

Tina Berger

Subject: FW: request
Attachments: COBIA PID Comments Nov 2016.bg.pdf; ATT00001.htm

From: Toni Kerns
Sent: Wednesday, January 25, 2017 10:03 AM
To: Tina Berger <tberger@asmfc.org>
Subject: Fwd: request

Tina – Please include the attached cobia public comment from CCA in the supplemental materials. It was received during the public comment period but was inadvertently left out of the main meeting materials. Thanks. – Toni

Sent from my iPhone

Begin forwarded message:

From: Christopher Elkins <tarheelboatworks@gmail.com>
Date: January 14, 2017 at 1:21:48 PM EST
To: sciaenops1@gmail.com
Cc: David Sneed <david@ccanc.org>, Dick Brame <dbrame55@gmail.com>
Subject: request

Louis,

Please find attached the Cobia comment from CCA. It was the one I read at the recent ASMFC public comment you chaired at the SAFMC meeting at Morehead and then put hard copy in your box of folders-if that spurs your memory. It came from CCA National (Dick Brame).

Chris

ps. couldnt find your asmfc email so used one David K gave me.

COBIA Public Information Document

Comments for Hearings

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission's Public Information Document for Cobia. Cobia are an important species for recreational fishers along the SE Atlantic coast, providing great sport close to shore in state waters for a few months each year.

With regard to the question posed in the Public Information Document: "How would you like the cobia fishery and population to look in the future?" we believe they should be managed as a primarily recreational species, with an emphasis on access and abundance.

Recreational fisheries respond to increased abundance with increased trips and catch, and do the opposite with decreased abundance. Increased abundance and the resultant increase in trips maximize the economic value of the fishery to local communities.

Management should strive to manage the cobia resource for maximum practicable abundance. This would necessarily mean defining a catch level at an optimum yield that is less than maximum sustainable yield in order to increase abundance.

The Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (ASMFC) would like comment on four areas:

1. Complementary Management with the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council (SAFMC)
2. Management Objectives
3. Coastwide, Regional or State-by-State Approach to Management
4. Commercial and Recreational Management Tools

1. Complementary Management with the SAFMC

Currently management of cobia is entirely through the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council via their Coastal Migratory Pelagics Fishery Management Plan (FMP), with states adopting the Council's regulations. With species that are entirely or mostly caught in the Exclusive Economic Zone, this style of management can work. However, it can be problematic when there is a sizeable portion of the catch in state waters, as the fishery rarely, if ever, occurs at the same time in each state, and a one-size-fits-all approach inevitably disadvantages some states.

In this instance, with harvest in both state and Federal waters, **complementary management would seem to make the most sense**. This is very similar to the federal waterfowl framework, where the Federal government sets the general season length and bag limits and allows the states to pick the actual days they allow hunting and bag limits within that framework.

We believe a system where the SAFMC sets the overall allowable harvest level and then allows the states to tailor their harvest measures within that framework to be the best system for cobia.

2. Management Objectives

The Atlantic cobia fishery has been primarily a recreational fishery, and should be continued with that tenet in mind, first and foremost. As stated previously, that means managing for access and abundance. Allowing states the opportunity to set their own season and bag limits within an overall framework makes sense, as the fisheries occur at different times of the year within each state.

A secondary management objective might be to get to a point where the season and bag limit are predictable from year to year.

3. Coastwide, Regional or State-by-State Approach to Management

If possible, allowing the states to set their own season and bag limits within an overall framework would be preferable.

4. Commercial and Recreational Management Tools

The standard size limit, bag limit and season approach to managing recreational fisheries should be the proper way to manage the Atlantic cobia recreational fishery.

We strongly encourage maintaining the historic bycatch management for the commercial fishery, with a 2 fish/person/day bag limit. We believe allowing a directed commercial fishery to develop would only add to problems with management. We also believe that allowing a directed commercial fishery would reduce the significant value this fishery generates through recreational fishing.



Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission

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South Atlantic Species Advisory Panel Meeting Summary

Conference Call
January 18, 2017

Advisory Panel Members: Bill Parker, Glenn Ulrich, Tom Powers, Erin Kelly, Bernie McCants

ASMFC Staff: Louis Daniel, Mike Schmidtke, Tina Berger

Public: Steve Poland (NCDMF)

The South Atlantic Species Advisory Panel (AP) meet via webinar/conference call on January 18, 2017 to discuss the Cobia Public Information Document (PID).

Tina Berger provided a brief introduction to the advisors and turned the meeting over to Louis Daniel to present the Public Information Document and public comment summaries.

Daniel relayed concerns from PDT regarding delay in stock assessment until 2020 and provided an update on the status of ongoing genetic/tagging work and the stock ID workshop being developed to convene after more data are available and analyzed.

A primary issue raised by the advisors involved MRIP landing estimates. Advisors raised concerns regarding the impacts of the MRIP estimation methods and the 2015 catch. Specific concerns were raised regarding the estimated number of anglers recognized by the MRIP program and whether the distribution of interviews actually match the distribution of effort.

Specific discussion centered on states that have, or are developing, recreational reporting methods (SC, VA) to improve landings data. How may those data be used if they are contrary to MRIP or SEFSC data? There is interest in comparing log book catch estimates with those derived from MRIP.

The advisors also wanted to raise a concern regarding high levels of mercury in cobia and suggested that be considered during discussions on an upper size or slot limit.

PID Issues

The AP had a good general discussion on the PID and agreed that specific management measures would be discussed during the development of the plan. Consequently, the advisors recommend some general agreement statements they would like the Board to consider during their deliberations in February.

- Issue 1- AP recommends that ASMFC develop a complementary FMP for cobia.
- Issue 2- AP expressed specific need for a long-term management regime, conservatively developed, so as to avoid annual (mid-season) changes.

AP supports improved information gathering to reduce uncertainty associated with current landings estimates and impart more confidence in the assessment process. Recommend the development of specific biological sampling requirements in the plan.

- Issue 3: No specific comments. Intend on commenting on specific measures as plan is developed.
- Issue 4: Discussion on circle hooks and agreed that if circle hooks are required, they should be non-offset style.