

# **Modifications to the Gulf of Mexico Migratory Group Cobia Catch Limits, Possession Limits, Size Limits, and Framework Procedure**

## **Amendment 32 to the Fishery Management Plan for the Coastal Migratory Pelagic Resources of the Gulf of Mexico and Atlantic Region**

**For review by LETC at its March 9, 2021, meeting**

### **MANAGEMENT ALTERNATIVES**

#### **Action 1 – Modify the Gulf of Mexico (Gulf) Migratory Group Cobia (Gulf Cobia) Stock OFL, ABC, and Annual Catch Limit (ACL)**

Gulf cobia is found from Texas to the Florida-Georgia state line, overlapping the jurisdictions of the Gulf and South Atlantic Councils. Each Council manages the portion of Gulf cobia within its respective jurisdiction.

#### **Action 2 – Modify the Gulf Cobia Apportionment Between the Gulf Zone and the Florida East Coast (FLEC) Zone, and the Zones' ACLs based on Action 1**

Gulf cobia is divided into the Gulf Zone (managed by GMFMC) and the Florida East Coast Zone (jointly managed between the Gulf Council and South Atlantic Council).

#### **Action 3 – Annual Catch Targets (ACT) for the Gulf Zone and FLEC Zone based on Action 2**

**Alternative 1:** No Action. The Gulf Zone ACT equals 90% of the Gulf Zone ACL, based on the Gulf Council's ACL/ACT Control Rule.

**Alternative 2:** Use the Gulf Council's ACL/ACT Control Rule to calculate ACTs for the Gulf Zone.

**Alternative 3:** [Affects FLEC Zone only]

An in-season accountability measure (AM) for the Gulf Zone states when the stock ACT is reached, or projected to be reached, the season is closed within that zone.

## **Action 4 – Modify the Gulf Cobia Possession Limit and/or Establish a Trip Limit**

**Alternative 1:** No Action. Retain the current recreational and commercial daily possession limit of 2 fish per person, regardless of the number or duration of trips in the Gulf Zone. [FLEC zone omitted.]

**Gulf Preferred Alternative 2:** Reduce the daily possession limit to 1 fish per person, regardless of the number or duration of trips.

**Gulf Preferred Option 2a:** in the Gulf Zone

**Gulf Preferred Suboption i:** for the recreational sector

**Gulf Preferred Suboption ii:** for the commercial sector

**Gulf Preferred Alternative 3:** Create a recreational daily trip limit. Fishermen may not exceed the per person daily possession limit.

**Gulf Preferred Option 3a:** in the Gulf Zone

**Gulf Preferred Suboption i:** The trip limit for cobia is two fish.

**Suboption ii:** The trip limit for cobia is four fish.

**Suboption iii:** The trip limit for cobia is six fish.

**Preferred Alternative 4:** Create a commercial daily trip limit. Fishermen may not exceed the per person daily possession limit.

**Preferred Option 4a:** in the Gulf Zone

**Preferred Suboption i:** The trip limit for cobia is two fish.

**Suboption ii:** The trip limit for cobia is four fish.

**Suboption iii:** The trip limit for cobia is six fish.

## **Action 5 – Modify the Gulf Cobia Minimum Size Limit**

**Alternative 1:** No Action. Retain the current recreational and commercial minimum size limit of 36 inches fork length (FL) in the Gulf Zone and 33 inches FL in the FLEC Zone.

**Gulf Preferred Alternative 2:** Retain the current recreational and commercial minimum size limit of 36 inches FL in the Gulf Zone and increase the recreational and commercial minimum size limit to 36 inches FL in the FLEC Zone.

**Alternative 3:** Increase the recreational and commercial minimum size limit to 39 inches FL.

**Option 3a:** in the Gulf Zone

**Option 3b:** in the FLEC Zone

**Alternative 4:** Increase the recreational and commercial minimum size limit to 42 inches FL.

**Option 4a:** in the Gulf Zone

**Option 4b:** in the FLEC Zone

## **Action 6 – Modify the Framework Procedure**