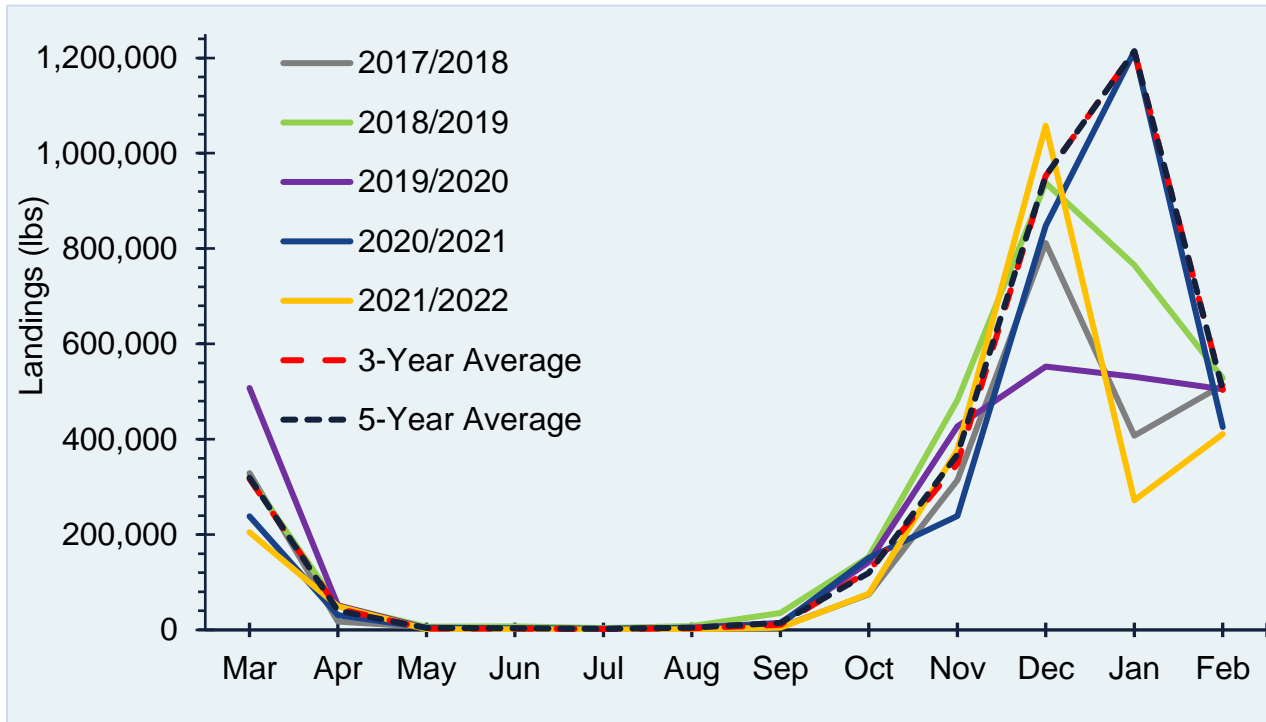


Figure A-2. Spanish mackerel Southern Zone commercial landings by month for the fishing years of 2017/2018 through 2021/2022.

Three different scenarios were used for predicting future Southern Zone commercial landings, and the scenarios are described in the text.

Framework Amendment 13 has four different alternatives for Southern Zone quotas (**Table A-3**). Following the trip limit reduction and closure procedure of the Southern Zone, an impact on the landings from the trip limit reduction is needed to predict when the quota will be met.

Commercial logbook data was provided from the SEFSC on March 1, 2023, and this logbook data was analyzed to determine the potential impact from trip limit reductions. The impact was calculated by choosing recent data from a time period where there were no trip limit changes or closures. The commercial data from December in 2020 and 2021 was used because it is relatively recent data and did not have any trip limit reductions or closures. The trip limits were analyzed by first modifying the catch per trip to match the trip limit under consideration then determining how much the new trip limit would decrease the landings. For example, when analyzing a reduction on the trip limit to 500 lbs., a trip with 800 pounds would be reduced to 500 pounds. Estimated reductions were calculated based on the difference in landings with no trip limit change (left at status quo of 3,500 lbs.) compared to landings when a trip limit was imposed. These reductions were converted to percentages based on the total harvest.

Additionally, the trip limit reductions assume the trip limits will be imposed in both federal and state waters. The trip limit reduction analysis was done for a reduction down to 1,500 lbs. and 500 lbs. (**Table A-4**)

Table A-3. Spanish mackerel Southern Zone commercial quotas (pounds) being considered in Framework Amendment 13.

	75% of Adjusted Southern Zone Quota	Adjusted Southern Zone Quota	Quota
Alternative 1	1,812,998	2,417,330	2,667,330
Alternative 2	2,460,420	3,280,560	3,530,560
Alternative 3	2,328,024	3,104,032	3,354,032
Alternative 4	2,195,628	2,927,504	3,177,504

Table A-4. Percent decreases in landings for the trip limit reductions of 1,500 lbs. and 500 lbs. for Atlantic Spanish mackerel in the Southern Zone.

Trip Limit (lbs)	Percent Reduction
1,500	20.3%
500	62.3%

Data was generated from commercial logbook data from December of 2020 and 2021.

Closure dates were predicted from assuming uniform landings for each day in a month. Then the landings per day were cumulatively summed and compared to the Southern Zone quota Alternatives in Framework Amendment 13 (**Table 3**). Predictions were first made when 75% adjusted southern zone quota is met. When 75% of the adjusted quota is met the time period after that date had the predicted landings reduced by 20.3% to reflect the trip limit reduction from 3,500 lbs. down to 1,500 lbs. Then when 100% of the adjusted quota is met the time period after that date had the predicted landings reduced by 62.3% to reflect the trip limit reduction from 1,500 lbs. down to 500 lbs. These landings are cumulatively summed per day until 100% of the Southern Zone quota is met. The federal closure date is determined when 100% of the Southern Zone quota is met. The predicted federal waters closure dates (when the Southern Zone quota was met) range from January 31 to no closure (**Table A-5**).

Table A-5. Spanish mackerel Southern Zone predicted dates when 75% of the Adjusted Southern Zone quota, Adjusted Southern Zone Quota, and Quota were met for the three different predicted landings scenarios.

	75% of Adjusted Southern Zone Quota Met	Adjusted Southern Zone Quota Met	Quota Met
Highest Landings			
Alternative 1	25-Dec	14-Jan	31-Jan
Alternative 2	12-Jan	14-Feb	No Closure
Alternative 3	8-Jan	4-Feb	No Closure
Alternative 4	5-Jan	28-Jan	No Closure
3-Year Average			
Alternative 1	1-Jan	20-Jan	13-Feb
Alternative 2	17-Jan	26-Feb	No Closure
Alternative 3	14-Jan	15-Feb	No Closure
Alternative 4	10-Jan	5-Feb	No Closure

	75% of Adjusted Southern Zone Quota Met	Adjusted Southern Zone Quota Met	Quota Met
5-Year Average			
Alternative 1	31-Dec	19-Jan	10-Feb
Alternative 2	17-Jan	24-Feb	No Closure
Alternative 3	13-Jan	14-Feb	No Closure
Alternative 4	10-Jan	4-Feb	No Closure

References

SEDAR 78. 2022. South Atlantic Spanish mackerel stock assessment. Southeast Data, Assessment and Review. North Charleston, South Carolina.
<http://www.sefsc.noaa.gov/sedar/>.

Appendix B: Predicting Closure Dates for the Atlantic Spanish Mackerel Recreational Sector

Prepared by Mike Larkin, NMFS SERO Staff.

Introduction

In 2022, a stock assessment was conducted for Atlantic migratory group Spanish mackerel (Atlantic Spanish mackerel) (SEDAR 78). Results from the assessment showed that Atlantic Spanish mackerel is not overfished and not experiencing overfishing. Following the results of SEDAR 78 the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council (South Atlantic Council) is considering changing the annual catch limit (ACL) for the Atlantic Spanish mackerel stock in Framework Amendment 13 to the Fishery Management Plan (FMP) for Coastal Migratory Pelagic (CMP) Resources in the Gulf of Mexico and Atlantic Regions (Framework Amendment 13). Additionally, following SEDAR 78, the new ACLs proposed in Framework Amendment 13 were set with Marine Recreational Information Program (MRIP) Fishing Effort Survey (FES) data instead of the previously used MRIP Coastal Household Telephone Survey (CHTS).

Data Sources and Predicted Landings

Recreational landings data for Atlantic Spanish mackerel are a combination of recreational landings from MRIP-FES and the Southeast Region Headboat Survey. These data were provided from the Southeast Fisheries Science Center (SEFSC) on August 25, 2023, and the recreational landings are organized by two-month waves. Framework Amendment 13 proposes a range of recreational ACLs. An estimate of future landings is required to estimate if the Framework Amendment 13 proposed recreational ACLs will be met, and the recreational sector will be closed. The Atlantic Spanish mackerel recreational sector has a fishing year from March 1st to February 29th. Three different scenarios were used for predicting future Atlantic Spanish mackerel recreational landings for the fishing year: 1) Using the highest fishing year of recreational landings in the past five years (fishing year 2021/2022), 2) three-year average of landings for the past three fishing years (2019/2020, 2020/2021, and 2021/2022), and 3) five-year average of landings for the past five fishing years (2017/2018 to 2021/2022) (**Figure B-1**).

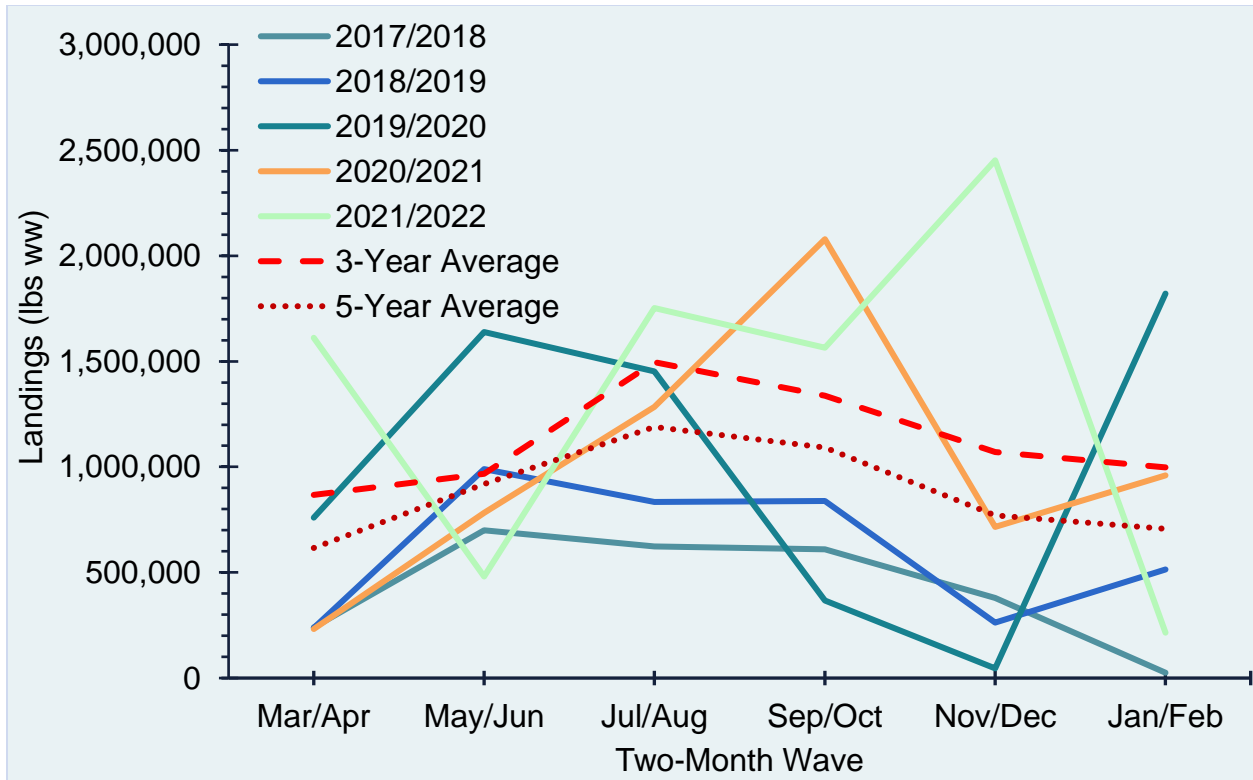


Figure B-1. Atlantic migratory group Spanish mackerel recreational landings by two-month wave for the fishing years of 2017/2018 through 2021/2022, and also the three- and five-year averages. All landings are in pounds whole weight (lbs ww).

Predicted Closure Dates

Closure dates were predicted by assuming uniform recreational landings for each day in a two-month wave for the three landings scenarios. Then the landings per day were cumulatively summed and compared to the recreational ACL alternatives in Framework Amendment 13. A closure date was determined as the day the cumulatively summed landings met or exceeded the ACL. The predicted closure dates range from August 10 to October 20th (**Table B-1**).

Table B-1. The projected closure dates for the recreational ACLs proposed in Framework Amendment 13 for three different landings scenarios.

	ACL	Closure Dates		
		Highest Landings	3-Year Average	5-Year Average
Alternative 1	2,727,000	Not Applicable		
Alternative 2	3,610,800	23-Aug	13-Sep	20-Oct
Alternative 3	3,430,260	17-Aug	5-Sep	10-Oct
Alternative 4	3,249,720	10-Aug	28-Aug	30-Sep

No prediction was made for Alternative 1 (No Action) since that recreational ACL was set in MRIP-CHTS which is no longer consistent with the best scientific information available and not a viable alternative.

References

SEDAR 78. 2022. South Atlantic Spanish mackerel stock assessment. Southeast Data, Assessment and Review. North Charleston, South Carolina.
<http://www.sefsc.noaa.gov/sedar/>.



THE SOUTH ATLANTIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

King and Spanish Mackerel Port Meetings

Discussion Document

December 2023

Background

During their April 2019 meeting and their October 2022 meeting, the Mackerel Cobia Advisory Panel (AP) passed motions requesting the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council (South Atlantic Council) set up a series of port meetings to gather more information on the Atlantic king and Spanish mackerel fisheries. The South Atlantic Council acknowledged the importance of gaining a comprehensive understanding of the commercial and recreational king and Spanish mackerel fisheries and how port meetings may provide an effective avenue to achieve that understanding. During their December 2022 meeting, the South Atlantic Council directed staff to begin developing a plan for conducting port meetings throughout the South Atlantic, Gulf of Mexico, Mid-Atlantic and New England regions.

In August 2023, the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (Atlantic States Commission) received an overview of the plan to conduct a series of port meetings for king and Spanish mackerel. Atlantic States Commission members are willing to participate in both the development and implementation of port meetings for the mackerel fisheries. There was wide agreement that port meetings would provide information beneficial for the management process and essentially function as pre-scoping for the forthcoming plan amendment addressing

management of Atlantic Spanish mackerel. Additionally, they recommend involving the Atlantic Spanish Mackerel Technical Committee (TC) in the planning process.

The Fishery Management Plan (FMP) for Coastal Migratory Pelagic (CMP) Resources in the Gulf of Mexico and Atlantic Regions (CMP FMP) is a joint management plan between the South Atlantic Council and the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council (Gulf Council). The Gulf Council also received a port meetings overview during their August 2023 meeting. Gulf Council staff compared participation between public hearings and virtual tools (i.e., Fishermen Feedback, video views, and webinars) and noted the historic low participation to in-person CMP-focused meetings. Given that virtual tools seem to have a wider-reach and capture responses their constituents more efficiently, the Gulf Council recommended moving forward with a virtual approach, but also asked staff to consider ways to enhance feedback from king and Spanish mackerel fishermen during scheduled Council meetings.

The Port Meetings Planning Team met for the first time in October 2023 to discuss the best way to facilitate discussion during port meetings as well as port meeting locations. Additionally, the Mackerel Cobia Advisory Panel discussed meeting structure and locations at their November 2023 meeting.

Objectives for this Meeting:

- Review Mackerel Cobia Advisory Panel Input.
- Provide input on port meeting structure and locations.

South Atlantic Council Port Meeting Goals and Objectives:

- Evaluation of current goals and objectives of the CMP FMP.
- Achieving the maximum economic and social yield from the fishery.
- Maintaining the long-term sustainability of stocks.
- Maintaining the integrity of fishing communities under climate change.
- Achieving the most equitable management structure under climate change.
- Identification of underserved communities and EEJ concerns.
- Consideration of interjurisdictional management and cooperation with other councils and ASMFC.

Discussion Topics:

- How species movement/expansion may affect future management, especially how fishermen are responding to these changes and how the permit structure may influence their behavior.
- Dynamics of the commercial fleet, including the mobility of the fleet, market flexibility, and spatial seasonality.

- Differences in how commercial fishermen interact with the fishery (travel to different areas vs. only participate in one area).
- Differences in the size of fish being targeted at different times and in different areas.
- How the commercial and recreational sectors utilize and value the king and Spanish mackerel fishery.
 - Is there a big catch and release component to the king and Spanish mackerel fisheries?
- What role do king and Spanish mackerel fishing tournaments play in the fishery? How might these tournaments be affecting the fisheries?
 - Is there acceptance/interest within the recreational industry to move towards catch and release only tournaments?
- How water quality and harmful algal blooms affecting the king and Spanish mackerel fisheries.
- How king and Spanish mackerel fisheries interact with other important fisheries.
- What types of gear are currently being used in the fishery and how has this changed over time?
- How can the Council better reach underserved stakeholders and identify equity and environmental justice issues within the king and Spanish mackerel fishing communities?

Mackerel Cobia Advisory Panel Comments:

- How a uniform management structure along the Atlantic coast (state and federal waters) may be achieved.
- How much king and Spanish mackerel are being targeted by locals (recreational) and sold or consumed locally (commercial) versus how much is being targeted by tourists or being sent away from the local area.
- How severe weather (hurricanes) affect the king and Spanish mackerel fisheries.
- The effect of the limited access status of the commercial king mackerel permit.
 - How are businesses choosing to operate under limited entry as the fishery changes.
 - Is there a future for short-term leasing of commercial king mackerel permits, especially considering the seasonal nature of the fishery.
- Recreational permitting and reporting should be discussed with recreational attendees to learn what would be needed for them to be comfortable with such a system.
- Ask attendees if they have noticed a change in who is participating in the commercial and recreational king and Spanish mackerel fisheries.

Tentative Timeline:

Date		Development of Port Meetings
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	October 2022	Mackerel Cobia Advisory Panel unanimously passes a motion requesting the Council conduct a series of port meetings to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the king and Spanish mackerel fisheries.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	December 2022	South Atlantic Council reviews the Mackerel Cobia Advisory Panel motion and directs staff begin work on a plan to conduct port meetings.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	March 2023	South Atlantic Council discusses what information they feel is needed to gain a comprehensive understanding of the king and Spanish mackerel fisheries.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	April 2023	Mackerel Cobia Advisory Panel discusses their goals and objectives for port meetings.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	June 2023	South Atlantic Council reviews input from the Mackerel Cobia Advisory Panel and discusses their goals and objectives for port meetings.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	August 2023	The Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission and the Gulf of Mexico Council are asked to participate in the development and execution of port meetings.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	November 2023	Mackerel Cobia Advisory Panel meets and provides input on proposed structure for port meetings and key communities to hold meetings.
<input type="checkbox"/>	December 2023	South Atlantic Council meets and discusses proposed meeting structure and approves key locations so scheduling work can begin.
<input type="checkbox"/>	February 2024	Mock-port meeting held with the Mackerel Cobia Advisory Panel
<input type="checkbox"/>	March 2024	South Atlantic Council approves final plan for conducting port meetings.
Date		Port Meetings Conducted
<input type="checkbox"/>	April 2024	Port Meetings conducted in: North Carolina
<input type="checkbox"/>	May 2024	Port Meetings conducted in: New England
<input type="checkbox"/>	June 2024	South Atlantic Council receives an update on port meeting progress.
<input type="checkbox"/>	July 2024	Port Meetings conducted in: South Carolina and Georgia
<input type="checkbox"/>	August 2024	Port Meetings conducted in: Mid-Atlantic
<input type="checkbox"/>	September 2024	South Atlantic Council receives an update on port meeting progress.
<input type="checkbox"/>	October 2024	Port meetings conducted in: Florida
<input type="checkbox"/>	December 2024	South Atlantic Council receives an update on port meeting progress.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Throughout 2024	Gulf Council staff holds webinars to gather input from king and Spanish mackerel fishermen and updates the Gulf of Mexico Council, as appropriate.

	Date	Summary Report Prepared
<input type="checkbox"/>	Winter 2025	Staff conducts thematic analysis and prepares summary report.
<input type="checkbox"/>	March 2025	Final report presented to the South Atlantic Council and guidance on future actions provided.
<input type="checkbox"/>	April 2025	Final report presented to the Mackerel Cobia Advisory Panel

DRAFT Port Meeting Structure:

Port meetings would be conducted in the evenings, from 6:00pm to 8:00pm. Materials provided during the meeting could include a general fact sheet with room for note-taking and various tables and charts presented around the room to spur discussion.

Prelude: As stakeholders arrive at the meeting, there could be space for them to answer a question or two (ex. post-it notes to stick to a flipboard). Example questions include:

1. What is one thing you hope comes out of port meetings?
2. What is one key thing the Council needs to know about king and Spanish mackerel?

Meeting Introduction: A very brief presentation introducing port meetings, the Council's goals and objectives, and explaining how the night will operate.

Breakout Groups: A series of breakout groups to elicit information from attendees on the various topics identified by the Council. Example breakout group categories:

1. CMP FMP Goals and Objectives
2. Environmental conditions (species movement, expansion)
3. Changes needed to the current management structure.

Break: Time for attendees to relax and have informal conversations. Also include an interactive activity, such as a sticky wall where stakeholders can note the year you got into the fishery or key events in the fisheries or a keep/remove poll for the goals and objectives in the CMP FMP.

Sector Dynamics: Two breakout groups, by sector, discussing the dynamics of each fleet. Those that do not participate in a specific sector (ex. ENGOs) can select.

Wrap-Up: Final presentation to recap port meeting goals and objectives, note the next steps/timing, and thank participants.

Mackerel Cobia Advisory Panel Comments:

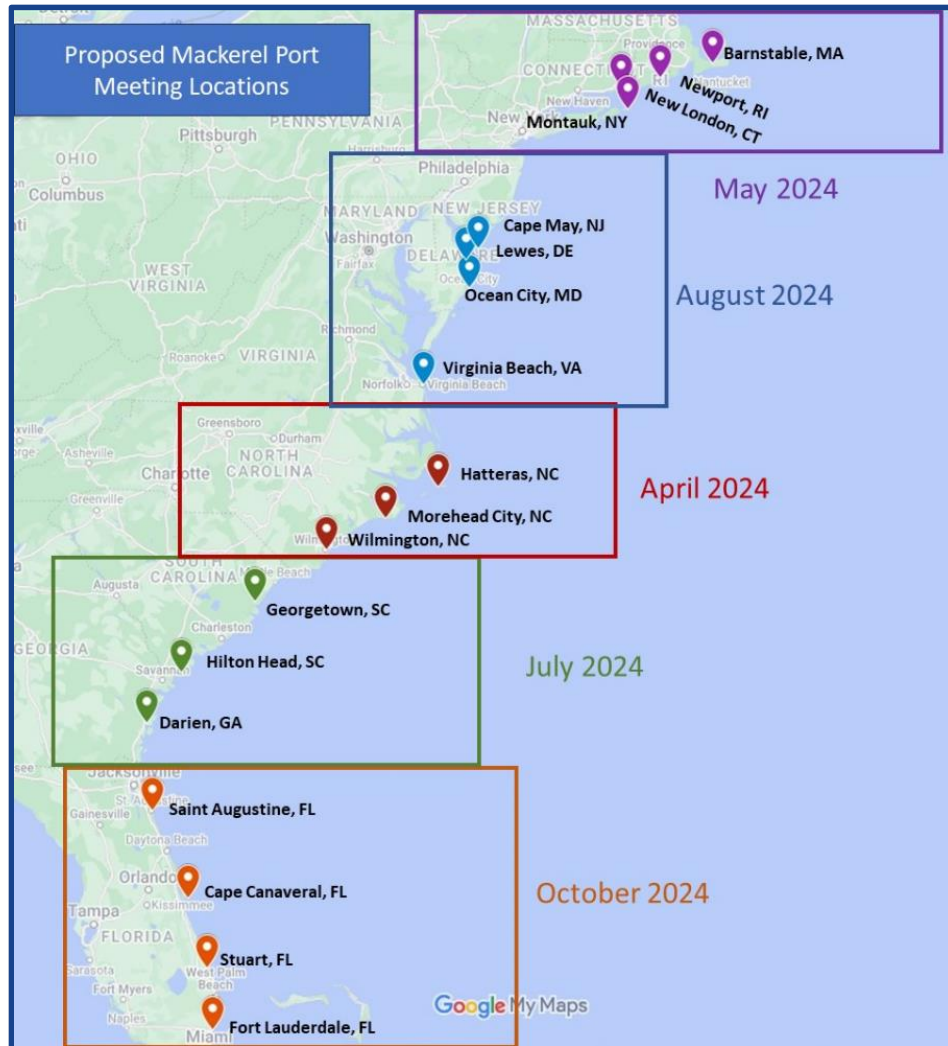
- Two-hours on a weekday evening is an appropriate amount of time to ask fishermen to attend and actively participate in a port meeting.
- Support for using breakout groups as a way to gather input from attendees.

- Breakout groups may make individuals feel more comfortable providing input and keep presentations to a minimum.
- Suggest that staff have a series of prepared questions to help get discussions started.
- Might need to consider an alternate method if meeting a has very high attendance or very low attendance because breakout groups may cause the meeting to run long or there won't be enough individuals to use breakout groups.
- AP members felt that they would be about to get a couple dozen fishermen to attend port meetings in their areas.
- Recommend using an online registration link to get an estimate of how many fishermen might attend a given port meeting.
- Create an online tool that would allow fishermen to provide input if they are unable to match their local port meeting.
 - Getting information about these port meetings out to fishermen will be incredibly important.
 - Recommendation to reach out to local chambers of commerce and other local organizations to reach underserved communities and fishermen who might not usually participate in the management process.
- Support for providing attendees with a short information sheet for them to reference during the meeting. If possible, providing access to the information sheet in advance of the meeting would be ideal. The sheet should include the following:
 - An introduction to the fishery management process.
 - Most recent stock assessment information for king and Spanish mackerel.
 - Recent commercial and recreational landings trends.

DRAFT Port Meeting Locations:

Port meeting locations were identified based on input from the Port Meeting Plannings Team and the Mackerel Cobia Advisory Panel, with the goal of holding three to four meetings in each state/region.

Month	State	Meeting One	Meeting Two	Meeting Three	Meeting Four
April	North Carolina	Wilmington	Morehead City	Hatteras	
May	New England	Montauk	New London	Newport	Barnstable
July	Georgia/South Carolina	Darien	Hilton Head	Georgetown	
August	Mid-Atlantic	Virginia Beach	Ocean City	Lewes	Cape May
October	Florida	Fort Lauderdale	Stuart	Cape Canaveral	Saint Augustine



Mackerel Cobia Advisory Panel Comments:

- Proposed Florida meeting locations look sufficient, but it was noted that Fort Lauderdale is too far south for most commercial fishing effort for king and Spanish mackerel and will likely have a crowd that leans toward the recreational sector.
 - The September/October time frame would be better than May for holding port meetings in Florida.
- In South Carolina and Georgia, it was recommended that the Council consider having a meeting in Savannah instead of Hilton Head Island. Savannah has a larger recreational component and is more easily accessible to Interstate 95. Georgetown/Murrells Inlet will have attendees, but also may want to consider the Charleston area as Haddrell’s Point Tackle is known for hosting various fishing seminars and events.
- The North Carolina locations hit the three main areas; however, it might be ideal to add a meeting in Wanchese. Both Hatteras and Wanchese have large king and Spanish mackerel fisheries and due to the time and distance fishermen from one community are unlikely to travel to the other community to participate in port meetings.

- Mackerel AP members were not as familiar with the Mid-Atlantic and New England regions but did note that there was a large gap between proposed port meetings in Cape May, New Jersey and Montauk, New York. It was also noted that there is a lot of king and Spanish mackerel fishing happening in Chincoteague, Virginia, and it may be helpful to hold a meeting or two along the Chesapeake Bay.
- All AP members provided specific locations in their communities (Bass Pro Shops, tackle shops, community colleges, etc.) that may be willing to host a port meeting.

FINAL
SUMMARY REPORT
MACKEREL COBIA COMMITTEE
SOUTH ATLANTIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL
Beaufort, North Carolina
December 5, 2023

The Committee approved the minutes from the September 2023 meeting and the agenda.

Mackerel Cobia Advisory Panel Report

The Mackerel Cobia Advisory Panel met on November 7th and 8th, 2023 in Charleston, South Carolina. The AP Chair, Ira Laks, provided a summary of Advisory Panel discussion and recommendations. The Committee expressed their appreciation of the advisory panels' in-depth discussions and indicated that they would ask for input on recreational permitting and reporting, tournament sales, and for-hire limited entry during the mackerel port meetings process.

CMP Framework Amendment 13

Catch level recommendations for Atlantic Spanish mackerel based on SEDAR 78 were provided to the Council in June 2023 and the Council directed staff to begin work on a framework amendment to update catch levels to be consistent with the recommendations. SEDAR 78 includes revised recreational landings that are based on the Marine Recreational Information Program's (MRIP) newer Fishing Effort Survey (FES) method.

Staff presented an options paper with a draft action and alternative language as well as analysis on when the proposed annual catch limits and quotas are anticipated to be met and the number of Atlantic Spanish mackerel landed recreationally per person and per vessel.

The following motions were approved:

MOTION 1: ADD AN ACTION TO FRAMEWORK AMENDMENT 13 TO CONSIDER MODIFICATION TO THE LONG-TERM OY FOR ATLANTIC SPANISH MACKEREL.
APPROVED BY COMMITTEE
APPROVED BY COUNCIL

MOTION 2: ADD AN ACTION TO FRAMEWORK AMENDMENT 13 TO INCLUDE IN-SEASON AND POST-SEASON ACCOUNTABILITY MEASURES FOR THE RECREATIONAL SECTOR.
APPROVED BY COMMITTEE
APPROVED BY COUNCIL

Mackerel Port Meetings

Based on recommendations from the Mackerel Cobia Advisory Panel, the Council directed staff to begin work on a plan to conduct port meetings for king and Spanish mackerel to gain a comprehensive understanding of the fisheries to improve management efforts. Staff presented the Committee with a draft structure for port meetings and tentative meeting locations.

The Committee provided the following input on meeting structure:

- One of the Councils goals for Mackerel Port Meetings is to identify underserved communities and address equity and environmental justice concerns. To achieve this goal, staff should consider either adding an additional breakout group on this topic or ensuring that the topic is brought up within the context of other breakout groups.
- It will be important to provide stakeholders with information on port meetings in advance of the meeting so that they can come prepared to provide information on what they want to see come out of Mackerel Port Meetings.

The Committee modified the tentative meeting locations, as follows:

- Hold meetings in both Wanchese and Hatteras, North Carolina.
- Consider holding meetings in Port Judith, Rhode Island (as opposed to Newport, Rhode Island) and New Bedford, Massachusetts (as opposed to Barnstable, Massachusetts).
- Hold a meeting in Pooler, Georgia (as opposed to Hilton Head, South Carolina) and consider holding meetings in Charleston, South Carolina and Murrell's Inlet, South Carolina (as opposed to Georgetown, South Carolina).
- Consider holding a meeting in central New Jersey (as opposed to Cape May, New Jersey).
- When scheduling port meetings, make all efforts to avoid overlapping with scheduled saltwater fishing tournaments.
- There are several national seashores along the coast who might be helpful when trying to conduct outreach on port meetings.

Other Business

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 3: ADOPT THE FOLLOWING TIMING AND TASKS:

1. Ask the Law Enforcement Advisory Panel to provide input on the sale of tournament caught Atlantic king and Spanish mackerel.
2. Continue work on CMP Framework Amendment 13, bring an updated decision document to the March 2024 Council meeting.
3. Continue development of Mackerel Port Meetings, bringing a final plan for Council approval and implementation to the March 2024 Council meeting.