

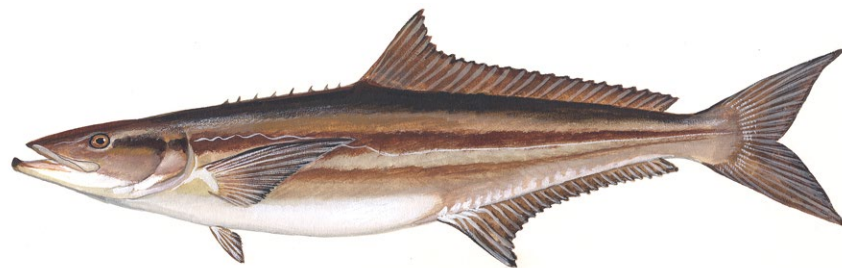


Cobia Technical Committee

Terms of Reference for SEDAR 95

Atlantic Migratory Group Cobia Stock

Assessment



January 24, 2024

Data and Assessment Workshop Teams



Name	Affiliation	Role/Expertise	Data and/or Assessment Workshop Participation
Somers Smott	VMRC, Cobia TC	VA state data provider	Data
Justin Yost	SC DNR, Cobia TC	SC state data provider	Data, Assessment
Jimmy Kilfoil	SC DNR	Tagging data analysis	Data, Assessment
Angela Giuliano	MD DNR, Cobia TC	MD state data provider; MRIP Index standardization; State commercial discards estimation; Age compositions	Data, Assessment
Nichole Ares	RI DEM, Cobia TC	RI state data provider; Data compilation	Data, Assessment
Caitlin Craig	NY DEC	NY state data provider	Data
Mike Rinaldi	ACCSP	Commercial landings	Data
Meisha Key	SEDAR	Project Coordinator	Data, Assessment
Lewis Coggins	NMFS SEFSC	Lead Modeler	Data, Assessment

Assessment Timeline



January 2024	Finalize TORs & call for data
March 2024	Data scoping webinar
June-August 2024	Data workshop webinars
March-April 2025	Data due to compilers & final data report sections due to SEDAR
April-August 2025	Assessment workshop webinars
September 2025	Final assessment report due to SEDAR
October 2025	Review workshop
November 2025	Review workshop addenda & final review workshop reports due
Early 2026	Report to Coastal Pelagics Management Board

Overview



- Technical Committee met on January 4 to discuss Terms of Reference (TORs) for the upcoming stock assessment
- Based on standard SouthEast Data, Assessment, and Review (SEDAR) TORs
- Three Sections of TORs
 - Data Workshop
 - Assessment Workshop
 - Review Workshop

Data Workshop



- Includes review of and collection of information on:
 - Life History Information (age, growth, natural mortality, maturity, etc.)
 - Discard Mortality Rates
 - Fishery Dependent and Independent Surveys and Sampling
 - Catch Statistics (Commercial and Recreational)
 - Research Recommendations
- TC Addition:
 - 1. Review stock structure and unit stock definitions; consider whether changes are required. **Consider genetic and/or tagging data and other data sources as available.**

Assessment Workshop



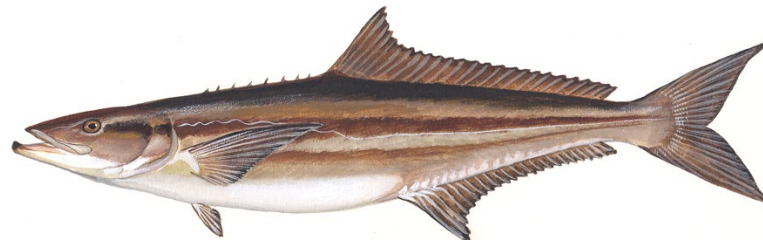
- Includes:
 - Review of any changes in data or data sources
 - Development of assessment models & estimates of stock population parameters
 - Characterize uncertainty in the assessment
 - Provide estimates of population benchmarks or management criteria consistent with data and FMP
 - Stock status determination
 - Research recommendations
- **TC goal was to provide flexibility to the Data and Assessment Workshop teams**
 - Unclear if continuity model will be able to be run
 - Unclear what new modeling framework will be used or what the reference points will be

Review Workshop



- Includes evaluation of:
 - Data used in the assessment
 - Methods used to assess the stock
 - Any stock projections provided
 - Uncertainties in the assessment
 - Research recommendations
 - Whether the assessment is the best scientific information available
 - Considerations on when to schedule the next assessment

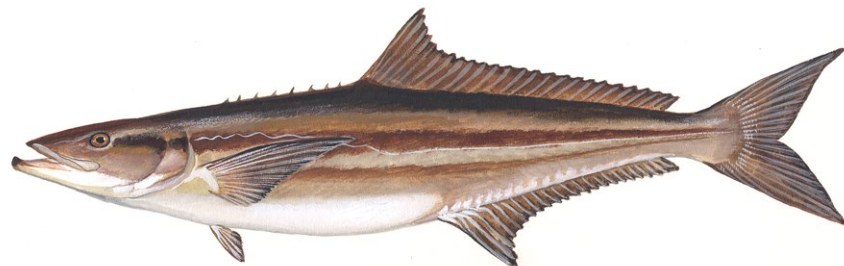
Questions?



Board action for consideration: Approval of the Terms of Reference for the SouthEast Data, Assessment, and Review of Atlantic Migratory Group (AMG) Cobia Stock Assessment (SEDAR 95)



Atlantic Cobia Recreational Reallocation Addendum Progress



Coastal Pelagics Management Board
January 24, 2024

Overview



1. Allocation Overview
2. October 2023 Board Motion
3. Plan Development Team (PDT) Progress
4. Timeline

Recreational Harvest Targets



- Addendum I Sector Allocation: 96% recreational; 4% commercial
- Recreational allocations based on states' percentages of coastwide historical landings in numbers of fish:
 - 50% of the 10-year average landings from 2006-2015
 - 50% of the 5-year average landings from 2011-2015

State	Percent	Current Rec Target
VA	39.4%	30,302 fish
NC	38.1%	29,302 fish
SC	12.1%	9,306 fish
GA	9.4%	7,229 fish
De minimis	1.0%	769 fish
Total	100%	76,908 fish

October 2023 Board Motion



“Move to initiate an addendum addressing recreational Atlantic cobia quota reallocation. The Board recommends that the Plan Development Team explore options outside of the current state-by-state quota allocation system, specifically a coastwide soft target with regional management measures designed to meet the coastwide soft target while considering the need for fishing opportunity based on the seasonality of the species in various regions.”

Plan Development Team Progress



- PDT discussed three alternatives for inclusion in Addendum:
 - State-by-state allocations
 - Regional allocations
 - Coastwide allocation
- PDT is seeking guidance on:
 - Alternative details (rolling seasons, allocation update trigger, etc.)
 - Incorporation of uncertainty
 - Allocation data timeline
 - Timeline for changing measures

State-by-State Allocations



- Continue current system of state-by-state allocation with updated data
- Automatic allocation trigger:
 - Allocations may be updated without the need for an addendum (e.g., if a state falls out of *de minimis*)
- **Topics for discussion:**
 - Should an automatic allocation trigger be further explored under this action?
 - What scenarios outside of a state falling out of *de minimis* status may constitute a reallocation?

Regional Allocations



- Two Region Allocation
 - Northern Region (States north of South Carolina)
 - Southern Region (South Carolina and Georgia)
- Three Region Allocation
 - Northern Region (States north of Maryland)
 - Mid-Atlantic Region (North Carolina-Maryland)
 - Southern Region (South Carolina and Georgia)

Rolling Seasons



- Regional and coastwide allocations would require uniform bag and size limits with seasons determined by cobia availability
- PDT will further explore options for season determination
 - Example: Open state/regional seasons when X% of the cobia harvest in the state/region occurs throughout the year
- **Topic for discussion:**
 - What is the feasibility of the upfront regulatory changes needed with this approach? Limiting factors?

State	Regulations	
<i>De minimis</i>	<i>Minimum Size:</i> 37 inches TL <i>Vessel Limit:</i> 1 fish per vessel <i>Season:</i> Year-round	
Virginia, Maryland, PRFC	<i>Minimum Size:</i> 40 inches TL <i>Vessel Limit:</i> 1 fish per person, 2 fish per vessel <i>Season:</i> June 15-September 15	
North Carolina	<i>Minimum Size:</i> 36 inches FL <i>Bag Limit:</i> 1 fish per person <i>Season:</i> May 1-December 31	<i>Private Vessel Limit:</i> May 1- June 30: 2 fish July 1-Dec 31: 1 fish <i>For-Hire Vessel Limit:</i> May 1-Dec 31: 4 fish
South Carolina	<i>Minimum Size:</i> 36 inches FL <i>Vessel Limit:</i> 1 fish per person, 6 fish per vessel <i>Season:</i> Year-round	Southern Cobia Management Zone: <i>Minimum Size:</i> 36 inches FL <i>Vessel Limit:</i> 1 fish per person, 3 fish per vessel <i>Season:</i> June-April 30
Georgia	<i>Minimum Size:</i> 36 inches FL <i>Vessel Limit:</i> 1 fish per person, 6 fish per vessel <i>Season:</i> March 1-October 31	

Allocation Data Timeline



- Using the most recent 10 years of data (2014-2023) may not be appropriate
 - Fishery closure in 2016
 - COVID years and concerns with sampling and imputed data in 2020-2021
 - Proposed timeline: 2014-2015, 2017-2019, 2022-2023
- **Topic for discussion:**
 - Should COVID years (2020 and 2021) be included in allocation calculations?

Other Considerations



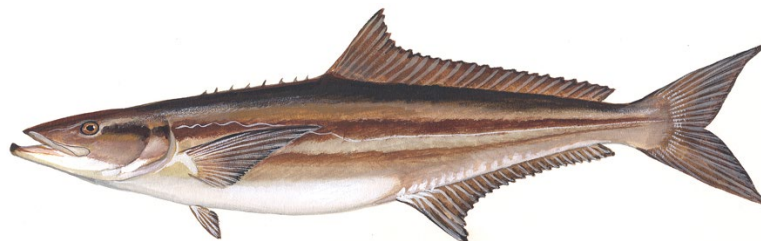
- Management uncertainty preliminary ideas:
 - Upfront uncertainty buffer applied to the harvest target
 - Buffer around state-level soft targets to indicate when management action is needed
 - Quota borrowing system to prevent management whiplash
- Timelines for setting recreational measures:
 - Current process sets measures on a three-year timeline
 - Is this still appropriate?

Tentative Timeline



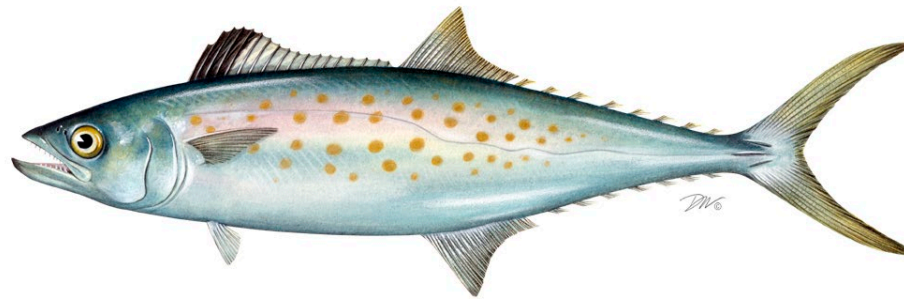
Mid-2024 (May or August)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Board considers approval of draft addendum for public comment and states begin public hearings
Late-2024 (August or October)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Board considers selecting final measures and approval of addendum for 2025 implementation
2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• States implement new recreational management measures based on updated allocation system (total harvest quota will remain the same)
2026	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Board receives cobia stock assessment results and considers setting new total harvest quota and recreational measures for the 2027-2029 fishing years

Questions?





Spanish Mackerel FMP Review: 2022 Fishing Year



Coastal Pelagics Management Board
January 24, 2024

Status of the FMP



Omnibus Amendment (2011) to the Interstate FMP

Recreational Fishery

- 12" FL or 14" TL minimum size limit
- 15 fish creel limit
- Must be landed with head and fins intact
- Prohibited gear: Drift gill nets prohibited south of Cape Lookout, NC

Commercial Fishery

- 12" FL or 14" TL minimum size limit
- Trip limits (per vessel, per day)
 - NY-GA: 3500 lbs
 - FL: 3500 lbs, 3/1-11/30;
 - 3500 lbs Mon-Fri & 1500 lbs Sat-Sun, 12/1 until 75% adj. quota taken;
 - 1500 lbs, when 75% adj. quota taken;
 - 500 lbs after 100% of adj. quotas taken.
- Prohibited: purse seines; drift gill nets south of Cape Lookout, NC

Status of the Stock



- SEDAR 78 (2022)
 - Data through 2020
 - Operational (i.e., update) to SEDAR 28 (2012)
- Stock is not overfished; not experiencing overfishing (3-yr avg fishing mortality)
- In the terminal year of the assessment, the fishing mortality rate was above threshold; if the 2020 overfishing rate continues, the stock may fall into an overfishing status.

Status of the Fishery



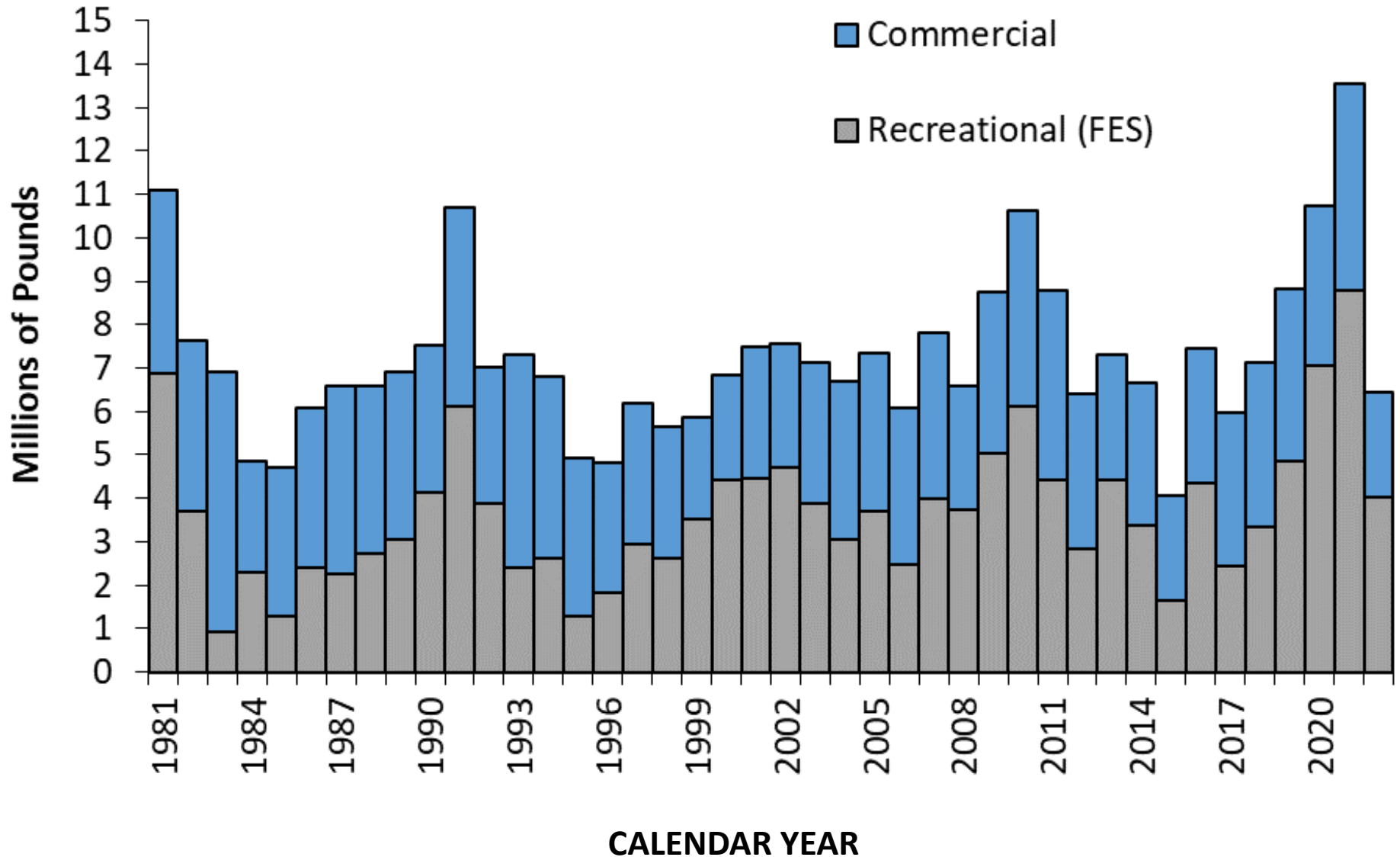
- Landings in the FMP Review are calendar year
- Florida landings are Atlantic coast only
- This year's FMP Review uses current, recalibrated MRIP estimates (based on FES)
- Previous FMP Reviews listed CHTS estimates
- Federal quotas are based on CHTS; intent to update quotas using current MRIP FES estimates in future federal FMP amendment

Status of the Fishery



- Total 2022 landings: 6.5 million pounds
 - 38% commercial; 62% recreational (current MRIP)
- 2022 commercial landings: 2.4 million pounds
 - 49% decrease from 2021, driven by FL decrease
- 2022 recreational landings: 4.0 million pounds
 - 54% decrease from 2021, driven by FL decrease
- 2022 recreational live releases: 4.3 million fish
 - Comprised 52% of total recreational catch

Spanish Mackerel Landings



2022 Landings Decrease



- Florida landings decreased in 2022
 - Commercial landings decreased by 63% from 2021
 - Recreational landings decreased by 88% from 2021
- Florida noted areas off central east coast are increasingly closed to vessels by the U.S. Coast Guard to create safety zones associated with space launches
- Prevented fishermen from accessing areas where they would traditionally fish for Spanish mackerel
- Contributed to a decline in Spanish mackerel landings and fishing effort

2022 Compliance



- PRT found no inconsistencies among state measures from the FMP requirements

De Minimis



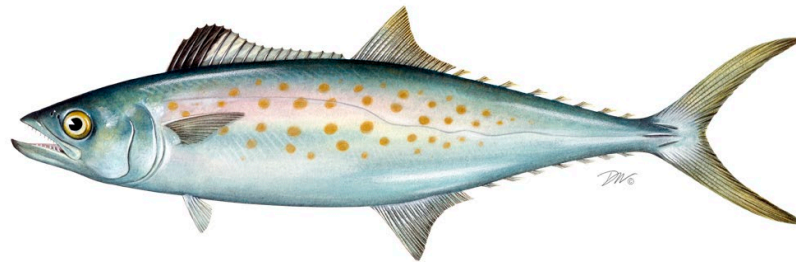
- Qualifies for *de minimis* if state's 3-yr average combined commercial and recreational landings is <1% of coastwide 3-yr average
- RI, NJ, DE, and GA requested *de minimis*
- All meet requirements except Georgia (landings are 1.04% of coastwide landings)
- Georgia noted request for *de minimis*:
 - Most years there is no commercial harvest
 - Except for 2019-2020, recreational harvest is below 75,000 pounds, resulting in *de minimis* status 7 out of past 9 years
 - High PSEs averaging 59% since 2013

PRT Recommendations



- Understand the dynamics across regions, especially as catches increase in more northern states.
 - Regional analysis could be completed as part of Spanish Mackerel Technical Committee's work on forthcoming paper characterizing fisheries along the coast (Board task; states submitted state-specific profiles)
- Continue coordination between ASMFC and the SAFMC on future management action to address differences between the Interstate and Federal FMPs.

Questions?



Board action for consideration: Approve Spanish mackerel FMP Review for the 2022 fishing year, state compliance reports, and de minimis requests from RI, NJ, DE, and GA.