

Mackerel Committee Report
June 22, 2016
Pam Dana – Chair

The agenda was modified and approved to include a discussion of updating the Gulf migratory group king mackerel OFL and ABC yield streams.

CMP Amendment 29

Staff reviewed the purpose and need for CMP 29, which addresses Gulf king mackerel allocation sharing and accountability measures. The Committee determined that the purpose and need were accurate and suitable to the intended actions.

Action 1

Staff reviewed Action 1, which examines options for allocation sharing strategies between the recreational and commercial sectors for Gulf king mackerel. Alternative 2 was taken directly from CMP Amendment 26, Alternative 3 was developed by staff, and Alternative 4 was proffered at the previous Council meeting. Staff presented an example of how Alternative 3 would function. Committee members were asked to define what would be meant by the language “met its ACL” with respect to Alternatives 3 and 4. Committee members agreed that, with respect to king mackerel, if a sector lands at least 90% of its ACL, then it is determined to be landing its ACL. The Committee was also asked to consider its willingness to allow waves 2 and 3 from the MRIP survey to be estimated in order to facilitate the timely issuance of temporary rules by NMFS to adjust the ACLs as described in Alternatives 3 and 4. The Committee indicated that they would prefer to see the landings history of the recreational sector for those waves prior to making a decision. Committee members also wished to see a table outlining the estimated timelines for Alternatives 2 – 4. Upon request from the Committee, staff noted that the landings for the recreational sector for the current fishing season are ~1.1 million pounds below what they were at the same time last year.

Action 2

Staff reviewed the proposed modifications to the accountability measures (AMs) for the recreational sector for king mackerel. It was noted that the measures proposed in Action 1 had the potential to result in the current in-season accountability measure for the recreational sector being triggered. Because of the Council’s desire to keep the recreational sector open year round, the IPT recommended changing the current in-season AM to a post-season AM. The change to a post-season AM allows for the safeguards built into Action 1 to return any shared allocation to the recreational sector before the AM could be applied, thereby safeguarding the current year round recreational season from any risks related to the allocation sharing strategy. Staff were asked to consider expanding the AM proposed in Alternative 2 to consider successive years of overages. Committee members were hesitant to consider the bag limit adjustment proffered in Alternative 2, since changing bag limits from one season to the next can be burdensome for anglers and enforcement.

CMP Framework Amendment 5

Staff reviewed the purpose and need, noting the South Atlantic Council's desire to participate in CMP FA5. Including the South Atlantic Council in this measure would reduce the administrative burden on NMFS, and would keep management measures consistent between the Councils. As such, the Committee approved modifying the purpose and need to be inclusive of the Atlantic migratory groups of king and Spanish mackerel.

Action 1

Staff reviewed the proposed alternatives, noting that king and Spanish mackerel are being considered separately from one another to account for differences in the management of each species, and between the Councils. The Committee approved modifying the language in the alternatives to reflect consideration of the respective migratory groups. Committee members asked if it was possible to combine Alternatives 2 and 3; staff replied that they were presented separately to give the Councils options, and that keeping them separate would make analyses more straightforward. Committee members asked how MRIP would sample these commercial vessels when they fish recreationally. NMFS replied that it was likely that the sampling of these vessels would prove difficult; another Committee member noted, however, in her state, many of the commercial mackerel vessels in their state used public boat ramps and could be easily sampled by MRIP.

The Committee recommends, and I so move, in Action 1, to make Alternatives 2 and 3 the preferred Alternatives.

Alternative 2: Remove the restriction on retaining the recreational bag limit of king mackerel on a vessel with a federal pelagic commercial permit for king mackerel that is fishing recreationally when the ~~Gulf of Mexico~~ commercial zone in which the vessel is fishing is closed.

Alternative 3: Remove the restriction on retaining the recreational bag limit of Spanish mackerel on a vessel with a federal pelagic commercial permit for Spanish mackerel when the ~~Gulf of Mexico~~ commercial Spanish mackerel fishing season is closed.

Motion carried with no opposition.

Other Business

Updating the Gulf migratory group king mackerel OFL and ABC yield streams

A Committee member offered the motion below to address the under-harvest of king mackerel in the Gulf, in an effort to appropriately adjust the stock ACL to account for landings over the last couple years.

The Committee recommends, and I so move, to request the SEFSC provide the SSC with updated OFL and ABC yield streams for Gulf migratory group king mackerel

for the 2017/2018 to 2019/2020 fishing seasons.

Motion carried with no opposition.

Mr. Chairman, this concludes my report.