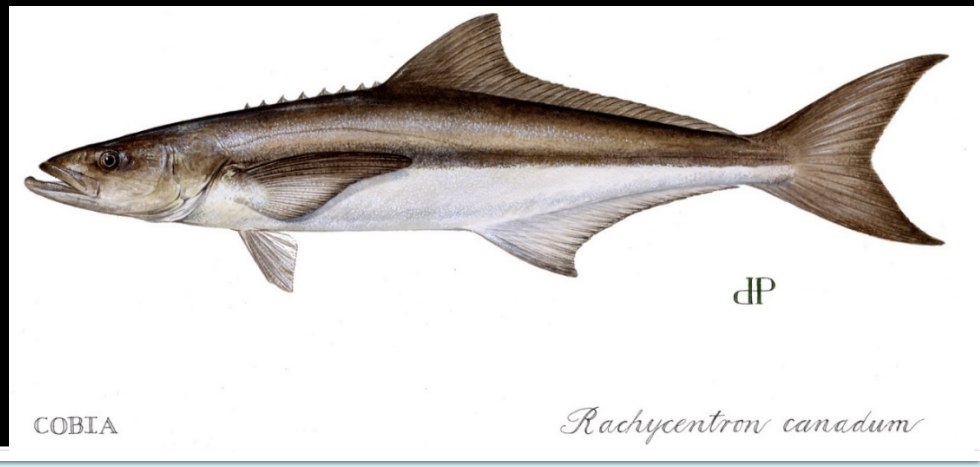
Tab C, No. 6

Gulf of Mexico Migratory Group Cobia Draft Options

(CMP Amendment 32)



Overview/ Recent Cobia Management

Framework Amendment 7 (March 2020): increased minimum size to Gulf Zone cobia; retained existing possession limits.

SEDAR 28 update (June 2020): Gulf Cobia is not overfished but is undergoing overfishing.

Council motion (September 2020)

- To direct staff start a plan amendment to reduce the fishing mortality in the commercial and recreational cobia fishery in the Gulf of Mexico, which will include bag limits, vessel limits, size limits, and catch limit options.

- Potential Actions and Alternatives for CMP 32

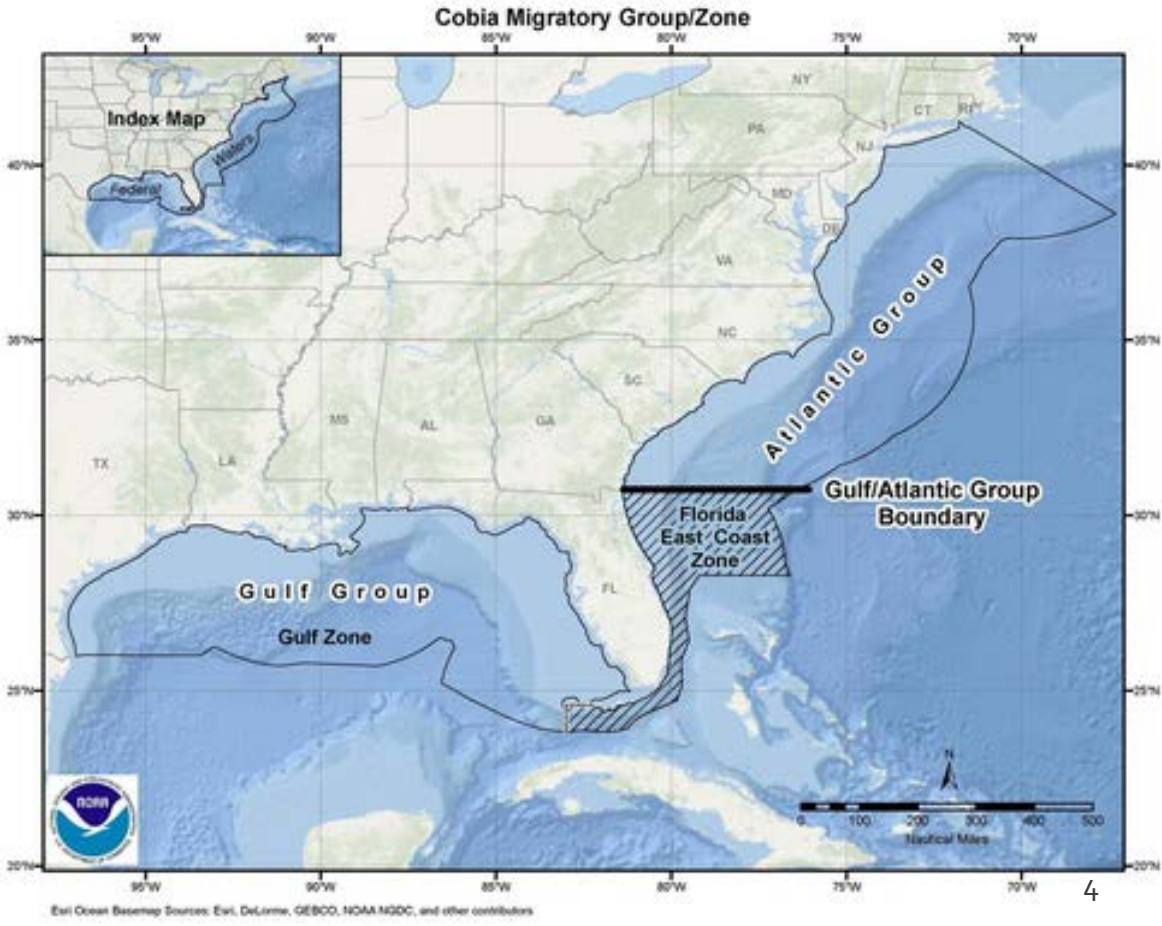
Draft Actions for CMP 32

Action 1	Modify the Gulf migratory group cobia (Gulf cobia) OFL, ABC, and ACL
Action 2	Modify the Gulf cobia ACL apportionment between the Gulf Zone and Florida East Coast Zone, and update the zones' ACLs and ACTs
Action 3	Modify the Gulf cobia possession limit
Action 4	Increase the Gulf cobia minimum size limit
Action 5	Modify the CMP Framework Procedure

Gulf Cobia Zone Management

- Managed jointly between the South Atlantic and Gulf Council

- Divided into two zones:
  - Gulf Zone – GMFMC
    - 64% of stock ACL
    - Single stock
  - Florida East Coast Zone (FLEC) – SAFMC
    - 36% of stock ACL
      - 92% Recreational
      - 8% Commercial



Most Recent Cobia Action: Framework Amendment 7 (March 2020)

Purpose: To reduce fishing mortality of Gulf cobia in response to concerns that harvest rates have decreased in waters in the Gulf Zone.

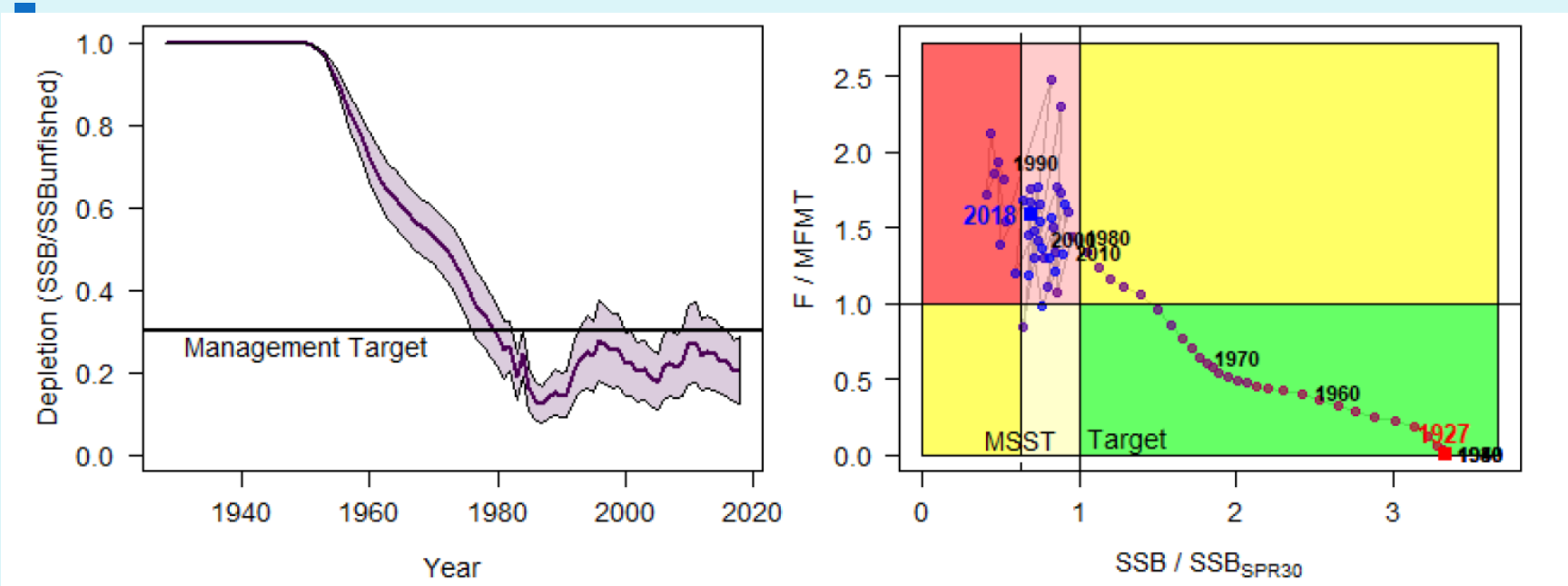
- **Increased minimum size limit**
- **Considered changing possession limit**

Increased minimum size limit - Increased from 33” FL to 36” FL in Gulf Zone cobia (Florida East Coast Zone maintains 33” FL)

Possession limit – No action. Do not change the current two fish per person daily recreational and commercial possession limit for Gulf cobia, regardless of the number or duration of trips.

SEDAR 28U (2020)

- Terminal year 2018.
- FES adjustments to the recreational catch.
- Not overfished but is undergoing overfishing.
- Overfishing has occurred every year from 1975 – 2018, except in 1993 and 2009.
-



Draft Actions for CMP 32

Action 1	Modify the Gulf migratory group cobia (Gulf cobia) OFL, ABC, and ACL
Action 2	Modify the Gulf cobia ACL apportionment between the Gulf Zone and Florida East Coast Zone, and update the zones' ACLs and ACTs
Action 3	Modify the Gulf cobia possession limit
Action 4	Increase the Gulf cobia minimum size limit
Action 5	Modify the CMP Framework Procedure

Action 1 – Modify the Gulf Cobia OFL, ABC, and ACL

Alternative 1 No Action. Retain the OFL, ABC and total ACL for Gulf cobia as implemented in 2015 by CMP Amendment 20B.

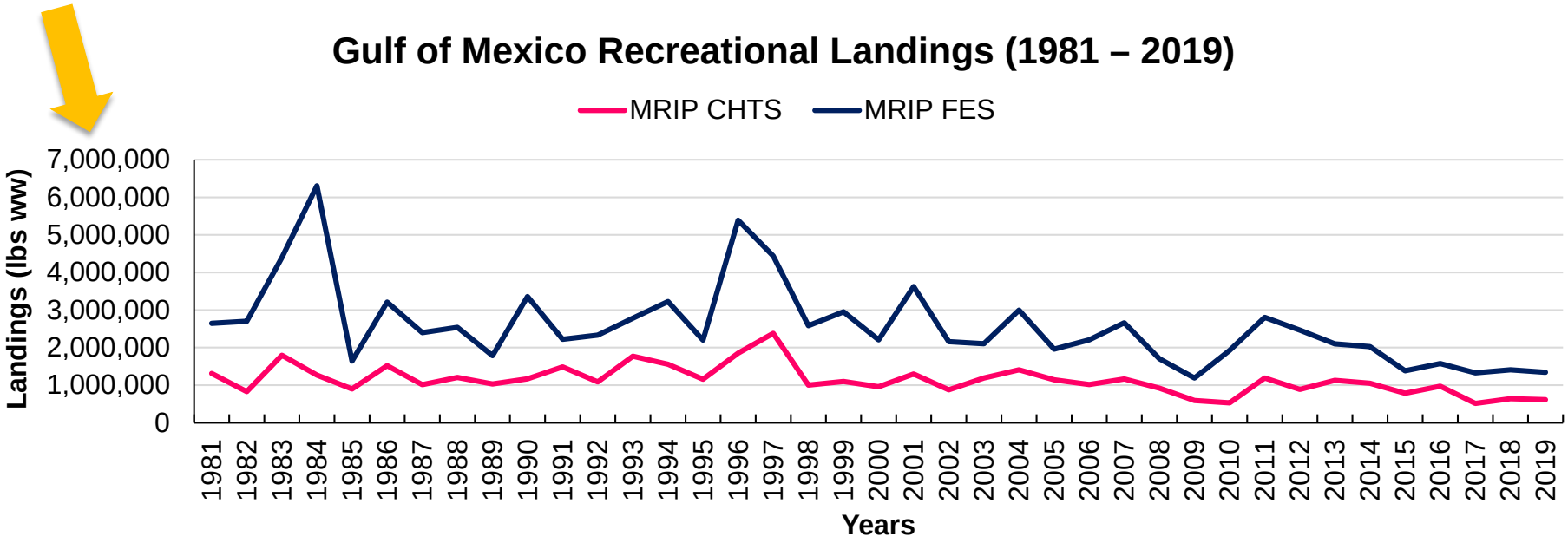
	Current		
	Gulf Cobia (Total)		
	OFL	**ABC**	**ACL**
MRIP-CHTS	2.66	2.60	2.60
Hypothetical FES (SEDAR 28U)	*4.87*	*4.5*	*4.5*

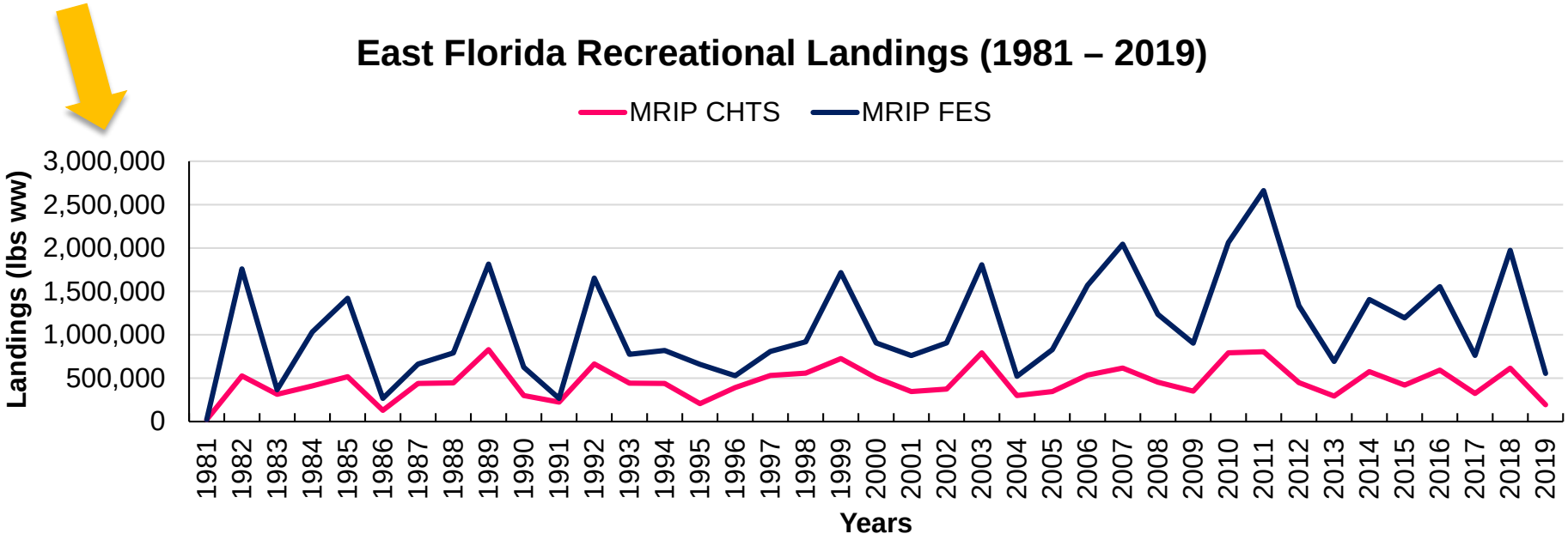
Alternative 2 Modify the OFL, ABC and total ACL for Gulf cobia based on the recommendation of the Gulf SSC.

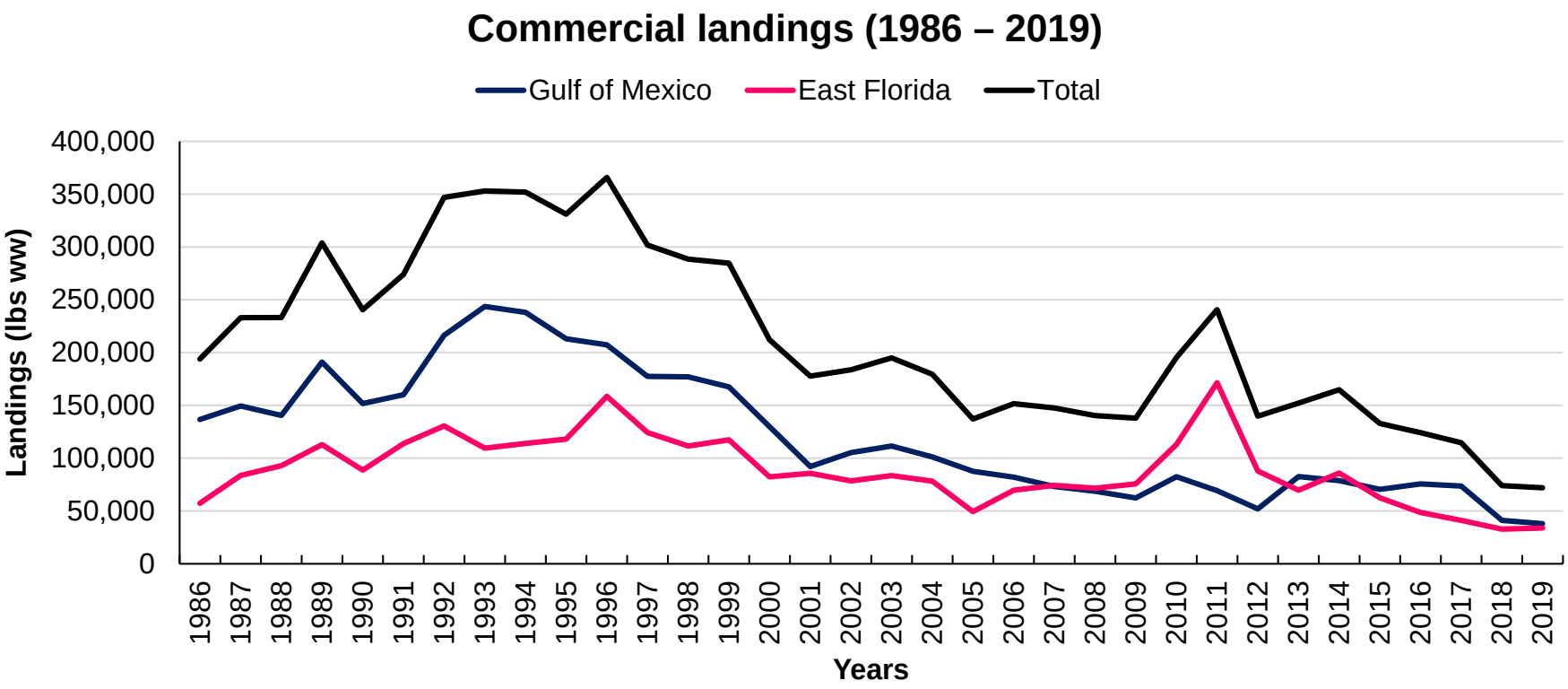
	Gulf SSC Recommendation		
	Gulf Cobia (Total)		
Year	**OFL**	**ABC**	**ACL**
2021	3.03	2.34	2.34
2022	3.21	2.60	2.60
2023+	3.31	2.76	2.76

MRIP-FES

Note: All units in mp ww.


Gulf of Mexico Recreational Landings (1981 – 2019)
MRIP CHTS
MRIP FES
Landings (lbs ww)
7,000,000
6,000,000
5,000,000
4,000,000
3,000,000
2,000,000
1,000,000
0
1981 1982 1983 1984 1985 1986 1987 1988 1989 1990 1991 1992 1993 1994 1995 1996 1997 1998 1999 2000 2001 2002 2003 2004 2005 2006 2007 2008 2009 2010 2011 2012 2013 2014 2015 2016 2017 2018 2019
Years


East Florida Recreational Landings (1981 – 2019)
MRIP CHTS
MRIP FES
Landings (lbs ww)
3,000,000
2,500,000
2,000,000
1,500,000
1,000,000
500,000
0
1981 1982 1983 1984 1985 1986 1987 1988 1989 1990 1991 1992 1993 1994 1995 1996 1997 1998 1999 2000 2001 2002 2003 2004 2005 2006 2007 2008 2009 2010 2011 2012 2013 2014 2015 2016 2017 2018 2019
Years


Commercial landings (1986 – 2019)
Gulf of Mexico
East Florida
Total
Landings (lbs ww)
400,000
350,000
300,000
250,000
200,000
150,000
100,000
50,000
0
1986
1987
1988
1989
1990
1991
1992
1993
1994
1995
1996
1997
1998
1999
2000
2001
2002
2003
2004
2005
2006
2007
2008
2009
2010
2011
2012
2013
2014
2015
2016
2017
2018
2019
Years

Action 2 – Modify the Gulf Cobia ACL Zone Apportionment and Update ACTs

Alternative 1: No action. Retain the current apportionment of 64% Gulf Zone and 36% FLEC Zone based on MRIP-CHTS average landings from 1998-2012. Use this apportionment to update the Zone ACLs and ACTs.

Gulf Zone	FL East Coast Zone
ACL = 64% of ABC	ACL = 36% ABC Commercial ACL= 8% ACL Recreational ACL= 92% ACL
Stock ACT = 90% ACL	Recreational ACT = ACL [(1-PSE) or 0.5, whichever is greater

Alternative 2: Modify the ACL apportionment between the Gulf Zone and the FLEC Zone based on MRIP-FES average landings from 1998-2012. Use this apportionment to update the Zone ACLs and ACTs

Action 2 – Modify the Gulf cobia ACL Zone Apportionment and Update ACTs

Alternative 3: Modify the ACL apportionment to be ___% Gulf Zone and ____% FLEC Zone based on MRIP-FES average landings from _____. Update the Zone ACTs using the respective Council ACL/ACT Control Rules

Gulf Zone	FL East Coast Zone
ACL =___% of ABC	ACL = ___% ABC Commercial ACL= 8% ACL Recreational ACL= 92% ACL
Stock ACT = 90% ACL	Recreational ACT = ACL [(1-PSE) or 0.5, whichever is greater]

ACL Monitoring (2012-2018)

Gulf Zone Cobia

Year	Recreational Landings	Commercial Landings	Total Landings	ACT	ACT %	ACL	ACL %	Rec Data Source
2012	924,697	51,911	976,608	1,310,000	74.6	1,460,000	66.9	MRFSS
2013	1,211,101	82,508	1,293,609	1,310,000	98.7	1,460,000	88.6	MRFSS
2014	923,426	78,982	1,002,408	1,310,000	76.5	1,460,000	68.7	MRFSS
2015	811,564	70,370	881,934	1,450,000	60.8	1,610,000	54.8	MRIP-CHTS
2016	888,898	75,559	964,457	1,500,000	64.3	1,660,000	58.1	MRIP-CHTS
2017	643,048	73,604	716,652	1,500,000	47.8	1,660,000	43.2	MRIP-CHTS
2018	496,358	40,728	537,086	1,500,000	35.8	1,660,000	32.4	MRIP-CHTS
2019	595,797	35,225	631,022	1,5000,000	42.1	1,660,666	38	MRIP-CHTS

Source: https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/gulf-mexico-historical-stock-landings-and-annual-catch-limit-monitoring [Accessed: 10/05/2020]

Action 3 – Modify the Gulf cobia Possession Limit

Alternative 1: No action. Retain the two fish per person daily recreational and commercial possession limit, regardless of the number or duration of trips.

Alternative 2: Reduce the recreational and commercial daily possession limit to one fish per person

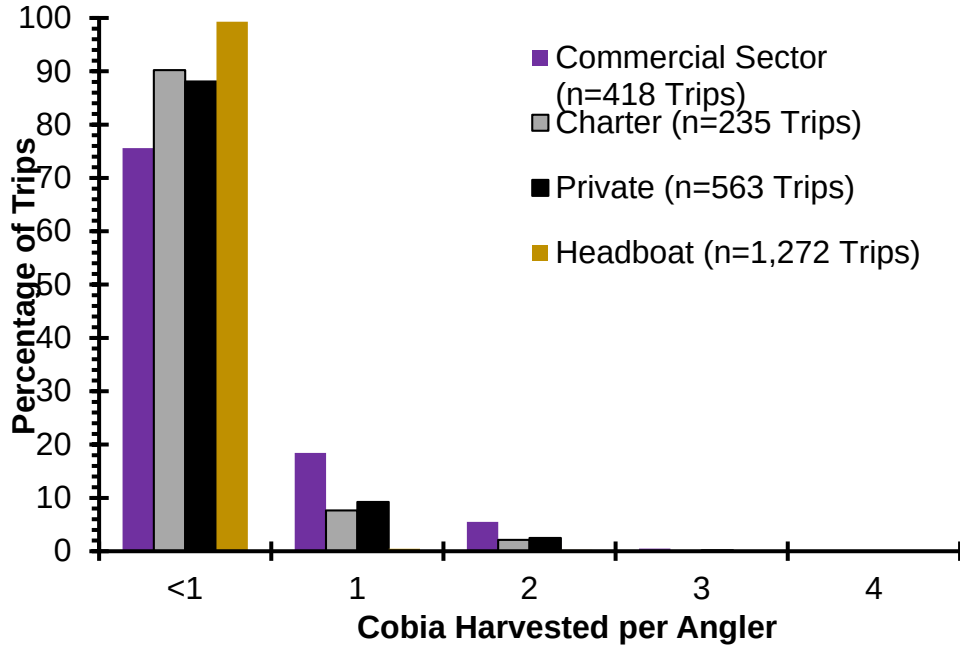
- **Option 2a**: in the Gulf Zone
- **Option 2b**: in the Florida East Coast Zone

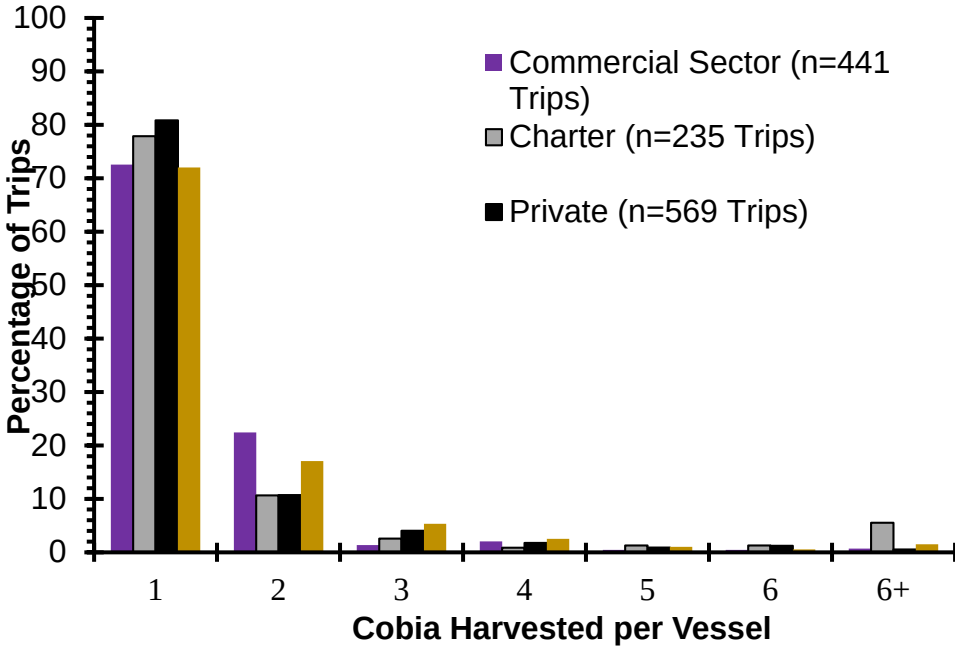
Alternative 3: Create a recreational and commercial daily vessel limit for Gulf cobia. Anglers may not exceed the per person possession limit.

- **Option 3a:** in the Gulf Zone
  - Suboptions: 2, 4, 6 fish per vessel
- **Option 3b**: in the Florida East Coast Zone
  - Suboptions: 2, 4, 6 fish per vessel

Analyses from Framework Amendment 7 (2015 – 2017, Gulf Zone)

Alternative	% Reduction	
	Commercial	Recreational
Preferred Alternative 1 No Action	**0.0**	**0.0**
Alternative 2, 1 Cobia per Person	6.0	4.0
Alternative 3a, 2 Cobia per Vessel	5.0	9.1
Alternative 3b, 4 Cobia per Vessel	1.6	3.7
Alternative 3c, 6 Cobia per Vessel	0.7	1.5





Action 4 – Increase the Gulf Cobia Minimum Size Limit

Alternative 1: No action, retain current rec. and com. minimum size limit of 36” FL in Gulf Zone, and 33” FL in Florida East Coast Zone

Alternative 2: Retain the current rec. and com. minimum size limit of 36” FL in the Gulf Zone and increase the rec. and com. minimum size limit to 36” FL in the Florida East Coast Zone.

Alternative 3: Increase the rec. and com. minimum size limit to 39” FL.

- Option 3a: in the Gulf Zone
- Option 3b: in the Florida East Coast Zone

Alternative 4: Increase the rec. and com. minimum size limit to 42” FL.

- Option 4a: in the Gulf Zone
- Option 4b: in the Florida East Coast Zone

Analyses from Framework Amendment 7 (2015 – 2017, Gulf Zone)

Alternative	Size Limit (Inches FL)	% Reduction	
		Commercial	Recreational
Alternative 1 (No Action)	33	0.0	0.0
Preferred Alternative 2	**36**	**10.3**	**26.1**
Alternative 3	39	29.0	47.0
Alternative 4	42	55.9	61.7

Action 5 – Modify the Framework Procedure

Alternative 1: No action. Retain the current framework procedure for the responsibilities of each Council to set regulations for the Gulf migratory group cobia as adopted in Amendment 20B and revised in Amendment 26.

Recommendations with respect to the Atlantic migratory groups of king mackerel, Spanish mackerel, and cobia will be the responsibility of the South Atlantic Council, and those for the Gulf migratory groups of king mackerel, Spanish mackerel, and cobia will be the responsibility of the Gulf Council, with the following exceptions:

a. The South Atlantic Council will have responsibility to set vessel trip limits, closed seasons or areas, or gear restrictions for the east coast of Florida including the Atlantic side of the Florida Keys for Gulf migratory group cobia.

Action 5 – Modify the Framework Procedure

Alternative 2: Modify the framework procedure to update the. responsibility to each Council for setting regulations for the Gulf migratory group cobia

Recommendations with respect to the Atlantic migratory groups of king mackerel, Spanish mackerel, and cobia will be the responsibility of the South Atlantic Council, and those for the Gulf migratory groups of king mackerel, Spanish mackerel, and cobia will be the responsibility of the Gulf Council, with the following exceptions:

a. The South Atlantic Council will have the responsibility to specify management measures that affect only the east coast of Florida including the Atlantic side of the Florida Keys for Gulf migratory group cobia.

Questions?