

## 2024 Coastal Migratory Pelagics Communications Plan

The Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council aims to gather input from a broad variety of stakeholders on king and Spanish mackerel. Declines in landings of both species in recent years may be an indication of declining stocks or they may be indicative of a shift in distribution or migration patterns of the species. The most recent stock assessments for king and Spanish mackerel determined both species to not be overfished or undergoing overfishing. Based on this information, the annual catch limits for Gulf king mackerel were updated on January 6, 2023. The Council is also considering modifying catch limits to Gulf Spanish mackerel.

The South Atlantic Council plans to engage in a Port Meeting effort along the Atlantic Coast in hopes of gathering information about Spanish and king mackerel movement and the impacts management has on fishing behavior. They also want to understand the dynamics of the commercial fleet, how fishermen value the fishery, understand the role tournaments play in the fishery, and understand how the species are affected by water quality and other environmental variables. They also strive to understand how king and Spanish mackerel fisheries interact with other species.

The following three-pronged outreach plan for the Gulf of Mexico aims to serve as a complimentary effort to the South Atlantic's Port Meeting endeavor. This plan is tailored to the Gulf of Mexico region and aims to gather the most valuable input possible, while being mindful of historical low participation in past in-person mackerel-based engagements. This outreach plan aims to gather specific feedback on movement and health of the fish stocks, dynamics of fishing behavior, and the role of mackerel species within the ecosystem.

### **Online Feedback Tool**

An online tool will be developed and used to gather feedback on king and Spanish mackerel modeled after the Council's existing Fisherman Feedback tool. This tool will not be branded as 'Fisherman Feedback' because it is not being deployed in conjunction with a stock assessment and will not be analyzed and reported in exactly the same manner. This tool should gather responses from a broad audience and require relatively minimal stakeholder investment of time or resources. Responses gathered from the tool will be summarized and shared publicly and directly with the Gulf and South Atlantic Council's as the FMP is jointly managed.

### **Virtual Feedback Workshops**

Three virtual workshops will be held at different times of the day and during different parts of the fishing season. During these workshops, staff will ask a series of questions to gather feedback from attendees. Summaries of each meeting will be produced and emergent themes will be identified.

**Advisory Panel (AP) Feedback**

Throughout the year, the Council will host a variety of AP meetings. When appropriate, staff will reserve some time to conduct a workshop during each meeting by asking a series of questions to gather feedback from AP members and members of the public. Summaries of each meeting will be produced and emergent themes will be identified.

**Communications Plan for Promoting Feedback**

The online feedback tool and virtual feedback workshops will be advertised broadly through the Council's established communication channels. Additionally, the Council will ask members of the Outreach and Education Technical Committee to amplify communications through their networks. Targeted communications that aim to engage tournament anglers, commercial and charter CMP fishermen, and niche CMP fishing groups, like the Alabama and Florida Key's gillnetters, will also be used to drive traffic to the online tool and the virtual workshops.

**Feedback during Planned Council Meetings**

A request for comment will be included for each Council meeting announcement scheduled for 2024.