GULF OF MEXICO FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL
MACKEREL MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

Marriott Courtyard Gulfport, Mississippi

April 17, 2018

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<td>Bob Beal</td>
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<td>Ryan Bradley</td>
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<td>Eric Brazer</td>
<td>Reef Fish Shareholders Alliance</td>
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<td>J.P. Brooker</td>
<td>Ocean Conservancy, St. Petersburg, FL</td>
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<td>Mark Brown</td>
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<td>James Bruce</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>Gary Bryant</td>
<td>Gulf Shores, AL</td>
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<td>Dan Buckley</td>
<td>Reef Fish Shareholders Alliance</td>
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<td>Blake Compeant</td>
<td>St. Larose, LA</td>
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<td>Laura Deighan</td>
<td>Audubon Institute</td>
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<td>Michael Drexler</td>
<td>St. Petersburg, FL</td>
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<td>13</td>
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<td>New Orleans, LA</td>
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<td>14</td>
<td>Traci Floyd</td>
<td>MDMR, Biloxi, MS</td>
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<td>15</td>
<td>Troy Frady</td>
<td>AL</td>
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<td>16</td>
<td>Susan Gerhart</td>
<td>NMFS</td>
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<td>17</td>
<td>Ken Haddad</td>
<td>ASA, FL</td>
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<td>18</td>
<td>Rick Hart</td>
<td>NOAA Fisheries, Galveston, TX</td>
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<td>Mark Kelley</td>
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<td>Corky Perret</td>
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<td>Ruth Perry</td>
<td>Shell, Houston, TX</td>
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<td>Laura Picariello</td>
<td>Audubon Institute</td>
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<td>26</td>
<td>Ashford Rosenberg</td>
<td>Reef Fish Shareholders Alliance</td>
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<td>27</td>
<td>Jessica Stephen</td>
<td>NMFS</td>
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<td>28</td>
<td>Donna Tryon</td>
<td>Gulf Breeze, FL</td>
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<td>29</td>
<td>Mark Tryon</td>
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<td>30</td>
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<td>Bob Zales</td>
<td>Panama City, FL</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Table of Contents</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table of Motions</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adoption of Agenda and Approval of Minutes</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Action Guide and Next Steps</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Review of CMP Amendment 31: Atlantic Cobia Management</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adjournment</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
PAGE 18: Motion to make Alternative 2 the preferred alternative. The motion carried on page 19.

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The Mackerel Management Committee of the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council convened at the Marriott Courtyard, Gulfport Mississippi, Tuesday morning, April 17, 2018, and was called to order by Chairman Tom Frazer.

ADDITION OF AGENDA
APPROVAL OF MINUTES
ACTION GUIDE AND NEXT STEPS

CHAIRMAN TOM FRAZER: I would like to call to order the Mackerel Committee. The agenda, I believe, is on Tab C, Number 1, and I could get a motion to approve adoption of the agenda as it’s written.

MS. MARTHA GUYAS: So moved.

CHAIRMAN FRAZER: It’s moved by Ms. Guyas. Can I get a second? It’s seconded by Mr. Diaz. Is there any objections? Seeing none, the motion carries. The second item on the agenda is the approval of the minutes from January of 2017, and if I could get a motion for approval of those minutes.

MS. GUYAS: So moved.

CHAIRMAN FRAZER: It’s moved by Ms. Guyas. Can I get a second for that? It’s seconded by Mr. Anson. Is there any additions or correction to those minutes? Any further discussion? Seeing none, is there any objection to the approval of the minutes, the motion on the board? Seeing none, the motion carries. We’re going to move right into our third item on the agenda, which is the Action Guide and Next Steps, and Mr. Rindone.

MR. RYAN RINDONE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. For the Action Guide, essentially what we’re looking at here is a public hearing draft for the Atlantic cobia management amendment, and so what you guys will be doing is just reviewing the document and taking a look at the South Atlantic Council’s current preferred alternative and the only action that’s in the document, and that is Alternative 2, and feel free to ask any questions.

We also had the cobia stock ID review workshop, which took place last week, and so I can give you some information about what went on there, and hopefully that will help answer any questions.

CHAIRMAN FRAZER: Thank you. I think we’ll proceed with the review of the CMP Amendment 31 and then also just fold right into that stock ID update.
MR. RINDONE: All right. Essentially, what has happened is a lot of the cobia in the South Atlantic are caught in state waters, and, in 2016, NMFS closed the fishery down, commercial and recreational, for exceeding the ACL, and that was in June, and then, in 2017, it was closed in January, and so the federal regulations, because of the proportion of landings that are occurring in state waters, the federal regulations aren’t having as much of an effect on constraining the landings in the South Atlantic for the Atlantic cobia migratory group.

The South Atlantic Council is proposing to transfer management in some way or another to the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission, which has management authority in concurrence with the Atlantic states to be able to manage cobia not only in state waters, but out into federal waters if federal management is not taking place, and so, if the South Atlantic Council gives it away to the Atlantic States, then they become the de facto management body. Any questions on that?

CHAIRMAN FRAZER: Dr. Crabtree.

DR. ROY CRABTREE: Just one thing. At least right now, where the South Atlantic Council seems to be heading is removing cobia from the FMP, and so the Atlantic stock would no longer be federally managed. There is already an interstate management plan that has been approved by the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission, and so they would take over management of cobia, of the Atlantic stock, and then NMFS would implement some compatible regulations with the interstate management plan that would be done under the authority of the Atlantic Coastal Fisheries Cooperative Management Act.

If this all goes through, when we remove cobia, Atlantic cobia, from the federal management plan, we would simultaneously put in place compatible regulations under the ASMFC authority, and then the cobia Atlantic stock would be managed by the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission.

CHAIRMAN FRAZER: Ms. Guyas.

MS. GUYAS: I would love to hear what we think is going to come out of the stock ID workshop, and so, just to be clear, the Atlantic stock right now stops at the Florida/Georgia line, but there is some question as to whether that stock maybe wraps
further south, and maybe into the Gulf of Mexico, and I feel like we’re really putting the cart before the horse if we sign-on with this before we understand what we’re doing. If the Gulf is going to be involved in here, that adds significant complexity to this, and I feel like we may not want to move forward.

CHAIRMAN FRAZER: Go ahead, Ryan, with that stock ID update.

MR. RINDONE: Thank you, sir. The stock ID workgroup met last week in Charleston, and, in short, the spatial telemetry and movement data and the genetic data were in concurrence that there appears to be a transition zone between the Gulf and the Atlantic migratory groups occurring somewhere between Cape Canaveral, and this is approximate, and so don’t put a pin on a map, but between Cape Canaveral and Savannah, and they are calling it a transition zone.

With that comes the acknowledgement that obviously fish don’t follow the lines that we draw on maps, but within that area is where the stocks intermingle a little bit, but fish in the Gulf are not found, except in extremely rare occurrences, north of the current stock boundary, which is the Florida/Georgia line. In short, the data presented at the workshop did not support changing the current stock boundary, which is at the Florida/Georgia line.

CHAIRMAN FRAZER: Thank you, Mr. Rindone. Mr. Gregory.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR DOUG GREGORY: I just wanted to point out that we have Mr. Bob Beal on the webinar, the Executive Director of the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission, and so he can answer any questions that anybody might have, and he may want to say something, and I don’t know.

CHAIRMAN FRAZER: I am certainly open to giving Mr. Beal an opportunity to weigh-in.

MR. BOB BEAL: I don’t have a lot to add. I think the summary that Dr. Crabtree and Mr. Rindone have provided about the history of the Atlantic cobia management is spot-on, obviously, and we’re trying to work with the South Atlantic Council to solve a big allocation and access problem primarily to the recreational cobia fishery, and, as Mr. Rindone commented, there has been extensive closures, and, when the fishery is open for limited periods, the access and availability to the east coast states is not equitable, and about 82 percent of the harvest now is occurring in state waters, given the water temperature
changes along the east coast, and cobia are being caught all the way north to Long Island, New York, and so it’s a jurisdictional problem for the South Atlantic Council as well, and so we’re just trying to work with them to sort out the access and equitable allocation of that stock.

I’m happy to answer any questions, but I think, given the preliminary results that came out of the stock ID workshop, and granted those still have to go through peer review, and so they are preliminary, but it seems that the notion of ASMFC taking over the management of the Atlantic group from the Florida/Georgia line north may work pretty well, and then everything south of the Florida/Georgia line would still be managed as it is, which would be the combination of the South Atlantic Council and the Gulf Council, and so that’s the background. I’m happy to answer any questions if you have any.

CHAIRMAN FRAZER: Thank you very much. Are there any questions?

Dr. Crabtree.

DR. CRABTREE: Not really a question, but just a little to refresh your memory. What happened was we had a big overrun of the Atlantic cobia stock’s ACL, and we shortened up the season, but the states continued to allow fishing in state waters, and the fishery is predominantly in state waters, especially off of Virginia and North Carolina, and so we came into a situation where, in 2017, we projected that the entire ACL would be caught in state waters, and so the EEZ was closed year-round.

This posed a real problem for South Carolina and Georgia, where most of the cobia catch comes from the EEZ, and although it’s a small amount of fish, they ended up with their fishery essentially closed down completely.

It’s a little like the red snapper situation in the Gulf. The difference is, in the South Atlantic, we had the ability to fix this by going to the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission, which has binding regulatory authority. They put together an interstate management plan, and then the states have to put in place measures and comply with the interstate management plan and stay within their allocations and things, and so it’s a good solution, I think, to the problem, and the way this will work out is the South Atlantic Council will get the report from the stock ID workshop, and I believe they will likely take final action on this amendment in June.

They meet the week before you meet in Key West, and then this will come back before this council at the June meeting to be
approved at that time, and then we’ll move forward with the
rulemaking and hopefully get all of this taken care of by the
end of the year.

CHAIRMAN FRAZER: Thank you, Dr. Crabtree. Chairman Bosarge and
then Dale Diaz.

MS. LEANN BOSARGE: I am glad to hear that there is a game plan,
and hopefully that will fix some of their issues. I guess my
only concern is how -- Is there anything laid out in writing
that if, at some point in the future, the councils need to
interact with the Atlantic States Commission and how that
interaction occurs?

We are governed under one act, the Magnuson Act, and they’re
governed under a different act and have different rules that
they follow, and it’s my understanding that, at some point in
the past, this cobia stock was indeed all one stock, and so it’s
not out of the realm that one day in the future it could be all
one stock again, and maybe it’s not right now, but I guess, if
we’re going to get divorced from these cobia, I would like to
see what’s in the divorce decree, in case we ever have to have
any kind of interactions in the future.

DR. CRABTREE: Well, if the stock changes, and remember the
cobia is managed under a joint plan with the South Atlantic
Council, and that joint plan will still be in place, and cobia
will still be in the joint management plan as the Gulf stock.

If we decided at some point down the road, and the science
showed there was a single stock, then we would have to remove
the -- We would have to go in and amend the plan to manage that
stock, because the Gulf stock would no longer exist.

There would then be a single cobia stock, and I think what we
would do then is then the South Atlantic Council and the Gulf
Council would have to decide on an allocation of how many pounds
is the Gulf going to manage and how many pounds will the South
Atlantic manage, and we would likely then put the management
boundary back to Key West, and then what I think would happen is
we would probably look to Florida to come into the interstate
management plan on the east coast, and we would have to have
some sort of new structure as to how that related to the FMP at
that point.

Until that happens, there is no way to do that, but the plan is
not going away. The South Atlantic Council still will manage
cobia off the east coast of Florida, and, if the stock ID
changes at some point in the future, we’ll have to do a plan
amendment, but, whether we took Atlantic cobia out of this or
not, if the stock ID changes, we would have to come in and amend
the plan in any case, but the advantage of the interstate
management plan is it enables us to bring some rationale into
what the states are doing, and it helps the states to see how
many pounds of fish they need to stay within.

It’s a significant move forward, and I think it will enable us
to stay much closer to the cobia catch levels that we’re trying
to achieve, but, like all things, nothing we ever do is settled
forever, and it’s all subject to new science and new advances,
and we will have to come in and adapt to that if it happens at
any point in the future.

CHAIRMAN FRAZER: Okay. I’ve got a number of people, but,
Leann, to that point.

MS. BOSARGE: To that point, I just want to see something in
this document in writing that says, hey, if there is ever some
sort of change -- Like you just said, if the stock boundary
looks like it needs to change to Key West and we have to change
allocations and we have to move that stock boundary, then my
understanding, when I asked this question at the South Atlantic
Council, was the Atlantic States said, well, if it looks like
there’s a boundary change, we’re just going to make the change
and it will be done, and so there is not any communication on
where to change the boundary to between the councils and
Atlantic States, and do you?

That’s all I want in writing. You’ve got to consult with us,
and we’re all going to come to a happy agreement somehow or
another and not the Atlantic stock now goes all the way to Key
West and so that’s it from Atlantic States and we take it and we
manage it and, Gulf people, you stay on your side of the line.

DR. CRABTREE: But I don’t think the Atlantic States Commission
changes the boundary line. Right now, it’s Georgia and the
states north. That’s who is in the interstate management plan.
If the boundary, the stock ID boundary, is going to be moved, it
will have to be moved by the South Atlantic and the Gulf
Councils, because that’s what’s in the fishery management plan.

MS. BOSARGE: But what’s in this document does not say that.
What’s in this document says that we’re not going to manage
Atlantic cobia anymore, and it doesn’t say we will only manage
from the Florida/Georgia line south and around to the Gulf.
That is not what is being handed over to Atlantic States, and
so, if the stock changes, then they get it, right?

DR. CRABTREE: If the stock boundary changes, as I said, we will have to amend the plan to reflect that, and then the commission will take appropriate steps through the interstate management plan. If the stock boundary goes away and it becomes one stock, then the Atlantic stock no longer even exists, and neither does the Gulf stock. We will then have to amend the plan to manage a single stock and go through it.

If the stock boundary moves north or moves south, then the council will have to amend the plan to reflect that, and the commission will have to take steps to reflect that, too. Now, we can ask, and I can ask Jack to take a look at what’s in the document and add a paragraph that addresses that, but I don’t think this is much different than what we do all the time. Stock ID boundaries can change, and, if they do, we have to come in and amend the plan.

CHAIRMAN FRAZER: Thank you. Real quick, and I realize there is two or three people that are in line to chat here, but I think a real quick summary of what we’re looking for is some addition of language, potentially, to the amendment coming from -- As a recommendation perhaps, is a letter from this committee to that effect, but, moving forward, I’m going to go first with Ryan and then with Martha.

MR. RINDONE: I am going to yield to Madam Chair, because I think we have the same question, but it’s the same thing of who pulls rank? Is it the South Atlantic Council and the Gulf Council or is it the Atlantic States if there gets to be a disagreement?

DR. CRABTREE: About what exactly?

MR. RINDONE: About -- If the line moves in such a way that it causes a burden on the councils or the Atlantic States, who ultimately has the authority to management?

DR. CRABTREE: Well, if the stock boundary line moves, then the South Atlantic and the Gulf Council will need to amend the plan to reflect that move. Now, then the Atlantic States Commission will have to decide what they’re going to do.

MR. RINDONE: I guess my question is, if that move would be taking management away from Atlantic States in some capacity, do the councils have the authority to do that, or if let’s say the Atlantic stock goes into the Gulf to some degree at some point
in the future, just to make sure all the T’s are crossed and I’s are dotted, do the councils have the ability to draw those lines irrespective of Atlantic States, or how does that function, from a management standpoint?

DR. CRABTREE: The council has the authority to manage this fishery in federal waters, and so the council will move the boundary wherever the council decides the science indicates it needs to be, and then the council will put in place management measures for federal waters.

If you move the boundary further north, then the council will amend the plan to do that. If the boundary disappears and it becomes one stock, then we will amend the plan accordingly, but we’ll have to see what exactly we’re dealing with, and then we’ll have to have discussions with -- The South Atlantic Council will have discussions with the commission to figure out what to do with the interstate management plans, because we can’t really successfully constrain the catches of cobia without the commission and the interstate management plan, because 80 percent of the fishery is in state waters, and we don’t want to get back into a situation where we’re just closing the EEZ and going over the ACLs anyway, and so I can’t predict exactly how all of this will play out. It’s going to be specific to the situation that we find ourselves in.

CHAIRMAN FRAZER: Okay, and I think we have a number of people that want to chat about this, and so first I have Martha and then Doug Gregory and then Kevin Anson.

MS. GUYAS: I guess my comment was to what Leann has already brought up, and Ryan as well. It kind of feels like, yes, maybe we’re okay here for the time being if the line is going to be Florida/Georgia, but there’s a lot of ways that this is going to get complicated at some point. If the council and the commission need to sit down and talk about anything, I just don’t understand how that even happens at this point, and so it would be nice to clarify that.

CHAIRMAN FRAZER: Thank you. Mr. Gregory.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR GREGORY: Roy, I have a hypothetical, to try to get at a direct answer. Let’s say cobia move offshore in the Atlantic, and so they’re again in federal waters, and the stock ID workshop in the future says there’s only one stock of cobia in the Southeast, and does the FMP have the authority to take the Atlantic stock back under federal and away from the commission once it’s given to the commission? I think that’s
the crux of the problem. Do the councils have the authority to take it back if they want to?

DR. CRABTREE: The council has authority to manage federal waters. If your scenario happens, the Atlantic stock no longer exists, but the councils will always have the authority to manage federal waters, and so I’m not really -- Maybe Mara can help, but I don’t understand where the confusion is here. The council is not giving up any authority permanently, and the council can always change this, but you still will have to deal with the states, because that’s where most of the fishery is.

Now, if the fishery moves offshore and there are no cobia in the states anymore, and that seems extraordinarily unlikely, that would be a different scenario, but I don’t know. Maybe Mara has a comment.

CHAIRMAN FRAZER: I realize that Kevin is next, but, Mara, go ahead.

MS. MARA LEVY: Well, just to say that I think we’re confusing the jurisdictions, right? So, the Atlantic States Commission is talking about managing in state waters, only because the South Atlantic Council is saying we want to remove the Atlantic cobia stock from federal management. What they’re saying is we don’t think it’s in need of federal conservation and management because of what’s going to be happening through the states, through the Atlantic States Commission.

If that is scenario changes, the councils always have the authority to say we think this stock of fish is in need of federal conservation and management, looking at the factors outlined in the National Standard Guidelines, et cetera, and so it’s not about giving anybody jurisdiction. It’s saying, at this point in time, because of the circumstances that we have, we don’t think this particular stock is in need of federal conservation and management.

CHAIRMAN FRAZER: I promise, Kevin, that I’m going to get to you, but, Martha, to that point?

MS. GUYAS: I mean, Atlantic States works kind of funny, and they can require states to do different things. I mean, couldn’t they require states to extend their regulations into federal waters for cobia? Then we’re kind of still there, right?

MS. LEVY: Well, if it’s actually under federal management, the
states can’t extend their regulations, to the extent they’re inconsistent, and so you have the provisions that say vessels that are registered in a particular state, the state can have those regulations in federal waters as long as they’re consistent with the FMP, but the problem in this case is you have an FMP and you have the need to close fishing in federal waters, and so the states then can allow their vessels to fish in federal waters.

What is happening is essentially the South Atlantic Council is saying, because of this process that’s happening with the states, we don’t think we need federal management of this particular stock, because what’s going to happen with the states is it’s going to manage it sufficiently for the purposes of whatever, using the different factors.

DR. CRABTREE: If I could, there will still be federal regulations in the EEZ, but they will just be put in place under the authority of the Atlantic Coastal Fisheries Act.

MS. GUYAS: That’s what I’m saying. The Atlantic States can basically set those regulations in federal waters, and I think that’s the conversation that we’re having here, or make the states do it.

DR. CRABTREE: NMFS will set the regulations in federal waters. I mean, to me, if we had a similar situation in the Gulf of Mexico, where the Gulf States Commission had regulatory authority, I would likely be wanting to have a conversation about removing cobia from the FMP entirely, and I think cobia would best be managed by the states. It is a state-water fishery, by and large, but we don’t have a mechanism in the Gulf to allow us to do interstate management plans, which can require compliance, and so we don’t have the recourse in the Gulf like we do on the east coast.

CHAIRMAN FRAZER: Kevin Anson and then Ryan Rindone.

MR. KEVIN ANSON: I guess it was a question or a comment back to Martha on your original statement, when you had expressed some concerns, kind of what we’re talking about right now, as to it muddies the waters when we go to the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission management in regard to the east coast of Florida.

The mixing zone question is separate, or it can be separate, but I’m looking for an explanation as to why it would muddy the water, Martha, because there is some confusion about this mixing
zone and state waters and federal waters and jurisdiction change
and such, but, just in the context of the document right now,
with the preferred alternative, how does it muddy the water?

MS. GUYAS: In my original statement, I was thinking, if the
Atlantic stock extends into the Gulf, then we would be in a very
muddy situation, whether it’s off Florida or further west, and
so, if the stock stays north of Florida, then I think it’s
mostly going to be okay, but I guess what I’m asking for is, if
there are situations where the Gulf Council and the commission
need to chat, it would be nice to have some bounds about how
that happens, and I don’t know if it’s an MOU or just some words
in the document that both the commission and the council can
agree upon, but that’s all I’m saying, is it would be nice to
have some terms by which we get together and how we agree on
things.

CHAIRMAN FRAZER: Dr. Crabtree.

DR. CRABTREE: I think the way this will go is most of the
interaction between the commission and the council will be with
the South Atlantic Council. I mean, they are -- The state
directors on the South Atlantic Council are on the commission,
and it’s the South Atlantic Board, which is made up largely of
the states, and so I think most of the interaction with the
commission will continue to be through the South Atlantic
Council, and then the interactions will be between the South
Atlantic Council and the Gulf, since it’s a joint plan. That’s
how I would see the communication happening.

CHAIRMAN FRAZER: Mr. Rindone.

MR. RINDONE: Just a point of clarification. The majority of
the cobia caught in the Gulf are caught in federal waters.

CHAIRMAN FRAZER: Thank you.

DR. CRABTREE: That depends on where federal waters are, which
seems to be a rather fluid thing these days.

CHAIRMAN FRAZER: Okay, and so let me just kind of get a handle
on this one here. What I think is we’ve had a lot of really
good discussion, and I think it raises some issues and some
concerns, but I think there’s probably ample opportunity to
incorporate some language into the document that alleviates
those concerns, and so perhaps, as a council, we can provide our
input, by way of a letter, perhaps, through the Chair that
requests that essentially agreement or some clarification of how
things might be handled in the future, and, if we can do that, we would be good to go, if that’s acceptable to the committee. Mr. Rindone.

MR. RINDONE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. The IPT can take that direction. You guys don’t necessarily have to provide a letter, but we could just include the language based on the discussion that has taken place here, if you guys are comfortable with that. I think we have a pretty good record right now.

CHAIRMAN FRAZER: I am looking around to the council. Is everybody good with that? I don’t see any opposition to that, and so I’m okay with that as well. Mr. Beal, go ahead.

MR. BEAL: Hopefully this won’t muddy the waters and it will help things out, but the commission, the ASMFC, is very sympathetic to future conditions of the stock and the relationship between ASMFC and the South Atlantic Council and the Gulf Council, and, as a bit of additional background, the South Atlantic Council reached out to ASMFC and asked us to get involved, and so I hope this isn’t being perceived as a hostile takeover or that we’re trying to wrestle something away from the South Atlantic Council.

They said, hey, this fishery is occurring in state waters, and we feel that it would be better managed through the ASMFC process, and I think, if the future conditions of the stock changed and the line moved from the Florida/Georgia border down south, or that line disappeared completely, I think the South Atlantic Council would quickly reach out to ASMFC and ask for some changes, and ASMFC has to go through the amendment process as well to move that line from where it is right now.

I think any future changes in stock condition or stock identification would -- We would have to open up the joint plan that your council and the South Atlantic Council have, as well as the ASMFC plan, and figure out what the best way to manage this critter is, but I think, given the science that we have right now, and I don’t foresee the east coast water temperatures cooling off significantly and shifting back to where we were five or ten years ago anytime soon, and I think this is a -- It may not be a permanent fix to what’s going on, but I think it’s at least a medium-term fix that will solve a lot of problems on the east coast, and so that’s additional background for the council to consider.

CHAIRMAN FRAZER: Thank you for those comments, and I think that all of the entities involved are actually trying to move forward
in a way that most effectively manages the fishery, and I just think we’re just trying to tweak the language a little bit here so that everybody is comfortable moving forward, and I think the council and this committee is happy with Mr. Rindone’s suggestion to work through the IPT to modify the language and move forward, and so, unless there is any further discussion, we will move forward. Mr. Rindone.

MR. RINDONE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. There is only one action in this, which is to revise the management system for the Atlantic migratory group of cobia, and it’s on page 18 of Tab C, Number 4. Alternative 1 is leave current management of Atlantic cobia in the CMP FMP, which is joint between the Gulf and South Atlantic Councils, and the South Atlantic Council currently prefers Alternative 2, which would remove Atlantic group cobia from the CMP FMP.

Alternative 3 would establish a policy in the CMP FMP for complementary management of Atlantic cobia with the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission. That’s a little bit more complex, and then Alternative 4 would establish a framework procedure in the CMP FMP for an enhanced cooperative management system with the commission that allows changes to Atlantic cobia management through NMFS rulemaking. In the interest of time, I can go through what these actually mean in a whole lot more detail, or I can just see if there is any questions.

CHAIRMAN FRAZER: Is there a preference by the committee for this? Chairman Bosarge.

MS. BOSARGE: I was just going to make one observation. You know, if there was an alternative in here that essentially drew a line at that Florida/Georgia line and handed management over above that line, northward of that line, to the commission, it sure does solve a lot of our problems, because then if there is any shift in the stock southward, the Atlantic stock, they don’t have jurisdiction to manage below that line. They would have to get back with the councils and see what we wanted to do. Is that not doable though in the Atlantic?

DR. CRABTREE: I don’t really understand what you mean. The South Atlantic’s jurisdiction is unchanged. They have jurisdiction over federal waters. The Atlantic stock boundary is at the Florida/Georgia line. If the boundary moves, the council will make the appropriate adjustments, but the council is not giving up jurisdiction of anything. Their boundaries on where they have jurisdiction are unchanged.
They are just deciding that the Atlantic stock at this time doesn’t require federal management and can be managed more effectively by the states, and so it’s not clear to me how what you’re asking about would change anything.

CHAIRMAN FRAZER: Mr. Rindone, to that point?

MR. RINDONE: I think maybe a different way of saying it is, if the South Atlantic Council and the Gulf Council determine later that it needs to be managed federally, they take it back and it’s managed federally again and we go through the plan process and we put it back in, and so, if they need to take it back, they can take it back.

CHAIRMAN FRAZER: Okay, and so I think, going back to what I said earlier, I think that we’re going to go ahead and move forward with some of this. We’re going to bring this back probably later in the week, after I wrap my head around this a little bit, but I suspect that we will work with the IPT to provide some language, or suggest some language, that we can then provide to the South Atlantic Council.

MR. RINDONE: Yes, sir. The IPT will draft up a paragraph or two to outline the functionality behind the questions that were asked here. It’s the committee’s prerogative if they want to concur with the South Atlantic Council’s current preferred alternative now, or if there is a different alternative they think would be more appropriate, or they could not prefer anything at this time. That’s up to you all.

CHAIRMAN FRAZER: Is there anybody that wants to weigh-in on this any further? Dr. Crabtree.

DR. CRABTREE: We will need to pick a preferred at some point, and we can wait until the June meeting if that’s what folks want to do.

CHAIRMAN FRAZER: My inclination -- Again, I’m going to seek some input from the committee here, but it would be to continue to work through the process, as we have described here, and wait until that June meeting to actually pick a preferred. Dr. Crabtree.

DR. CRABTREE: I think, after consulting with our attorneys, I’m going to go ahead and make a motion to select Preferred Alternative 2 as our preferred.

CHAIRMAN FRAZER: Is there a second to that motion? It’s
seconded by Dr. Shipp. Is there further discussion? Chairman Bosarge.

MS. BOSARGE: If we go ahead and pick that as a preferred, are you going to put our language in that document and make sure our language gets in this document?

CHAIRMAN FRAZER: Yes, the assumption is -- In fact, it’s not an assumption, but in fact it will happen, and we’ll work through the IPT to make that happen. Is there any further discussion on the motion? Is anybody opposed to the motion? Seeing no opposition, the motion carries. Mr. Rindone, do we have any more to cover here?

MR. RINDONE: No, sir, not as it relates to this amendment specifically.

CHAIRMAN FRAZER: Is there any other business by the committee? Seeing none, this concludes the committee.

(Whereupon, the meeting adjourned on April 17, 2018.)

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