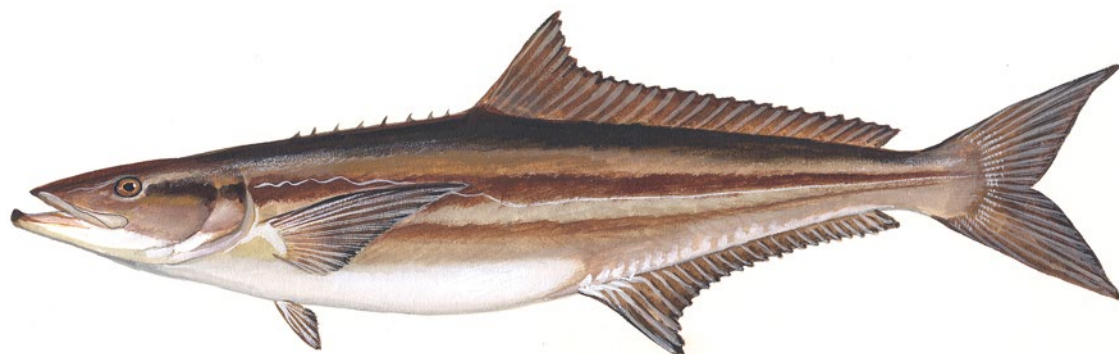




Draft Amendment 1 to the Cobia Fishery Management Plan



May 2019

Timeline



Step	Anticipated Date
Approval of Draft PID by the Board	Aug 2018
Public review and comment on PID	Aug – Oct 2018
Board review of public comment; Board direction on what to include in Draft Amendment 1	Oct 2018
Preparation of Draft Amendment 1	Oct 2018 – May 2019
Review and approval of Draft Amendment 1 by Board for public comment Current step	May 2019
Public review and comment on Draft Amendment 1	May – Aug 2019
Board review of public comment on Draft Amendment 1	Aug 2019
Review and approval of the final Amendment 1 by the Board, Policy Board and Commission	Aug 2019

Presentation/Amendment Outline



- 1.0 Introduction**
- 2.0 Goals and Objectives
- 3.0 Monitoring Program
- 4.0 Management Program
- 5.0 Compliance
- 6.0 Research Needs
- 7.0 Protected Species

1.0 Introduction



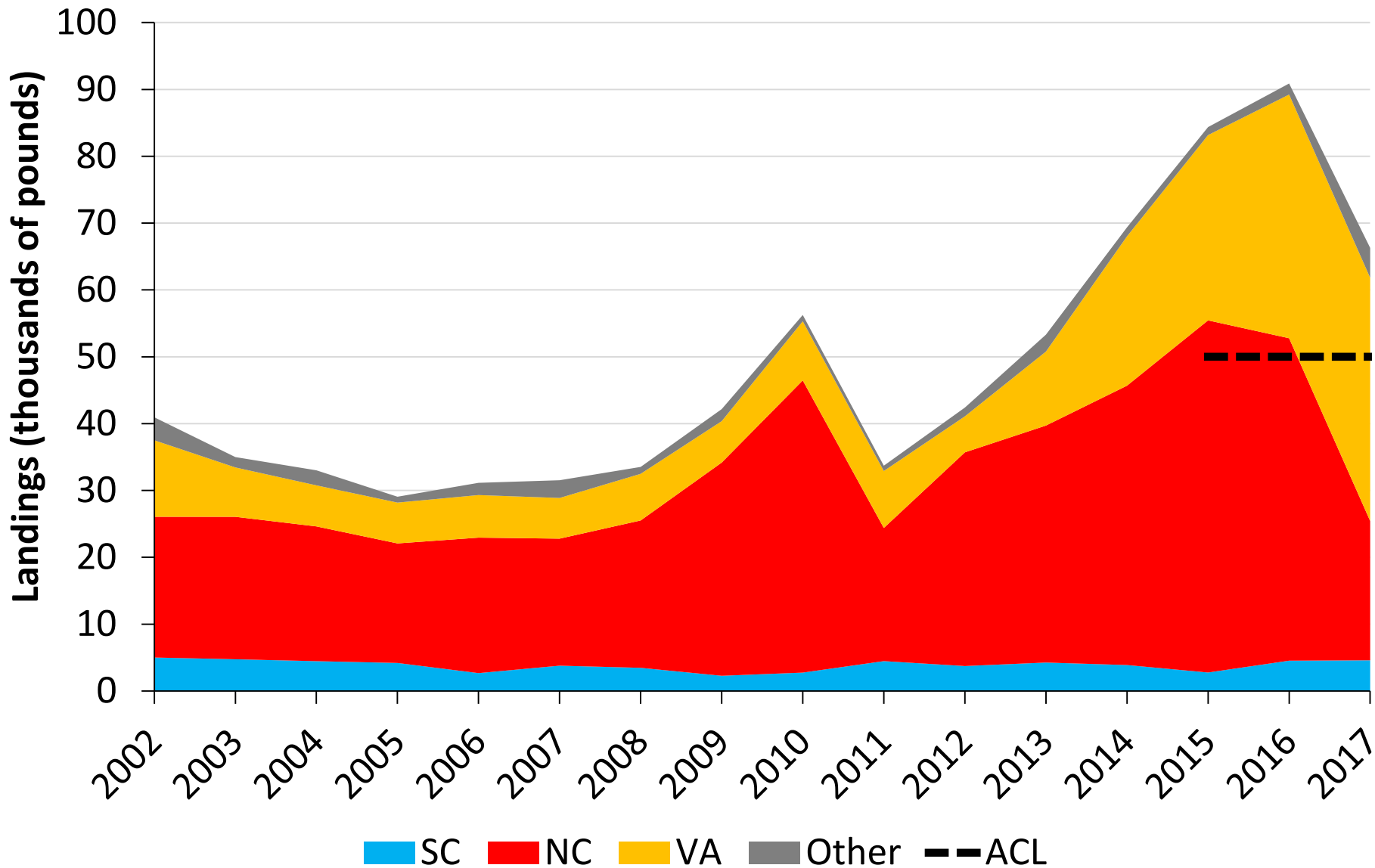
- Updates from FMP made to introductory sections to reflect most up-to-date information about Atlantic cobia fishery
 - E.g. SEDAR 58 Stock ID Process
- 1.1.1 Statement of the Problem
 - On March 21, 2019, Reg. Amd 31 to the CMP FMP became effective; Atl cobia now managed solely through ASMFC FMP
 - ASMFC FMP complementary and dependent on the CMP FMP, e.g. ACL & EEZ reg recommendation through CMP FMP
 - Board also given direction to establish a process for specifying aspects of harvest quickly, through Board action

1.2 Description of the Resource



- Most recent assessment, SEDAR 28 (2013)
 - Not overfished, no overfishing
- SEDAR 58
 - Stock ID Process (2018)
 - Results do not dispute FL-GA line as stock boundary; will be used as assessment boundary between Atl and Gulf stocks
 - More information on fish along NE Florida and Georgia could refine conclusions on boundary/transition zone
 - Assessment (in progress)
 - Scheduled for completion in January, 2020
 - Data Workshop completed; assessment webinars will be held over the summer

1.3.1 Commercial Fishery



1.3.2 Recreational Fishery

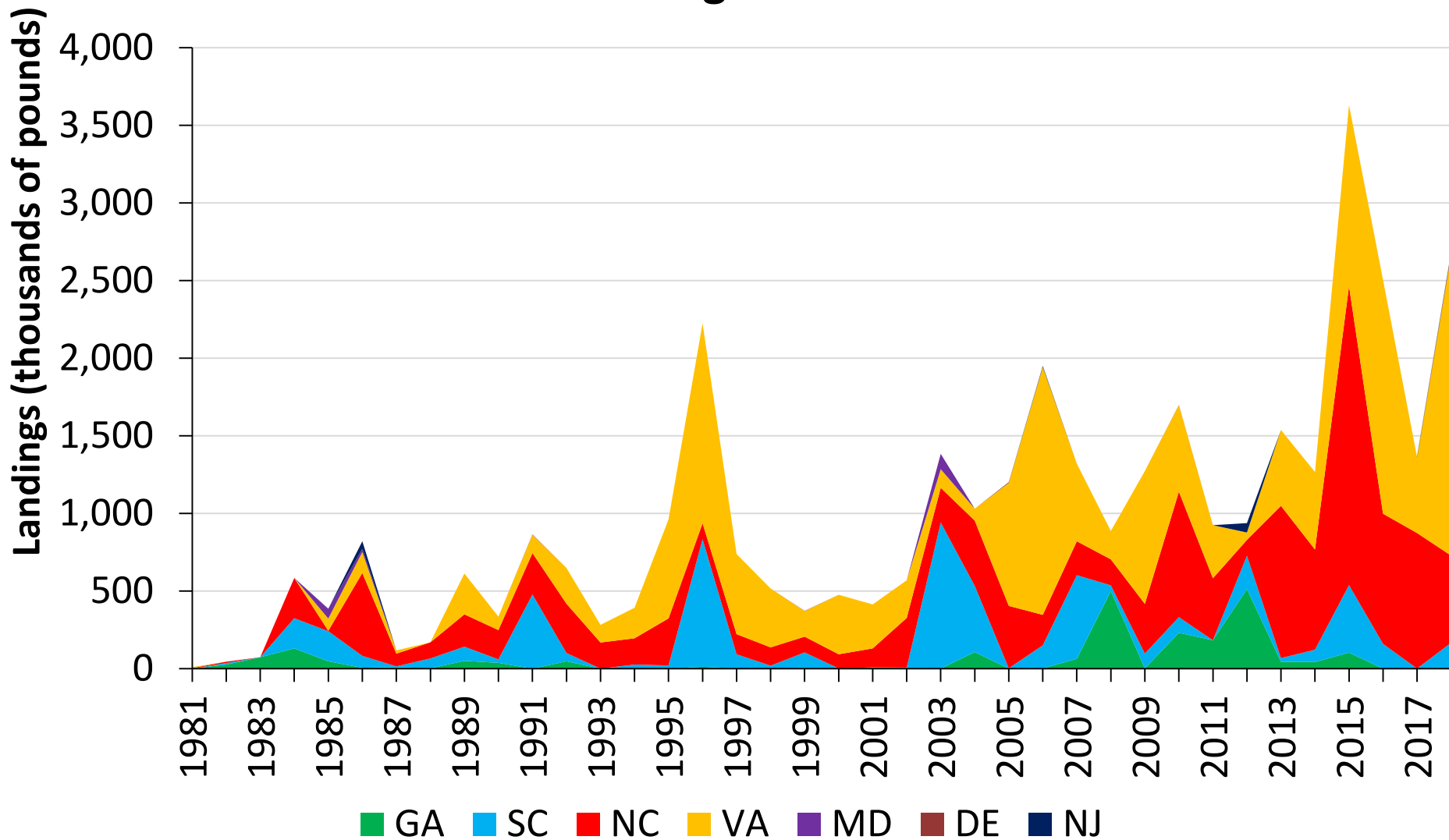


- MRIP Update in 2018
- SEDAR 58 will use new FES catch estimates, but until completion, management continues using CHTS catch estimates

1.3.2 Recreational Fishery



FES Landings Estimates



Presentation/Amendment Outline



- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Goals and Objectives**
- 3.0 Monitoring Program
- 4.0 Management Program

2.1 History of Management



- FMP established in 2017, first implemented in 2018
- Commercial ACL (50,000 lb) from CMP FMP
- Recreational Harvest Limit, derived from CMP FMP recreational ACL, allocated as state harvest targets (with 1% *de minimis* set aside)
 - Landings evaluated against targets as 3-year averages

State	Recreational Harvest Target (lb)
VA	244,292
NC	236,316
SC	74,885
GA	58,311

2.3 Goal



- Goal: The goal of Amendment 1 is to provide for an efficient management structure that implements coastwide management measures, *providing equitable and sustainable access to the Atlantic cobia resource throughout the management unit* in a timely manner.

Recommended edit from the PDT

2.4 Objectives



- 1) Provide a flexible management system to address future changes in resource abundance, scientific information, and fishing patterns among user groups or area.
- 2) *Implement management measures that allow stable, sustainable harvest of Atlantic cobia in both state and federal waters.*
- 3) *Establish a harvest specification procedure that will allow flexibility to respond quickly to stock assessment results or problems in the fishery, while also providing opportunities for public input on potential significant changes to management.*
- 4) Promote continued, cooperative collection of biological, economic, and social data required to effectively monitor and assess the status of the cobia resource and evaluate management efforts.
- 5) Manage the cobia fishery to protect both young individuals and established breeding stock.
- 6) Develop research priorities that will further refine the cobia management program to maximize the biological, social, and economic benefits derived from the cobia population.

Recommended edits from the PDT

2.6 Definition of Overfishing



- REVISED SECTION
- Previously assumed overfishing definitions (fishing mortality and spawning stock biomass thresholds) from the CMP FMP
- Amd 1 specifies that overfishing definitions based on peer-reviewed stock status criteria may be set through Board action
- Primary peer-review processes: SEDAR & ASMFC Independent External Peer Review

Presentation/Amendment Outline



- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Goals and Objectives
- 3.0 Monitoring Program**
- 4.0 Management Program

3.1 Landings/Catch Monitoring



- Commercial (3.1.1) – NOAA Fisheries will continue to monitor landings through end of 2019
 - Beginning in 2020, non-*de minimis* states (VA, NC, SC) will monitor
- Recreational (3.1.2) – MRIP
 - VA has required reporting, but this does not replace MRIP estimates

3.5 Stock Assessments



- Will continue to be conducted through SEDAR
- Commission will work through representation on SEDAR Steering Committee to schedule coibia assessments

Presentation/Amendment Outline



- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Goals and Objectives
- 3.0 Monitoring Program
- 4.0 Management Program**

4.1 Harvest Specification Process



Issue 1

Options

- a. The coastwide total harvest quota, vessel limits, possession or bag limits, minimum size limits, and commercial closure triggering mechanism may be specified by Board action for up to **two** years. Subsequent harvest specification would occur for implementation after expiration of the previous specification (up to **two** years apart) or following a completed stock assessment.
- b. The coastwide total harvest quota, vessel limits, possession or bag limits, minimum size limits, and commercial closure triggering mechanism may be specified by Board action for up to **three** years. Subsequent harvest specification would occur for implementation after expiration of the previous specification (up to **three** years apart) or following a completed stock assessment.
- c. The coastwide total harvest quota, vessel limits, possession or bag limits, minimum size limits, and commercial closure triggering mechanism may be specified by Board action for up to **four** years. Subsequent harvest specification would occur for implementation after expiration of the previous specification (up to **four** years apart) or following a completed stock assessment.

4.1 Harvest Specification Process



Issue 1

Options

- a. The coastwide total harvest quota, vessel limits, possession or bag limits, minimum size limits, and commercial closure triggering mechanism may be specified by Board action for up to **two** years. Subsequent harvest specification would occur for implementation after expiration of the previous specification (up to **two** years apart) or following a completed stock assessment.
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4.2 Sector Quota Allocation



Issue 2 (No alternatives recommended by the PDT)

The recreational quota will be 92% of the coastwide total harvest quota set through Board specification. The commercial quota will be 8% of the coastwide total harvest quota set through Board specification. These allocation percentages were derived from those previously in place through the CMP FMP. These percentages may be changed in the future through an addendum to this amendment.

4.3 Recreational Management Measures



- 4.3.1: Min size limit remains 36”
- 4.3.2: Bag limit remains 1 fish per person
- 4.3.3: Vessel limit continues to be set by states, NTE 6 fish
- 4.3.4: Seasons and allocations remain the same
 - Adapted from Table 10

State	Allocation Percentage	State Targets Under 620,000 lb Rec Quota
GA	9.4%	58,311 lb
SC	12.1%	74,884 lb
NC	38.1%	236,313 lb
VA	39.4%	244,292 lb
De Minimis	1.0%	6,200 lb
Total	100%	620,000 lb

4.3.5 Evaluation of Rec Landings & Overage Response



Issue 3 (No alternatives recommended by the PDT)

- Intended to clarify implementation of process used under the FMP
- Rec landings evaluated at the same time as Board specification of harvest
- Rec landings evaluated as average of annual landings
 - Average includes up to the 3 most recent years of data
 - Average only includes years with the same regs, even if less than 3
 - Terminal year will be the previous year (e.g. if evaluation/specification meeting in August 2020, terminal year of landings is 2019)
- States with consistent under-harvest for at least 3 years may apply to relax measures (while remaining under target)

4.3.5 Evaluation of Rec Landings & Overage Response



Issue 3 Example (Table 11)

Harvest Target: 100,000 lb	Year	Vessel Limit/ Season	Harvest	Evaluation Status & Specification
	2018	Vessel Limit: 4 fish Season: June 1-Aug. 30	110,000 lb	Not evaluated
	2019	Vessel Limit: 4 fish Season: June 1-Aug. 30	90,000 lb	Not evaluated
	2020	Vessel Limit: 4 fish Season: June 1-Aug. 30	95,000 lb	Not evaluated
	2021	Vessel Limit: 4 fish Season: June 1-Aug. 30	105,000 lb	Evaluated: Achieved target in 2018-2020 . Regulations set for 2022-2024.

4.3.5 Evaluation of Rec Landings & Overage Response



Issue 3 Example (Table 11)

Harvest Target: 100,000 lb	Year	Vessel Limit/ Season	Harvest	Evaluation Status & Specification
	2021	Vessel Limit: 4 fish Season: June 1-Aug. 30	105,000 lb	Evaluated: Achieved target in 2018-2020 . Regulations set for 2022-2024.
	2022	Vessel Limit: 4 fish Season: June 1-Aug. 30	115,000 lb	Not evaluated
	2023	Vessel Limit: 4 fish Season: June 1-Aug. 30	95,000 lb	Not evaluated
	2024	Vessel Limit: 4 fish Season: June 1-Aug. 30	110,000 lb	Evaluated: Over target by average of 5,000 lb per year in 2021-2023 . Required reduction of season or vessel limit. Regulations set for 2025-2027.

4.3.5 Evaluation of Rec Landings & Overage Response



Issue 3 Example (Table 11)

	Year	Vessel Limit/ Season	Harvest	Evaluation Status & Specification
Harvest Target: 100,000 lb	2024	Vessel Limit: 4 fish Season: June 1-Aug. 30	110,000 lb	Evaluated: Over target by average of 5,000 lb per year in 2021-2023 . Required reduction of season or vessel limit. Regulations set for 2025-2027.
	2025	Vessel Limit: 4 fish Season: June 10-Aug. 30	80,000 lb	Not evaluated
	2026	Vessel Limit: 4 fish Season: June 10-Aug. 30	75,000 lb	Not evaluated
	2027	Vessel Limit: 4 fish Season: June 10-Aug. 30	85,000 lb	Evaluated: Achieved target in 2025-2026 (different regulations in 2024). Regulations set for 2028-2030.

4.3.5 Evaluation of Rec Landings & Overage Response



Issue 3 Example (Table 11)

Harvest Target: 100,000 lb	Year	Vessel Limit/ Season	Harvest	Evaluation Status & Specification
	2027	Vessel Limit: 4 fish Season: June 10-Aug. 30	85,000 lb	Evaluated: Achieved target in 2025-2026 (different regulations in 2024). Regulations set for 2028-2030.
	2028	Vessel Limit: 4 fish Season: June 10-Aug. 30	65,000 lb	Not evaluated
	2029	Vessel Limit: 4 fish Season: June 10-Aug. 30	75,000 lb	Not evaluated
	2030	Vessel Limit: 4 fish Season: June 10-Aug. 30	70,000 lb	Evaluated: Achieved target in 2027-2029 . May submit liberalized measures for TC and Board review, for implementation in 2031. Regulations set for 2031-2033.

4.3.6 Recreational Units



Issue 4

Options

- a. (Status Quo) Recreational landings, quotas, and targets will be evaluated and set in units of pounds.
- b. Recreational landings, quotas, and targets will be evaluated and set in units of numbers of fish.
 - Quota and targets converted to numbers using coastwide annual average weight from MRIP for the most recent 3 years, excluding 2017 and 2016 (due to federal rec closures)
 - 2018, 2015, 2014 avg: 28.0 lb

State	State Targets Under 22,142 Fish Rec Quota
GA	2,081 fish
SC	2,679 fish
NC	8,436 fish
VA	8,724 fish
De Minimis	222 fish
Total	22,142 fish

- States may submit alternative data that would better represent average weights of their fishery; must be reviewed by TC and approved by Board

4.4 Commercial Management Measures



4.4.1 Size Limit Options

Issue 5

Options

- a. (Status Quo) All states shall maintain a minimum size limit of 33 inches fork length or the total length equivalent (37 inches).
- b. All states shall maintain a minimum size limit of 36 inches fork length or the total length equivalent (40 inches).

4.4.2 Possession Limit: 2 per person, NTE vessel limit

4.4.3 Commercial Vessel Limit



Issue 6

Options

- a. (Status Quo) All states shall maintain a daily vessel limit, not to exceed **6** fish per vessel.
- b. All states shall establish a daily vessel limit, not to exceed **5** fish per vessel.
- c. All states shall establish a daily vessel limit, not to exceed **4** fish per vessel.

4.4.4 Commercial Quota-Based Management



Issue 7 (No alternatives recommended by the PDT)

- Coastwide commercial quota set by harvest spec and sector allocation processes (*Sec. 4.1 & 4.2*)
- Landings monitored in-season
- Trigger mechanism: If coastwide (non-*de minimis*) landings hit $x\%$ of the (non-*de minimis*) quota, a coastwide closure will occur y days later
 - Trigger will be calculated based landings trends for the previous 3 years, allowing at least 30 days from the estimated trigger date to the estimated closure date
 - Trigger % and number of days until closure will be set as part of harvest spec process
 - Ex. Using 2015-17 weekly data and the 2019 quota (50,000 lb), commercial fishery would close 32 days after commercial landings reach 77% of the commercial quota (38,500 lb)

4.5.3.3 Commercial *De Minimis*



Issue 8

Options

- a. (Status quo) States may not apply for *de minimis* status for their commercial fishery.
- b. States may apply for *de minimis* status for their commercial fishery.
 - Eligibility: state commercial landings for 2 of the previous 3 years must be less than 2% of the coastwide commercial landings for the same time period
 - States subject to all coastwide commercial regulations, including minimum size, possession, and vessel limits, as well as closures of the commercial fishery resulting from the commercial quota being reached
 - Not required to monitor commercial cobia landings for their state within the fishing year, but still must report annual landings through state compliance report
 - To account for unmonitored landings, 3% percent of the commercial quota set aside and not accessible to non-*de minimis* states

4.9 Recommendation for Fed Waters

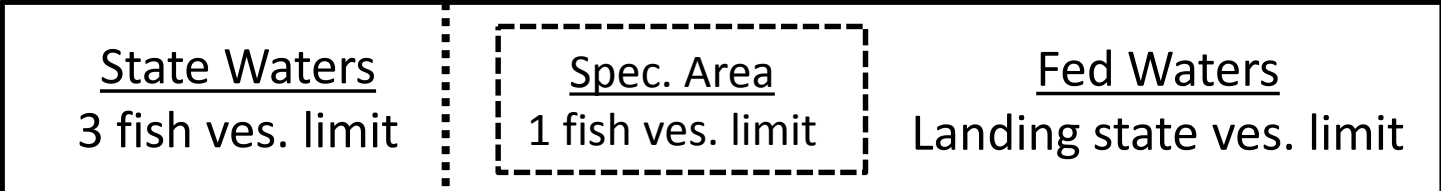


- Through ACFCMA
- If coastwide state closure, will recommend corresponding EEZ closure

Issue 9

Options

- a. Regulations in federal waters will be recommended to correspond to those of the vessel's state of landing.
- b. Regulations in federal waters will be recommended to correspond to the location of catch, with regulations persisting along a latitudinal extension of state boundaries into federal waters. This extension for all boundaries would be directly due east, not along any alternative trajectory of these boundaries as they approach the Atlantic coast.
- c. Regulations in federal waters will be recommended to correspond to those of the vessel's state of landing, with specified areas of restricted harvest. Regulations and boundaries for these areas of restricted harvest may be requested by a state, but must be approved by the Board.



4.9 Recommendation for Fed Waters



- Recommended edits from the LEC

Issue 9

Options

- a. Regulations in federal waters will be recommended to correspond to those of the vessel's **permitted or licensed** state of landing. **If possessing permits or licenses for multiple states with open seasons, regulations for the most restrictive open state shall be applied. If possessing permits or licenses for multiple states, only one of which is open, regulations for the state with an open season shall be applied.**
- b. Regulations in federal waters will be recommended to correspond to the location of catch, with regulations persisting along a latitudinal extension of state boundaries into federal waters. This extension for all boundaries would be directly due east, not along any alternative trajectory of these boundaries as they approach the Atlantic coast.
- c. ~~Regulations in federal waters will be recommended to correspond to those of the vessel's state of landing, with specified areas of restricted harvest. Regulations and boundaries for these areas of restricted harvest may be requested by a state, but must be approved by the Board.~~

Advisory Panel Input



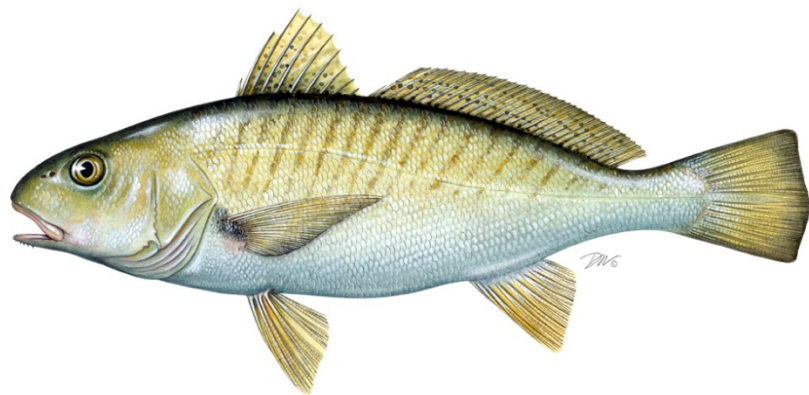
- Advisory Panel met via conf. call on 4/25/19 (2 attendees, 1 written comment)
- No objections to options as presented
- Both attendees support equal min. size limit between sectors
- Did not express preference for federal recommendation options, but recognize difficulties with each



Further Questions and Discussion

(Please send cobia pictures)

Potential Updates to the Traffic Light Analyses for Atlantic Croaker and Spot



May 2019

The Saga Continues...



- 2017: Benchmark stock assessment completed for both species, but did not pass peer review, in part, due to conflicting abundance and harvest signals
- Feb 2018: Croaker TC/Spot PRT recommend changes to TLA (Memo in Materials); changes would result in triggered management action

TC-Recommended Changes to TLA



	<u>Current TLA</u>	<u>New TLA</u>
Adult Abundance Indices	NEFSC, SEAMAP	Mid-Atlantic: NEFSC, ChesMMAP S Atlantic: SEAMAP, SCDNR Trammel (croaker)/ NC Program 195 (spot)
Adult Index Ages	Not age-specific	Croaker: 2+; Spot: 1+
Ref. Time Period	Croaker: 1996-2008 Spot: 1989-2012	Croaker: 2002-2012 Spot: 2002-2012
Triggering Mechanism	Both adult abundance & harvest metrics >30% (mod. concern) or >60% (sig. concern) in terminal 3 years (croaker) or terminal 2 years (spot)	Both adult abundance & harvest metrics >30% (mod. concern) or >60% (sig. concern) in 3 of 4 terminal years (croaker) or 2 of 3 terminal years (spot)
2018 TLA Result	Croaker: No Trigger Spot: No Trigger	Croaker: Mid-Atl Trigger (30%) Spot: Mid-Atl Trigger (30%)

The Saga Continues...



- 2017: Benchmark stock assessment completed for both species, but did not pass peer review, in part, due to conflicting abundance and harvest signals
- Feb 2018: Croaker TC/Spot PRT recommend changes to TLA (Memo in Materials); changes would result in triggered management action
- May 2018: Board tasked Croaker/Spot PDT investigate potential management actions
- Aug 2018: PDT recommended baseline management measures be established in the form of seasons and/or trip (vessel or bag/possession) limits (Memo in Materials); states request time to gather public input

State-Gathered Public Input



- MD
 - Focused more on spot (already have size, creel, and season limits for croaker)
 - Hesitant to support reductions to com or rec harvest or setting min size, possession, or season (if it leads to reduction) limit
 - Any regulations leading to reductions should equally impact all states
- VA
 - Generally against size limits
 - Not against adequately-sized bag limit (suggested 30-50 fish per day)
- NC
 - Don't want new spot or croaker measures; suggested declines in landings due reduced effort (caused by com regs)



Questions/Discussion