

**Mackerel Committee Report  
October 24, 2022  
Mr. Kevin Anson – Chair**

The Committee adopted the agenda (**Tab C, No. 1**) as written, and approved the minutes (**Tab C, No. 2**) of the June 2022 meeting as modified.

***Review of Coastal Migratory Pelagics (CMP) Landings (Tab C, No. 4)***

Mr. Peter Hood (NMFS Southeast Regional Office) reviewed the recent landings for the Gulf migratory groups of cobia, king mackerel, and Spanish mackerel. The Committee and NMFS staff discussed changing the way these updates are presented to the Council. The Committee concurred that presenting the landings updates in a graphic format twice a year would still provide opportunities to comment on trends, while also reducing the workload and time involved in the data request and discussions during Council meetings. Mr. Hood also mentioned that the agency's website provides the most current status of landings in relation to the annual catch limits (ACL). A link to the website will be included in the briefing book moving forward.

The Committee recommends, and I so **move, that landings reports be provided to Council Committees twice per year in April and October.**

*Motion carried without opposition.*

***Public Hearing Draft Amendment 33: Modifications to the Gulf of Mexico Migratory Group King Mackerel Sector Allocation (Tab C, No. 5)***

Staff presented draft CMP Amendment 33, which proposes modifying the sector allocation for Gulf king mackerel. This amendment will also update the CMP fishery management plan (FMP) objectives. After discussion of the motions from the South Atlantic Council's September 2022 meeting, the Committee concurred and made the following motions:

The Committee recommends, and I so **move, to remove Objective 3, as it is redundant with the newly added objective 9.**

Objective 3: To provide necessary information for effective management and establish a mandatory reporting system for monitoring catch.

*Motion carried with one in opposition.*

The Committee recommends, and I so **move, to amend the language of Objective 1 to read as follows: The primary objective of this FMP is to achieve and maintain optimum yield, to allow recovery of overfished populations, and maintain population levels sufficient to ensure adequate recruitment.**

*Motion carried without opposition.*

The Committee then discussed if Objective 5 was still required. After discussion, the Committee made the following motion:

The Committee recommends, and I so **move, to delete Objective 5.**

*Motion carried without opposition.*

A Committee member asked if Objective 7 needed to be updated or removed as it only states migratory groups of king mackerel, and not the CMP group as a whole. Council staff proposed modifying the language of Objective 7 to follow the language of Objective 8. The Committee will continue discussion on the CMP FMP objectives during Full Council.

A Committee member commented that draft CMP Amendment 33 could include more recent years of landings data. Another Committee member noted that the landings for the 2021/2022 fishing year were still preliminary, so at most, only the landings from the 2020/2021 fishing year could be presented as final. A Committee member then stated that more recent years of landings could be skewed because of COVID-19. Council staff referred to Tab C, No. 4, and noted that the recreational landings as a percentage of the sector ACL was 29.8% for the 2020/2021 fishing year, which was consistent with previous years for the recreational sector. A Committee member stated that constantly updating landings data in draft amendments required updating analyses and other written materials, which could potentially delay action by the Council.

A Committee member inquired why 25% and 50% of the average difference between MRIP-FES landings and total simulated ACL were considered, respectively, for Alternatives 2 and 3 for reallocating to the commercial sector. Council staff responded that the Council had previously considered 75% and 100% of the average difference between MRIP-FES landings and total simulated ACL, but that those percentages were likely to constrain recreational harvest, resulting in a recreational season closure due to the ACL being met, which is not a desired outcome as stated previously by the Council.

The Committee recommends, and I so **move, to add a new Alternative 4.**

**Alternative 4: Modify the sector allocation for Gulf king mackerel by reallocating to the commercial sector 15% of the average difference between the total landings from the 2016/2017 through 2019/2020 fishing years using Marine Recreational Information Program's (MRIP) Fishing Effort Survey (FES) data and the total simulated annual catch limit (ACL) for Model 2 in Appendix D for the predicted total landings by sector and the total projected ACL.**

*Motion carried with one in opposition.*

A Committee member asked for verification that, in the Council's Allocation Review Policy, Gulf king mackerel allocations were scheduled to occur in April 2025 and inquired why the Council was considering reallocation at this time. Council staff responded that Gulf king mackerel allocations were planned to occur every six years, with an expected start of first review

in April 2025 unless such an effort began sooner, from the time-based allocation review triggers; the Council had also selected public interest-based review triggers as part of the Allocation Review Policy.

***Draft Framework Amendment: Modifications to the Gulf of Mexico Migratory Group King Mackerel Gillnet Fishing Season (Tab C, No. 6)***

Staff presented a draft of Chapter 1 of CMP Framework Amendment 12, which would modify the fishing season for the Gulf king mackerel commercial Southern Zone gillnet component. The action proposed has two options: to retain the weekend and observed Federal holiday closures, or to allow the gillnet component to continue to fish from the season start date until NMFS determines the quota has been met.

The Committee recommends and I so **move**, to make **Option 2** the preferred.

Option 2. Remove the weekend and holiday closure for the gillnet component for Gulf migratory group king mackerel.

*Motion carried without opposition.*

NMFS staff also expressed support of the motion given the agency's close relationship with the fishermen and regular updates on their landings. The Committee will see a final draft of this document in April 2023 with the intent of implementing the change for the 2023/2024 fishing year, which begins on the Tuesday following Martin Luther King Jr. Day in January 2024 for the gillnet component.

Mr. Chair, this concludes my report.