

**Mackerel Committee Report  
April 3, 2023  
Mr. Kevin Anson – Chair**

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

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

Mr. Peter Hood (NMFS Southeast Regional Office) and Ms. Kelli O'Donnell reviewed the recent coastal migratory pelagic (CMP) landings for the Gulf migratory groups of cobia, king mackerel, and Spanish mackerel. A Committee member noted the Florida East Coast (FLEC) Zone's landings in relation to that Zone's annual catch limit (ACL) and asked about any accountability measures (AM). The FLEC Zone has a post-season AM, such that when the FLEC Zone stock ACL is exceeded in one year, then in the following year, the recreational season will close when the FLEC Zone recreational ACT is projected to be met. Council staff noted that CMP Amendment 32 analyses predicted the potential for a recreational closure in the FLEC Zone. The Committee member also commented on the lack of cobia landings in Orange Beach, Alabama, and that something else may be happening with the stock.

The South Atlantic Fishery Management Council is planning to host a series of port meetings to gather feedback from the mackerel fishing community, given concerns about lower CMP landings. Council staff reminded the Committee of the various CMP-centric projects that are underway, which include the upcoming Gulf Spanish mackerel stock assessment, the release of the Fishermen Feedback tool for Gulf Spanish mackerel, and the effort looking into an interim analysis approach for Gulf king mackerel.

***Final Action: Draft Framework Amendment 12: Modifications to the Commercial Gulf King Mackerel Gillnet Fishing Season (Tab C, No. 5)***

Council staff reviewed the option to remove the prohibition on fishing on weekends and federal holidays for the commercial gillnet component of the Gulf king mackerel fishery, which operates off southwest Florida. The Committee affirmed its preference to remove this prohibition, as it no longer serves its intended purpose. NOAA General Counsel described the changes to the codified text that would go into effect with the proposed regulations.

**Motion: To recommend the Council approve Draft Framework Amendment 12: Modifications to the Commercial Gulf King Mackerel Gillnet Fishing Season and forward it to the Secretary of Commerce for review and implementation, and deem the codified text as necessary and appropriate, giving staff editorial license to make the necessary changes in the document. The Council Chair is given the authority to deem any changes to the codified text as necessary and appropriate.**

***Motion carried without opposition.***

### ***Recommendations from the CMP Advisory Panel (AP) December 2022 Meeting (Tab C, No. 6)***

Council staff presented the remaining recommendations from the CMP AP meeting from December 2022. The Committee discussed the potential sale of recreationally caught fish, which is prohibited by each of the Gulf states. Some Committee members did not see how developing this type of document would further reduce the practice, as each Gulf state already has regulations in place. The Committee also heard a law enforcement perspective, and how the states may not devote resources to monitoring this type of infrequent violation. Given the concerns regarding the practice of selling recreationally caught fish, the Committee recommends the Law Enforcement Technical Committee discuss this topic at a future meeting. Instead of developing a document as stated in the Action Schedule, Committee members suggested focusing on outreach efforts to educate recreational anglers and seafood dealers of state restrictions and strive to reduce the occurrence of violations.

**Motion: To remove the following from the GMFMC Proposed Actions for 2023 (Action Schedule) because sale of recreationally caught cobia is prohibited by the states.**

- **(line 22) Framework Amendment: to prohibit the sale of recreationally caught cobia.**

***Motion carried with one in opposition.***

Mr. Chair, this concludes my report.