

Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission

Coastal Pelagics Management Board

August 7, 2024

1:30 – 4:00 p.m.

Draft Agenda

The times listed are approximate; the order in which these items will be taken is subject to change; other items may be added as necessary.

1. Welcome/Call to Order (*S. Woodward*) 1:30 p.m.
2. Board Consent 1:30 p.m.
 - Approval of Agenda
 - Approval of Proceedings from May 2024
3. Public Comment 1:35 p.m.
4. Consider Approval of Atlantic Cobia Fishery Management Plan Review and State Compliance for the 2023 Fishing Year (*E. Franke*) **Action** 1:45 p.m.
5. Consider Atlantic Cobia Addendum II on Recreational Allocation, Harvest Target Evaluation, and Measures Setting for Final Approval **Final Action** 2:00 p.m.
 - Review Options and Public Comment Summary (*E. Franke*)
 - Advisory Panel Report (*E. Franke*)
 - Consider Final Approval of Addendum II
6. Update from South Atlantic Fishery Management Council on Mackerel Port Meetings (*J. Carmichael*) 3:50 p.m.
7. Other Business/Adjourn 4:00 p.m.

The meeting will be held at The Westin Crystal City (1800 Richmond Highway, Arlington, VA; 703.486.1111) and via webinar; click [here](#) for details

MEETING OVERVIEW

Coastal Pelagics Management Board

August 7, 2024

1:30 – 4:00 p.m.

Chair: Spud Woodward (GA) Assumed Chairmanship: 1/24	Technical Committee Chair: Cobia: Angela Giuliano (MD) Spanish Mackerel: Vacant	Law Enforcement Committee Rep: Capt. Scott Pearce (FL)
Vice Chair: Lynn Fegley (MD)	Advisory Panel Chair: Craig Freeman (VA)	Previous Board Meeting: May 1, 2024
Voting Members: RI, NY, NJ, DE, MD, PRFC, VA, NC, SC, GA, FL, SAFMC, NMFS (13 votes)		

2. Board Consent

- Approval of Agenda
- Approval of Proceedings from May 2024

3. Public Comment – At the beginning of the meeting, public comment will be taken on items not on the agenda. Individuals that wish to speak at this time must sign-in at the beginning of the meeting. For agenda items that have already gone out for public hearing and/or have had a public comment period that has closed, the Board Chair may determine that additional public comment will not provide additional information. In this circumstance, the Chair will not allow additional public comment on an issue. For agenda items that the public has not had a chance to provide input, the Board Chair may allow limited opportunity for comment. The Board Chair has the discretion to limit the number of speakers and/or the length of each comment.

4. Atlantic Cobia Fishery Management Plan Review (1:45-2:00 p.m.) Action
Background <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • State Compliance Reports for Atlantic cobia were due on July 1, 2024. • The Plan Review Team reviewed each state report and compiled the annual Atlantic Cobia FMP Review (Supplemental Materials).
Presentations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overview of the Atlantic Cobia FMP Review Report by E. Franke.
Board action for consideration at this meeting <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accept Atlantic Cobia 2024 FMP Review Report for the 2023 Fishing Year and State Compliance Reports.

5. Atlantic Cobia Draft Addendum II (2:00-3:50 p.m.) Final Action

Background

- Atlantic Cobia Draft Addendum II proposes options for recreational allocation, including the data timeframe and geographic scope of the allocation framework, process for future updates to allocations, addressing data uncertainty in the harvest target evaluation process, and timeline for setting management measures (**Briefing Materials**).
- Public comment was gathered in June and July through public hearings and written comments (**Briefing Materials**).
- The Advisory Panel reviewed the draft addendum on July 25 (**Supplemental Materials**).

Presentations

- Overview of options and public comment summary by E. Franke.
- Advisory Panel report by E. Franke.

Board actions for consideration at this meeting

- Select management options and implementation dates
- Approve final document

6. Update on South Atlantic Fishery Management Council Mackerel Port Meetings (3:50-4:00 p.m.)

Background

- The South Atlantic Fishery Management Council (SAFMC) is conducting a series of [port meetings](#) for king and Spanish mackerel throughout 2024 to gain a comprehensive understanding of those fisheries from stakeholders to inform management efforts.
- Port meetings have already taken place in North Carolina, New England states (virtual), and New York.
- Port meetings are currently occurring in Georgia (late July) and South Carolina (early August).
- Port meetings in Florida and Mid-Atlantic states will be scheduled for October and November, respectively.

Presentations

- Update on SAFMC Mackerel Port Meetings by J. Carmichael

7. Other Business/Adjourn (4:00 p.m.)

Coastal Pelagics (Cobia and Spanish Mackerel)

Activity level: Moderate

Committee Overlap Score: Moderate

Committee Task List

- Cobia TC – review proposed state measures for 2025 based on harvest target evaluation
- Cobia TC – Most TC members participate in the SEDAR 95 benchmark stock assessment process
- Spanish Mackerel TC/PRT – October 1: Compliance Reports Due
- Cobia TC/PRT – July 1: Compliance Reports Due

Technical Committee Members:

Cobia TC: Angela Giuliano (MD, Chair), Nichole Ares (RI), Zachary Schuller (NY), Jamie Darrow (NJ), Josh McGilly (VA), Melinda Lambert (NC), Justin Yost (SC), Chris Kalinowsky (GA), Christina Wiegand (SAFMC), Michael Larkin (SERO)

Spanish Mackerel TC: Reuben Macfarlan (RI), Zachary Schuller (NY), Jamie Darrow (NJ), Devon Scott (DE), Harry Rickabaugh (MD), Ingrid Braun (PRFC), Joshua McGilly (VA), McLean Seward (NC), Pearse Webster (SC), Jeff Renchen (FL), Christina Wiegand (SAFMC)

Plan Review Team Members:

Cobia PRT: Angela Giuliano (MD), Chris McDonough (SC), Emilie Franke (ASMFC)

Spanish Mackerel PRT: McLean Seward (NC), Pearse Webster (SC), Christina Wiegand (SAFMC), John Hadley (SAFMC), Emilie Franke (ASMFC)

Plan Development Team Members:

Cobia Draft Addendum II PDT: Nichole Ares (RI), Zachary Schuller (NY), Brian Neilan (NJ), Angela Giuliano (MD), Somers Smott (VA), Kathy Knowlton (GA), Emilie Franke (ASMFC), Chelsea Tuohy (ASMFC)

**DRAFT PROCEEDINGS OF THE
ATLANTIC STATES MARINE FISHERIES COMMISSION
COASTAL PELAGICS MANAGEMENT BOARD**

**The Westin Crystal City
Arlington, Virginia
Hybrid Meeting**

May 1, 2024

These minutes are draft and subject to approval by the Coastal Pelagics Management Board.
The Board will review the minutes during its next meeting.

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INDEX OF MOTIONS

1. **Approval of Agenda** by consent (Page 1).
2. **Approval of Proceedings from January 24, 2024** by consent (Page 1).
3. **Move to postpone Draft Addendum II to Amendment I until such time the final MRIP FES Report has been presented to the Commission** (Page 12). Motion by Doug Haymans; second by John Clark. Motion fails (2 in favor, 8 opposed, 3 abstentions) (Page 13).
4. **Move to remove the timeframes for the weighted 10-year/3-year averages from Draft Addendum II Section 3.1 (Option B3, C3, C6, C9, and C12)** (Page 14). Motion by Shanna Madsen; second by Lynn Fegley. Motion approved without opposition (Page 14).
5. **Move to remove any of the options considering 3 regions from section 3.1 C4, C5, C10, C11** (Page 14). Motion by Shanna Madsen; second by Jesse Hornstein. Motion approved without opposition (Page 15).
6. **Move to approve Atlantic Cobia Draft Addendum II for public comment as modified today** (Page 15). Motion by Lynn Fegley; second by John Clark. Motion carries with one objection (Page 15).
7. **Move to adjourn** by consent (Page 19).

ATTENDANCE

Board Members

Jason McNamee, RI (AA)	Shanna Madsen, VA, proxy for J. Green (AA)
Eric Reid, RI, proxy for Sen. Sosnowski (LA)	Chris Batsavage, NC, proxy for K. Rawls (AA)
Jesse Hornstein, NY, proxy for M. Gary (AA)	Chad Thomas, NC, proxy for Rep. Wray (LA)
Emerson Hasbrouck, NY (GA)	Ben Dyar, SC, proxy, Blaik Keppler (AA)
Amy Karlnoski, NY, proxy for Assemb. Thiele	Chris McDonough, SC, proxy, M. Rhodes (GA)
Joe Cimino, NJ (AA)	Mel Bell, SC, proxy for Sen. Cromer (LA)
Jeff Kaelin, NJ (GA)	Doug Haymans, GA (AA)
Adam Nowalsky, NJ, proxy for Sen. Gopal (LA)	Spud Woodward, GA (GA)
John Clark, DE (AA)	Jeff Renchen, FL, proxy for J. McCawley (AA)
Roy Miller, DE (GA)	Gary Jennings, FL (GA)
Craig Pugh, DE, proxy for Rep. Carson (LA)	Rep. Thad Altman, FL (LA)
Lynn Fegley, MD (AA, Acting)	Ron Owens, PRFC
Russell Dize, MD (GA)	John Carmichael, SAFMC
David Sikorski, MD, proxy for Del. Stein	Jack McGovern, NMFS

(AA = Administrative Appointee; GA = Governor Appointee; LA = Legislative Appointee)

Ex-Officio Members

Angela Giuliano, Technical Committee Chair

Staff

Bob Beal	James Boyle	Jainita Patel
Toni Kerns	Caitlin Starks	Kristen Anstead
Tina Berger	Emilie Franke	Jeff Kipp
Madeline Musante	Tracey Bauer	
Chelsea Tuohy	Katie Drew	

Guests

Coly Ares, RI DEM	Julie Evans	Ja MacFarlan, RI DEM
Mike Armstrong, MA DMF	James Fletcher, Unites National Fisherman's Assn.	John Maniscalco, NYS DEC
Russ Babb, NJ DEP	Anthony Friedrich, ASGA	Genine McClair, FL FWC
Alan Bianchi, DC DMF	Keilin Gamboa-Salazar, SC DNR	Joshua McGilly, VMRC
Michael Bowen, Cornell Uni.	Pat Geer, VMRC	Daniel McKiernan, MA (AA)
Jeffrey Brust, NJ DFW	Lewis Gillingham, VMRC	Steve Meyers
Jessica Clawson, FL FWC	Angela Giuliano, MD DNR	Jeff Moore, NC DMF
Haley Clinton, NC DEQ	Blaik Keppler, SC DNR	Allison Murphy, NOAA
Heather Corbett, NJ DEP	Kathy Knowlton, GA DNR	Thomas Newman, North Carolina Fisheries Assn.
Scott Curatolo-Wagemann, Cornell Cooperative Extension of Suffolk County	Andrew Konchek	Jeffrey Pierce
Judd Curtis, SAFMC	Robert LaFrance	Will Poston, ASGA
Tanya Darden, SC DNR MRR	Sarah Lazo, NOAA	Harry Rickabaugh, MD DNR
	Nicole Lengyel Costa, RI DMF	Mike Ruccio, NOAA

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The Board will review the minutes during its next meeting.

Guests (Continued)

Zachary Schuller, NYS DEC
Tara Scott, NOAA
Amanda Small, MD DNR
Somers Smott, VMRC
Kristen Thiebault, MA DMF

Chad Thomas, NC Marine &
Estuary Foundation
Taylor Vavra, Stripers Forever
Kelly Whitmore, MADMF
Christina Wiegand, SAFMC

Travis Williams, NC DEQ
Steven Witthuhn, NY MRAC
Gregory Wojcik, CT DEEP
Chris Wright, NOAA
Daniel Zapf, ND DEQ

The Coastal Pelagics Management Board of the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission convened in the Jefferson Ballroom of the Westin Crystal City Hotel, Arlington, Virginia, via hybrid meeting, in-person and webinar; Wednesday, May 1, 2024, and was called to order at 10:15 a.m. by Chair Spud Woodward.

CALL TO ORDER

CHAIR SPUD WOODWARD: Good morning, everyone. I'm going to call the meeting of the Coastal Pelagics Management Board to order. For those of you online, this is Spud Woodward; Georgia's Governors Appointee Commissioner and current chair of the Board.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

CHAIR WOODWARD: Our first item on our agenda is Approval of the Agenda. Are there any recommended modifications or additions to the agenda? Any online, probably not. I don't see any in the room, okay we'll consider the agenda approved by unanimous consent.

APPROVAL OF PROCEEDINGS

CHAIR WOODWARD: We also have the proceedings from our January, 2024 meeting in the briefing materials. Are there any edits, corrections or additions to the proceedings? I don't see any hand raised in the room. Anyone online with any? All right, we'll consider those accepted by unanimous consent as well.

PUBLIC COMMENT

CHAIR WOODWARD: Next item is Public Comment. I know we have one person online, Thomas Newman, that wishes to make a public comment. I assume this is about items that are not on the agenda, so Thomas, I'm going to call on you.

MR. THOMAS NEWMAN: Yes, my name is Thomas Newman. I want to make a comment about Spanish mackerel. I am a North Carolina commercial fisherman. I also work part time in the North Carolina Fisheries Association. I am also on the

Mackerel Cobia Advisory Panel for the South Atlantic.

I just wanted to stress the importance of these fisheries to our state especially, like they were making everything work right now. Before we do any hard and fast changes, we need to take our time and look at the issues and do the right thing. Also, I talked with Mr. Batsavage earlier, last week, and all those 374 fishermen are state catch Spanish mackerel. They are all over our state for six to eight month part of the year.

They are really just a few core communities that really depend on this fish. A few dozen fishermen, less than 50, that depend on this fish to make the majority of a yearly income, and is a very, very important fish for our state and for our commercial fishermen. As this process goes along, I will be involved, and I hope anyone here on the Board will reach out and contact me if they need anything. I appreciate you guys' time, and for looking at these issues. Thank you.

CHAIR WOODWARD: Thank you, Thomas. Is there anyone in the room that would like to make a comment about anything on our Board agenda? Don't see any hands, then we'll move along.

CONSIDER APPROVAL OF ATLANTIC COBIA DRAFT ADDENDUM II ON RECREATIONAL ALLOCATION, HARVEST TARGET EVALUATION, AND MEASURES SETTING FOR PUBLIC COMMENT

CHAIR WOODWARD: Our next agenda item is an action item, and that is to Consider Approval of Atlantic Cobia Draft Addendum II, which is on Recreational Allocation Harvest Target Evaluation and Measures Setting for Public Comment. I'm going to turn it over to Emilie to walk us through, and we'll make sure we check our time, and we do this deliberatively, and everybody is comfortable with the final product of this. We'll turn it over to you.

MS. EMILIE FRANKE: Thank you, Chair. I'll review the timeline for the Addendum and also the current management process to get started, because I think that is helpful context. Then I will get into the

Statement of the Problem, and the management options. I'll also highlight some points from the Plan Development Team.

The PDT submitted a memo in your materials as well, so I'll note those in red throughout the presentation. As a reminder, as the Chair stated, this is a Board action for consideration to potentially approve this document for public comment today. The Board initiated this Addendum in October of last year to address recreational reallocation using more recent harvest data, and also to consider alternatives to the current state-by-state management framework.

Then most recently at the last meeting, the Board did provide some additional guidance to add some options addressing future updates to allocations, to consider uncertainty, and also the timeline for setting measures. Based on that additional Board guidance in January, the PDT developed the draft document, which you have in front of you today.

The Board is considering approving that draft addendum for public comment today, and if it is approved, we would conduct public hearings, and the public comment period this summer. Then the Board could review the public comment and select final management options at the next meeting in August.

Just a brief review of the current recreational management process regarding allocations and harvest target evaluations. The Board can set the total harvest quota for cobia for both sectors for up to three years, and 96 percent of that quota is allocated to the recreational sector, 4 percent to the commercial sector.

Then that recreational portion of the quota is then allocated further to the non de minimis states, so that is Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina and Georgia. Then there is a 1 percent set-aside for de minimis states. Then those allocations are based on the state's historical landings, with 50 percent based on landings from 2006 to 2015, and then 50 percent based on landings from 2011 to 2015.

Then those allocation percentages are used to calculate a soft harvest target for each of those non de minimis states. Then four of those states with soft targets, the realized harvest is evaluated against those soft targets every time the Board sets the total harvest quota. That is up to every three years, or sometimes more frequently.

To do that evaluation, we take an average of up to three years of harvest because that has been under the same set of recreational management measures, and if the state's average harvest exceeds their target, that state must adjust their measures to reduce back down to their target.

If a state's harvest has been less than their target for two consecutive years, then the state can choose to liberalize measures to reach their target. Then any changes to measures have to be reviewed by the TC and then by the Board. Most recently, last year the Board set the total harvest quota for 2024 to 2026.

Then we did conduct an evaluation of state average harvest for the years 2021 and 2022, and compared that to the state harvest targets. However, based on some TC analysis and recommendations, the Board decided to actually maintain status quo state management measures for this year, 2024, instead of requiring reductions for states that exceeded their targets. Essentially this new addendum the Board discussed is intended to dictate what will happen in 2025.

What the allocation framework will look like and going through that evaluation process, which might include updated harvest targets, depending on the outcome of this Addendum. In addition to having this addendum to determine what happens next year, we also have the upcoming stock assessment, which is just getting started on that SEDAR 95.

We anticipate that stock assessment will be available to inform management in either 2026 or 2027, depending on exactly when we get the assessment results. Sort of a lot to think about coming up the next few years. Getting into the statement of the problem for this draft addendum. The original

Interstate FMP established and used state-by-state allocations.

Then Amendment 1 in 2019 updated those allocations to add that de minimis set-aside of 1 percent. Those allocations are based on data, as I mentioned from 2015, but the distribution of cobia recreational landings has changed since 2015. We see an increase in some Mid-Atlantic states, but landings have been relatively stable in many of the southern states, so this indicates more of a range expansion versus a range shift.

We also had Rhode Island and New York declare into the fishery recently, due to the increasing presence of cobia in their state waters. Updating the allocation data timeframe used for cobia would account for these changes in landings that we've been seeing. Originally the state-by-state allocation framework was implemented to provide flexibility to the states.

However, there is concerns that the MRIP estimates for cobia has very high PSEs because of the pulse rare event fishery. There are also concerns about using these highly uncertain state estimates to continue to evaluate performance and make management changes at the state level. One way to reduce that uncertainty is to potentially increase the sample size by switching to a regional or coastwide allocation framework.

Uncertainty with these harvest estimates could also be addressed by thinking about how many years we're including in our average when we do these evaluations, whether to use point estimates or not, and also, whether a state or region's performance should be considered on its own, or should also take into account the performance of other states or regions. Additionally, we know that allocation percentages may need to be updated in the future. There are a few potential scenarios.

One is if a current de minimis state loses their de minimis status. That means that de minimis state would have to be factored in to the allocation calculation, and get their own harvest target. If that happens, all of the allocation percentages will need

to be updated. Then the percentages might also need to be updated if MRIP updates their harvest estimates, based on the work that they're doing right now to look into the bias in some of their estimates.

If future updates to these allocation percentages are considered through our typical addendum process, those updates could take several months. But if the Board could make those updates via Board action or Board vote, those updates could be accomplished more quickly. There has also been a concern about changing measures too frequently for the cobia fishery.

Right now, the Board can set the total harvest quota for up to 3 years. There was discussion about, to avoid management whiplash in changing those measures frequently, the Board could consider setting specifications for a longer period of time. I will get into the management options for this draft addendum.

Again, a huge thanks to the Plan Development Team. We had a great team working on this, and it has also been a joint effort on the staff end between myself and Chelsea. There are five sections in the management option portion, so I'll just go section by section, in terms of the options here.

Section 3.1 is the allocation framework itself. This section considers both how the quota is allocated on a geographic scale, so either state by state, regional or coastwide. Then it also considers the data timeframes at the basis for allocation. Status quo we have the weighted timeframes, 50 percent based on 2006 to 2015 landings, 50 percent based on 2011 to 2015; that's our status quo.

The alternative timeframes to consider here would be basing allocation on 2018 to 2023, or we have two additional weighted options, so 50 percent based on 2014 to 2023, so the previous 10 years, and then 50 percent based on 2018 to 2023, so the previous 6 years, or a weighted combination of that 10-year time span plus the most recent 3 years, 2021 to '23.

Just a note that 2016 and 2017 are excluded from these allocation calculations due to fishery closures,

and 2020 is also excluded, due to the COVID 19 impacts on MRIP. But just to clarify in the draft addendum. It is inconsistent in some places right now, you know it's a 2018 to 2023 the 6-year time span, but we have 5 years of data, 2014 to 2023 the 10-year time span, we have 7 years of data.

If this Addendum is approved for public comment, we'll make sure that that is clear in the Addendum. Just also a note before I go any further. The final MRIP estimates for 2023 are now available. The Addendum was drafted with preliminary estimates, because that is what we had at the time. But there were very minor updates to the cobia harvest estimates. Some of the allocation percentages changed by less than 0.01 percent, so not much change with the final MRIP data for this year. Getting into the specific options about how the quota could be allocated on the geographic scale and the timeframes.

We start with our status quo of course, Option A, state by state allocation with our 2006 to 2015 data. Option B would be continuing with a state-by-state allocation, but the allocations could be updated to either of the 3 alternative timeframes that I mentioned, so either the past 6 years, the combination of the past 10 years and the past 6 years, or the combination of the past 10 years and the past 3 years.

Then for the updated state by state allocations, the de minimis set aside would increase to 5 percent, and that would be to account for the increased landings that we've seen across de minimis states over the past few years. Status quo, we only have a 1 percent de minimis set aside, but the PT noted that landings have increased, and that 5 percent would better account for those de minimis landings.

Here is the table, this is the same one in the Addendum. But essentially you can see that the first column is Option A, status quo. Then for all of the alternatives you see a lot of the quota with the updated data, which shifts up to the Mid-Atlantic. North Carolina's quota would decrease, and then South Carolina and Georgia's would also decrease a little bit.

The PDT notes that these changes to the state allocations based on these updated data are pretty significant. It results in a pretty significant change for some states. Again, the magnitude of these changes is primarily driven by Virginia's increased proportion of the harvest in recent years, and North Carolina's decreased proportion of the harvest in recent years.

The PDT did talk about, because these are significant changes, whether or not to phase in these changes. But the PDT determined that this would result in, you know constantly changing targets and measures from year to year. The PDT wouldn't recommend doing any sort of phase in approach.

But the PDT does recognize that these would be pretty significant changes. The next option after the state-by-state options would be a regional allocation option. There are options in the Addendum for 4 different regional breakdowns, including options for either a 2-region approach or a 3-region approach.

The PDT does recommend a 2-region approach. The PDT is recommending that the Board remove the 3-region options, because 3 regions would result in having a northern region that is just several de minimis states, and those de minimis states would have less than 2 percent of the allocation.

Their landings are really variable, and they have really high PSEs, so the PDT would recommend just removing the 3-region approach and considering 2 regions. The other point to consider is where to draw the line between regions, and a question from the PDT is, should North Carolina be grouped with Virginia and states northward, or should North Carolina be grouped with South Carolina and Georgia? Previously there has been some tagging data that indicate that Virginia and North Carolina represent the same group of fish. That could be a rationale to group Virginia and North Carolina together. However, the PDT noted that when you're looking at the timing of harvest throughout the year, North Carolina's peak harvest tends to more closely align with South Carolina and Georgia's harvest.

That could be a rationale to group North Carolina with South Carolina and Georgia. The PDT

recommends if the Board does have a preference at this point for these regional groupings, the Board could consider removing some of the other options. Then of course, these regional allocations would consider the same 3 timeframes that I mentioned for the other options.

The goal with these regional allocations is to eventually establish a consistent region wide size and vessel limit. But the seasons could still vary among states, noting that depending on cobia availability, the seasons might be different from state to state. Measures in each state, if the Board went with a regional allocation, would remain status quo, until either that region needs to take a reduction, or until the next stock assessment, when likely things will change.

Once one of those things happens, either the region needed a reduction or we have the next stock assessment, then the Board would consider how to come up with a region wide consistent size and vessel limit. These tables are the same ones that are in the draft Addendum. I'll just highlight on this slide, these are the options for the southern region, which would be just South Carolina and Georgia.

For the two-region breakdown you have Virginia north would have somewhere between 84 and 87 percent of the quota. South Carolina and Georgia would have between 12 and 16 percent. Then if you have that 3-region breakdown you add that very northern region that would have less than 2 percent of the quota.

This slide again, this is in the draft Addendum, shows the options for if you have a southern region with North Carolina grouped with South Carolina and Georgia. In that instance, South Carolina, North Carolina and Georgia would have between 26 and 33 percent of the quota, and then Virginia north would have somewhere between 67 and 74 percent of the quota.

After the regional allocation option, we moved to Option D, and this is just the coastwide target option. There wouldn't be any sort of state or regional allocation, there would simply be the coastwide

recreational harvest quota. You would look at the total coastwide harvest in comparison to our coastwide quota.

Again, the goal was to be eventually establish a coastwide consistent size and vessel limit with seasons that could vary among the states. Again, the measures would remain status quo in each state, until either the coast needs to take a reduction or until we have the next stock assessment. Just to sort of wrap up all of these allocation framework options.

Conservation equivalency would not be allowed for any of these allocation options. For the state-by-state framework, this already allows flexibility for each state to tailor measures, you know based on what they desire for their state. Then the regional or coastwide framework, the objective here is to get to a consistent size and vessel limit for either the region of the coast, so conservation equivalency would not be allowed. The PDT had a couple of just closing thoughts here on the allocation framework. You know each of these types of frameworks coastwide, regional, state by state, do have benefits and challenges.

The regional or coastwide allocations could pool data into larger sample sizes to reduce uncertainty, but then of course you have the challenge of coordinating among states to come up with a consistent size and vessel limit. Then of course there are several underlying challenges that this Board has discussed frequently, which again is high PSEs in general for cobia recreational harvest estimates.

The seasonal migrations, you have different availability along the coast throughout the year. Also, Atlantic cobia is a relatively new species under Commission management, so the original FMP was implemented in 2017, and then we just transitioned to sole management in 2019. It's only been a few years under this management.

That was I promise the longest section, 3.1. Moving on to Section 3.2. This is regarding future updates to allocation. Option A would be status quo. Any changes to allocations would have to go through the typical addendum process. The alternative here is

Option B, where allocations could be changed via Board action, so simply a Board vote, but only for two specific scenarios.

Those scenarios would be 1, if a state loses de minimis status and therefore needs to be factored into the allocation calculations. The allocation framework, the data we're using for allocation that would all stay the same, you would just need to factor in that additional state that needed their own harvest target.

Then the other scenario where the Board could change allocations via Board vote would be if the allocation source data were updated. For example, if MRIP makes any changes to their estimates over the next few years. The next section, Section 3.3 is on data and uncertainty. In this section Option A is status quo, which is you will continue to use up to a 3-year rolling average when we evaluate harvest against the target.

This is an average of up to 3 years under the same management measures. Option B, the alternative here is using up to a 5-year rolling average for the evaluation, and this would be an opportunity to incorporate additional years of data, since landings can really vary from year to year, and knowing that we have high PSEs in some years.

Another feature of this section on data and uncertainty is a confidence interval provision, which would be a part of this section of the Addendum. If the Board chose a regional or coastwide allocation framework, this provision would allow the Board in the future to decide if the Board wanted to switch from a rolling average approach to a confidence interval approach for harvest target evaluation.

We would be looking at the confidence intervals around the MRIP point estimates. This would allow the Board to more directly account for uncertainty around these point estimates. The reason it is not a specific option right now is, in order to do this, we need region-specific confidence intervals and PSEs, and those are only available via custom data requests through MRIP. We're hoping to have those before this document goes out for public comment,

but this provision would allow the Board to have time to sort of digest that information on the region-specific confidence intervals, and take this up in the future if the Board wanted to switch to this approach.

How this would work is, instead of using rolling averages we would evaluate the harvest target relative to the 95 percent confidence intervals around each of the MRIP point estimates. If the confidence interval has been above the target, that means that states would have to address their measures back down to the target.

If the harvest target falls anywhere within those confidence interval bounds, then the region could stay status quo. Then if the confidence interval has been below the target, then the region could liberalize to the target. Any years with very large confidence intervals in years with a PSE greater than 50, would not be included in the evaluation, and then any years with PSEs between 30 and 50 would be evaluated by the Technical Committee.

Just a reminder, this provision would only be applicable to a regional or a coastwide approach. The PDT didn't feel comfortable proposing this for the state-by-state approach, because some of the state confidence intervals are quite large. As I mentioned, this provision is currently included in the draft Addendum in this section.

No matter which average option is chosen, this provision is there, and the Board could switch to the confidence interval approach. If the Board was more comfortable with framing this as an option instead, it could be, you know status quo. We have no provision. Alternative would be we add this provision.

If the Board didn't feel comfortable with having it in there as part of the Addendum right now, we could frame it as an option. The next section is Section 3.4. This is overage response for any recreational landing's evaluations. Currently status quo if a state or a region exceeds their target, they have to reduce down to their target.

The alternative here is if a state or region exceeds their target a reduction would not be required if the following criteria are met. If another state or region is below their target, and that state or region has chosen not to liberalize, and if the coastwide harvest has not exceeded the coastwide quota. If those two criteria are met, the state or region that is over would have the option to just stay status quo, instead of taking a reduction.

Then the final section here is the timeline for setting measures. Currently, the Board can set specifications so that total harvest quota for up to 3 years. The alternative would be setting specifications for up to 5 years. This would potentially reduce the frequency of management changes, and also better align with when we have new cobia stock assessments. That is all the options. I know that was a lot the PDT put forward, and I'm happy to take any questions.

CHAIR WOODWARD: Thanks for that, Emilie, thanks for a very clear, concise overview of the document. I want to open up the floor now for questions for clarity. Remember, our task is to winnow this down, if possible, as a public comment document. If we can kind of keep that in our forethoughts here. Shanna, I saw your hand.

MS. SHANNA MADSEN: I just want to stop for a second and say thank you, so much, to Emilie and Chelsea and the PDT. I listened in on their deliberations, and I felt like we kind of just threw a task at them and said, we don't know how to do this, can you figure it out? They really did. I think this document is incredibly strong. I was really impressed by the way you took the time to explain everything. I think it's a really good document.

My question is in relation to the provision on the use of the confidence intervals. I was just wondering, under like what circumstances eventually, would we be able to implement the approach? I know you're saying that there is not the ability currently for us to get to those confidence intervals regionally, without putting in a specific MRIP data request. Are we just kind of waiting for that to like appear on the website, or I'm just wondering what kind of triggers, the

Board could say okay, now we can consider the confidence interval approach.

MS. FRANKE: We actually have already submitted a data request for the region-specific confidence intervals and PSEs. We should have those in hand very soon. If the Board moved forward with this Addendum and the Addendum has this provision, any time after the Addendum is approved, and we have that information, the Board could consider whether or not you wanted to switch from the rolling average approach to the confidence interval approach.

You know if the Board approved this Addendum in August, and we have the region-specific confidence intervals in hand. The Board could also immediately take action to implement that confidence interval provision. The goal is to have hopefully the data in hand over the next few weeks.

Hopefully include it in the public comment draft as an appendix to look at the PSEs for those different regions. It is up to the Board how quickly, if the Board wanted to wait to consider this confidence interval approach, you know with the next assessment for example, or wanted to switch to the confidence interval approach right away. That would be up to the Board.

CHAIR WOODWARD: All right, Chris Batsavage.

MR. CHRIS BATSAVAGE: Thank you, Emilie, for going through the document, it's very well done and covers everything we need to consider. This is unclear. Under the regional allocation option, if that was chosen, the states would maintain their state-by-state regulations until the next assessment, right?

MS. FRANKE: Correct. Right now, measures vary among most states. The size limits across states are pretty much consistent, but the vessel limits are different for almost every state. That is right, if the Board chose a regional approach, all of the states would stay status quo, until the next stock assessment, so for a couple of years.

However, if we move forward with the regional approach, later this year we would have to do a regional evaluation of how the regions harvest compares to their new regional target. If that region needs a reduction, then we would have to immediately switch to a new consistent regional measure. However, if the region didn't need a reduction, then things would stay status quo until the assessment. It's either stay status quo until the assessment, or we have to change right away if that region ends up needing a reduction.

CHAIR WOODWARD: Thanks for that, Chris, because I think that is very important that we clearly understand the sequencing of how those things work. I mean we're trying to put reasonable sideboards on it, but give ourselves some flexibility to adapt to the circumstances we're facing here. Lynn.

MS. LYNN FEGLEY: It it's okay, I now have two questions. The first one is about the confidence limit approach. Practically, if we were to switch to that approach. Does that mean that states would be in a position where they may have to update measures each year, since we're no longer doing the average?

MS. FRANKE: That's a good question. No, so it would be on the same timeline as our current approach, where we're only doing those evaluations and potential management changes every few years, whenever we have a new total harvest quota.

MS. FEGLEY: Okay, thank you, and then the follow up is about Chris's question. The states would in a region, would maintain status quo measures. But if an upcoming evaluation showed they needed a reduction, the answer was, states would immediately have to move to a consistent measure. My question is a little bit about the definition of immediate. When does the evaluation occur, and when would the consistent regulations have to be implemented? I just want to understand if that is within states abilities to act.

MS. FRANKE: Yes, that was a great point of clarification on my end. If the Board were to select a regional management approach, and approve this

Addendum in August, this Addendum would dictate what the measures would be for 2025. Between the August and October meeting, we would do the regional evaluation. You know how is each region doing relative to their target? If a region was over their target and required a reduction, we would come to the October meeting with proposed measures for that region to then implement in 2025.

CHAIR WOODWARD: Yes, and I think it's also important to remember that we don't get finalized MRIP estimates until this time of the following year for the previous year's estimate. We're always gong to be sort of behind, which is an unavoidable reality that we're facing here. We just now got the approved final 2023 estimates. You're going to deliberate at the end of that year for what happened the previous year to set the following year. Doug.

MR. DOUG HAYMANS: Emilie, thank you for a good, clear understandable document, for me at least. You really brought up some great points, particularly around FES estimates and high ESEs, which to me sort of makes the entire process we're going through questionable at the moment.

Especially since some of this can change after the FES report is finalized, or the potential there is. I have great concern with taking this out to the public beyond this meeting, particularly with some of the large cuts that the southern states are taking, and where those cuts go. At an appropriate time, I think, I'm close to making a motion to tabling this until the FES report is done. With that said, I do have a question for John. I realize, Emilie, we can't anticipate every scenario.

But there was discussion about if we go with the regional approach that PSEs could get considerably better, and John has a way of describing things to me to help me understand better. When I look at North Carolina through Georgia, and the incredibly horrible PSEs that range from 33 to 92. I realize additional trips and that tighten those up. Do we really see getting out of a yellow zone that we get below 30, would you think, by pooling those three states estimates?

MR. JOHN CARMICHAEL: Maybe, but you know given what you see for the individual states, it does make you question whether or not putting them all in there, I think it would come down to just, are the states at all similar? If they are all really variable and not really similar to each other, then you may end up in basically the same boat.

You are putting some more observations in there, which probably brings it down some. You know it may bring some of those 90s down to something more reasonable. Does it bring the majority into the green zone is harder to say. Yes, you would really have to do it to be sure, because you guys know, this MRIP stuff is, you think you know what is going on until you run the numbers. It's really hard to guess how it's going to all work out.

MS. FRANKE: Yes, and just to add to that. The PDT did acknowledge that grouping the states into regions could provide some improvements. But the magnitude of those improvements is unknown. Hopefully we'll have the data from MRIP on our custom regions, to understand how much the PSEs would improve. But the PDT noted, you know while they might improve a little bit, this won't solve the problem of uncertainty.

MR. CARMICHAEL: Yes, and I think it's great to see it getting way from the three-year average, or at least looking at alternatives, because that is good if things are just kind of noisy, but more or less correct. But you know we know with MRIP the challenge is always the spikes that people don't think is necessarily legit, so then in a three-year, five-year moving average you live with that over the time period.

That's one of the reasons the Council moved away from those, because we have so many uncertain species that are rare events, and they tend to be really spikey. They go from zero to 100,000 from one year to the next. I think the confidence interval has stepped in the right direction. I just wonder.

When the other method has come up in the MRIP evaluations of rare events is looking at multiyear estimates, where they would take the total of observations of MRIP over say three years, and

generate a single estimate from all of those observations. I just wondered if the PDT talked about that.

Of course, it does add some complexities, because depending on how you calculate that period, you may have a greater lag, and when you get your actual estimate that you're going to use to judge the fishery. But it does seem to be a more robust place, and it wouldn't put the Board in a position to trying to decide, okay what confidence interval do we actually want to use as well?

MS. FRANKE: Yes, the PDT did not specifically look at that alternative approach, just the average and the confidence interval. I just want to also remind everyone; the confidence interval approach would only be applicable to a regional or coastwide framework. The PDT didn't feel comfortable proposing the confidence interval approach for a state-by-state framework, because some of the state confidence intervals are very large.

CHAIR WOODWARD: Yes, I think we're all fixing to have an uncomfortable reality here with the day we got it, until we go to some different alternative than MRIP, something like Virginia's done, we're going to be facing the same situation. But even that has got its own problems. It seems like we're sort of trapped in a world of imperfection. Any further questions? John.

MR. JOHN CLARK: Thank you for the presentation, Emilie. I guess I've got de minimis on the brain, because of our close call with spot yesterday. But just curious, with the 5 percent set aside. It looks like if we do go with state by state with de minimis that there are 5 de minimis states now, and theoretically they could exceed 5 percent and remain in de minimis.

First question is, what happens if that does happen and they exceed the 5 percent, and then just curious with some of the other measures there would be no de minimis, correct? Like a state in the regional or the coastwide would have to just adopt whatever the default regulations are.

MS. FRANKE: Exactly. The way the FMP is currently set up with a state-by-state allocations, there is no evaluation of or repercussions if the de minimis states in total exceed their set-aside. There is not a formal, if all de minimis states exceed their set-aside there is no repercussions in FMP. I assume that was set up that way, de minimis states are so variable in their landings, so there is no formal evaluation of the de minimis states against their target.

The set-aside is simply there to sort of try and account for the variable landings in those states. You're right. Theoretically, you know each de minimis state could exceed 1 percent in a year and we'll have slightly over the 5 percent de minimis in a certain year. But the PDT felt that there might be a few years like that, but largely the 5 percent should be sufficient for now to account for that.

Then correct, if we move to a regional or coastwide framework, the de minimis status becomes somewhat irrelevant, because right now de minimis states have the option to implement a slightly less restrictive size limit. But in the regional or coastwide framework the de minimis states would simply have to adopt whatever the rest of the region is adopting. The de minimis status becomes a little bit irrelevant.

CHAIR WOODWARD: Yes, it's hard to have payback provisions for something you probably don't catch. Again, that is kind of an odd situation. Chris, and then I'll go to Joe.

MR. BATSASVAGE: On that point, Emilie. I guess where de minimis still has some status in a region, if a region had to take a reduction and it was decided that shortening a season was the way to meet that reduction, and that was handled through the non de minimis states, since the different states can have different seasons, then that would be a scenario where the de minimis states could actually maintain the regulations in that region. I just wanted to make sure I understand that correctly.

MS. FRANKE: Yes, so you're talking about the scenario where if we, like later this year we move to the regional approach and a region needs a reduction. It turns out that if only a couple states in

that region were to take a season change, you could just meet that reduction and stay status quo. That is an interesting scenario.

The objective of the regional approach is to at least get on the same page with the size limit and the vessel limit. I don't think as written; we could only change the seasons and go from there. I think the regions would need to get to a consistent size and vessel limit, and then the seasons could still vary.

MR. BATSASVAGE: Yes, thank you. I probably should have been more clear on kind of the scenario. I guess I'm kind of thinking ahead, where the states did align their size and bag and vessel limits, and it came time for a reduction that an option could be for the non de minimis states to take reduction through a change in their season, and leaving the de minimis states to maintain what they already had.

MS. FRANKE: Yes, absolutely. In the future, if the states in a region decided, all right, just a couple of our states are going to change their season, and everyone else can have their same season. That would be up to the region, absolutely.

CHAIR WOODWARD: All right, Joe.

MR. JOE CIMINO: Thank you all for the hard work, I agree this is a pretty solid document. Not following it that closely. My question then is following on Chris's. A little bit more of an understanding of the exploration of conservation equivalency. There are actually a lot of us sitting around this table now.

There are a lot of states, and you know the idea of coastwide measures, where there is only say one state with a V that is continuously having large harvest. I think that we're all ratcheting down on regulations, and trying to explain to folks, you know that there is no CE when we do it with so many other species. Just curious, about how that didn't end up in this.

MS. FRANKE: Yes, I think that's just sort of the inherent difference between the state-by-state approach or even the region approach versus the coastwide approach. The state-by-state approach

gives the states the flexibility to change their measures, you know have different measures.

Moving to a coastwide approach would have that added challenge of just looking at everything from a coastwide lens, like looking at harvest from a coastwide lens, management measures from a coastwide lens, without getting sort of into the state by state. You know is this state up but this state's down. You know we would just be switching to that coastwide perspective.

MR. CIMINO: I'll follow up, because I'm almost embarrassed. I think what we would then be explaining to the public is if you do believe that then that state-by-state approach is the way that we should handle it. Okay, thank you.

CHAIR WOODWARD: Okay, any more questions for clarification? Dan.

MR. DAN ZAPF: Just to pile on, thank you to the PDT, really a lot of work went in, and appreciate that. Definitely want to echo some concerns from Doug regarding PSEs. Obviously, I don't know if that is going to change any time in the future. But on the flip side of that don't want to stick our heads in the sand completely.

But not sure if there is any merit to looking at when some of these regional numbers might come through in the next few months, if that's going to change anything drastically. I don't know. If we feel that is a possibility, question one. Then also, just for my clarification, and Lynn, thank you for pointing that out and sorry for slow on the uptake. If changes get made in '25, then requirements for states to take action would have to be within that same year. Is that correct?

MS. FRANKE: Yes, if the Addendum is approved in August, or even if the Board pushed the Addendum one meeting cycle, and approved it in October. Well, it would be up to the Board. But if the Board wanted to implement for 2025, that evaluation would occur at the end of this year, 2024 to figure out what changes to measures would achieve the reduction.

Then if the Board felt that a 2025 implementation date was feasible, the Board could decide to have those measures implemented in 2025. It's really up to the Board, as far as implementation date, and sort of how that would work. But sort of the fastest timeline would be if the Board approves this Addendum in August, the evaluation against the targets happens between August and October, and then at the October meeting the Board decides what the 2025 measures will be.

As I mentioned, the Board could, if the Board pushed this one meeting cycle, the Board would then be approving this Addendum in October. Then potentially, would be looking at an evaluation, and figuring out new measures in January, 2025. I think it would be up to the Board to decide if we approve new measure in January, 2025, is that enough time for states to implement for the 2025 season or not? That would just be something the Board would have to think about.

CHAIR WOODWARD: Shanna.

MS. MADSEN: That brings up another question. Since there is talk of tabling, what happens if this document is tabled into the foreseeable future. What can we expect to do this fall?

MS. FRANKE: Yes, great question. If this Addendum is tabled, or if the Board sort of runs out of time to do the evaluation and measures for 2025. Right now, the Board has only set measures for this year, 2024. The Board needs to do something for 2025. That could either be this Addendum is approved and we're using the new Addendum to figure out 2025. It could be the Addendum is approved, and we do the evaluations, but the Board, perhaps as they did last year, request the TC look at the impacts of just staying status quo for one more year, and the Board could consider that, or the Board tables this Addendum for a few years, and we just use the current process we have, which is those state-by-state evaluations and our current target. Either way, the Board has to do something for 2025. Whether that is using this new Addendum or not is up to the Board.

CHAIR WOODWARD: I think that is the fundamental question that this Board needs to decide right now. You know there is no need of going into the details of this Addendum right now if there is not a collective will to proceed down this course of action in some form or fashion, depending on how the Addendum was modified. At this point I would welcome a motion so that question can be asked and debated, and decided. Doug.

MR. HAYMANS: I would **move that Addendum II to Amendment 1 be tabled until such time as the final FES Report is presented to the Commission, at which time we would resume deliberations in this Addendum.**

CHAIR WOODWARD: All right, do we have a second for that motion? Is that a question or a second?

MR. CLARK: Well, I'll second just for discussion purposes. But isn't that a motion to postpone rather than table?

CHAIR WOODWARD: Yes, it's probably the proper Roberts Rules of Order procedure.

MR. HAYMANS: Well, I mean there is tabled to time certain, right? I guess it's not a time certain it's FES Report.

CHAIR WOODWARD: Yes, I think we don't know when that report is going to be produced, so we really don't know what that time is, for one thing. It puts it kind of out there into infinity. But if you say postpone. Tabled is different than postponing. Postponing would say until a future meeting. Do you want to change that to postpone?

MR. HAYMANS: Certainly.

CHAIR WOODWARD: Okay, so John, you still willing to second that as stated, for purposes of discussion. Okay, so we had some hands pop up. Will you raise the hands again, whoever? I think I saw Lynn and then who else? Hold on, let me get a whole list. I've got Lynn, Shanna, Chris and who else? Raise your hand again if you want to comment. I got you, Chris. Okay, I'll go to you, Lynn.

MS. FEGLEY: This is not a comment specifically on the motion, but there was a memo. I don't think I'm talking out of school. There was a memo released, talking about the timeline for the time series of calibrated catch and effort estimates being available for incorporation in the stock assessments no later than spring, 2026. I just wanted to provide; I think there is starting to be a little bit of a timeline coalescing around when these time estimates might be available. It looks like it will be in the early part of '26.

CHAIR WOODWARD: All right, so that is when they are projecting to have the results of the more expanded study, and then they're going to have to incorporate that into some sort of recalibration process, which would probably take another unknown period of time. Realistically, you're probably looking at '27 before you'll have revised catch estimates for us to argue about.

All right, just so everybody has a timeframe here. What we're talking about is postponing possibly into 2027, so at least two more, possibly three more fishing seasons under status quo. That's what we're dealing with here. All right, I've got Shanna and then I'll go to Chris Batsavage.

MS. MADSEN: Obviously I'm going to speak in not support of this motion. I feel like this is something that we have discussed now at every meeting at each part of this process, and the Board has been asked this question several times, if they want to continue to move forward with this document.

I think the document was put together extremely well, and I think it outlines a lot of the positive influences that could be made by changing to regional approaches. We're facing issues with de minimis states falling in and out of de minimis. We're facing issues with overages in areas where we know that we really can't stop the fish from going to any more.

We're in a place right now where we recognize that we're probably not going to get those FES numbers until 2027 at this point, we get those calibrations, and then how long into the future until we're

actually able to implement them? I just can't sit by and say that we're going to wait this one out. It is essentially just sticking our heads in the sand and pausing absolutely everything, just because we know this is coming.

There is a very specific portion of this Addendum that allows those numbers to be changed without us having to go through an addendum process, where if this Addendum did not go through, my understanding that we would have to go through another process to change all of those numbers, and we would end up back here again doing this again. For me, I'm not going to support this motion.

CHAIR WOODWARD: Chris Batsavage.

MR. BATSAVAGE: Yes, I'm also in opposition of postponing this. Shanna basically said every comment that I was going to say. I guess the one thing I'll add is, I think we've learned that MRIP is an iterative process. They continually kind of check their methodologies, and we get changes to the estimates over time. I think this will be about the third one, fourth one, I'm losing track.

The one that they're working on now probably won't be the last. I think this is the environment we're working in, as far as managing recreational fisheries. I think we need to move forward with the items, at least that won't be as impacted by any new FES calibrations that are in this Addendum that we know are a problem. That's why I don't think we should postpone this.

CHAIR WOODWARD: I'm going to ask John Carmichael just to make another brief comment just to clarify what our expectations are of the timing of the FES study results and recalibration report, so everybody will have that before we make a decision.

MR. CARMICHAEL: Yes, I just wanted to comment, and thank you, Spud. There was a recent NOAA Fisheries guidance on the FES that went out to a whole bunch of people. In that they say that they anticipate having what they call tentative recalibrated estimates in spring of 2026, with the timeline they normally put out the 2025 estimates.

They'll have those recalibrated. They are doing the comparison this year, and then the analysis in '25, and then in '26.

But, as we all know, that things are always contingent and there is a number of contingencies about, you know getting reasonable results and being able to trust the comparison, and being able to develop a recalibration process. Of course, it's always if considered necessary. The earliest you would be getting anything that you could look at numbers would be spring 2026, and then any changes would go in, probably in 2027 to a program overall.

CHAIR WOODWARD: Doug.

MR. HAYMANS: I heard stick your head in the sand twice, I guess I prefer kick the can, as opposed to sticking my head in the sand. But I think the realities of the issues that FES faces are enough for me to say, I don't want to take anything that is in 3.1 out to the public. I can't see North Carolina taking the cuts that it is planning to take, or South Carolina and Georgia, which is 1 percent,

But taking the cuts based on something that we acknowledge is potentially flawed up to 30 to 40 percent. I like options between 3.2 and the rest of the document. I think we could discuss those. But to me that is why I'm opposed to moving forward is everything that is in 3.1, and the reallocations there, which is a part of the document.

CHAIR WOODWARD: Any other discussion on the motion? I'm going to give us a few minutes to caucus before I call the vote on this. We need to dispense with this, because we only have about 30 minutes left, and we've got a lot more to do. I'll give everybody, let's make it three minutes of caucus.

Okay, everybody good on caucus? Well, we have a motion before the Board. I'm just going to read it again to make everybody is clear. It's **move to postpone Draft Addendum II to Amendment 1 until such time the final MRIP FES Report has been presented to the Commission. All those in favor, signify by raising your hand.**

Okay anybody, I guess there is nobody online. Everybody is represented here. **We have 2 ya votes, all right opposed like sign. Seven, all right abstentions. We've got 2 abstentions that's 3 abstentions. Null votes, no null votes. Council, NOAA and Florida abstain, all right, motion fails 2 to 8 to 3.** Now we can proceed with further deliberations on the draft Addendum. I have a sense that probably where we need to do our work most importantly is going to be on 3.1. I want to open up the floor on that. We had a recommendation from the PDT about the 3-region approach. I'm assuming that the Board would probably be interested in supporting that recommendation, so Shanna.

MS. MADSEN: I'm actually going to make a more simplified motion, I think first. Then we can start to have discussions about the regions. The motion that I want to make is, **move to remove the timeframes for the weighted 10-year and the weighted 3-year averages from the document, and those would be Options B3, C3, C6, C9 and C12**, and if I get a second, I'll speak to that. Thank you.

CHAIR WOODWARD: Do I have a second for that motion? Second from Lynn Fegley. All right, let's get this up on the board, make sure we're clear. Okay, is that accurate, Shanna? We've got a motion and a second. Discussion on the motion. Shanna, would you like to provide some rationale for your motion?

MS. MADSEN: Sure, the rationale for this motion is again, we're trying to simplify the document. I think that we're continuously talking about how we need longer time series averages in order to more accurately understand what is going on in this fishery. I think that the second weighted option, which is the 10-year and the 5-year average, the one that we're currently using with updated years.

I would like to see that one continues forward in the document, since that also seems to be working for everyone. But I just don't see there being a big difference between the 10 year and the 3 year and the 10 and the 5. I think that it is just easy for us to kind of try to whittle down some of those options, and keep a more stable average timeframe.

CHAIR WOODWARD: All right, we're going to go back to that slide, just so everybody can see the time series we're talking about deleting from the document, so everybody is clear. Okay, there we go. Any discussion, questions for clarification on this motion? Anything online? Any need to caucus on this motion?

I don't see anything. **Any opposition to this motion? Okay, I don't see any opposition to it, I guess nobody online. Okay, with no opposition then we'll consider that motion approved**, and that will be deleted from the draft document. Any other recommendations on this particular part of the document with the timeframes?

Everybody satisfied with that content? All right then we will move on to the next part, we can flip to that next slide if we can, we'll be talking about the regions. We'll move to the regions. We do need to answer the question of whether or not, where North Carolina goes. I know some of you have strong feelings about where North Carolina should go, but that's not what we're talking about. Okay, so we had a recommendation from the PDT to delete what would be in essence a *de minimis* region, so Shanna.

MS. MADSEN: I'm going to go with the PDT recommendations, after talking to some of the *de minimis* states. **That would be removing any of the options in the document that are comprised of three regions. That would be Option B4, C5, C10 and C11.**

CHAIR WOODWARD: Do we have a second for that motion? All right, Jesse. We've got a second. Any need for discussion on that motion? We had a PDT recommendation pretty strong. I think it's pretty clear that we would end up with unintended consequences from that choice. Any opposition to that motion? Seeing none; we will consider that approved.

MS. TONI KERNS: Spud, I think we might have altered the language just a little bit, just to make it very clear which options were being removed from which sections. If you just give us one second, we can write the section in there.

CHAIR WOODWARD: Yes, I'm going to read it into the record just to make sure it is clear. Move to remove any of the options considering 3 regions from Section 3.1 which is C4, C5, C10 and C11. We had a motion by Ms. Madsen and second by Jesse Hornstein from New York. Again, just to make sure we're clear, **any opposition to this motion? Seeing none; that motion is approved.** We're making progress.

We're down to two region options, and do we want to leave in what is in there regarding North Carolina being included with, I'm going to call it the north region, or the south regions. Leave those two like they are for public comment. Okay, I've seen some heads nodding so I think that looks good. Okay that's good. Any other sections of this document?

Is everybody comfortable with what else has been presented in this draft document, clear on what it means, like it is going to be clear to the public what it means when we take it out? Do you think there needs to be any modification of any of the language to make it more clear? All right, at that point I think we're ready to approve the Addendum as modified for public hearing.

Would someone like to make that motion? I've got a motion by Lynn Fegley and a second by John Clark, so it's **move to approve Atlantic Cobia Draft Addendum II for public comment as modified today.** Motion by Lynn Fegley, second by John Clark. **Any opposition to that motion? We've got one, one nay vote.** Doug.

MR. HAYMANS: That is with all due reference to Dennis's comment this morning. I still feel like I can vote my convictions though.

CHAIR WOODWARD: Okay. All right, so we dispensed with that. Thank you all very much.

PRESENTATION OF SPANISH MACKEREL WHITE PAPER

CHAIR WOODWARD: We'll move forward with that. We'll go to our second item, or fifth item actually,

which is Presentation of the Spanish Mackerel White Paper. Go ahead, Emilie.

MS. FRANKE: I will provide an overview of the Spanish mackerel white paper prepared by the newly formed Spanish Mackerel Technical Committee. I don't have time to cover everything in the paper, so I'll just try to hit a few of the highlights. Just a little bit of background. This task emerged from the Board discussion about the need to better understand each state's Spanish mackerel fishery, in anticipation of future Board action to address state and federal management differences, and also recognizing emerging fisheries at the northern end of the species range.

All states from Rhode Island to the Florida east coast have declared interest in this fishery, except for Connecticut and Pennsylvania. There are some management differences between the Commission's Interstate FMP and the Federal FMP. The Board has been discussing these differences and anticipates some future action. In August of last year, the Board tasked the Technical Committee with developing this paper to characterize Spanish mackerel fisheries along the coast, with the intent of helping the Board address state waters management issues.

Thanks very much to each state who submitted a fishery profile with a lot of detail on their state fisheries. We really appreciate each state pulling that information together. First the TC noted that Spanish mackerel availability along the coast is driven by water temperature and their seasonal migration.

The Atlantic Coast stock spends the winter off the east coast of Florida, then they move northward to North Carolina in early April, and then further north in June. Then the fish move back down to the east coast of Florida again for the winter. The majority of harvest across both sectors really reflects the seasonal migration.

The majority of Florida's harvest occurs from late fall through winter, and then into early spring. Then from Georgia up until around Virginia, you start to see that majority of harvest in early summer as those

fish move north. Then up further, to Maryland off to Rhode Island, you see the majority of that harvest start to appear in sort of late summer.

Looking at the combined commercial and recreational landings in pounds by state over the past decade, you can see the recreational sector shown here in green, has accounted for the majority of harvest in most states, except for Florida, where the commercial fishery shown in blue has accounted for about 55 percent over that time period.

You can see that in addition to Florida, both Virginia and North Carolina have targeted directed commercial fisheries. The commercial proportion is a little bit larger for those two states as well. For those commercial fisheries, again only those three states, Florida, Virginia, North Carolina have directed commercial fisheries for Spanish mackerel.

Over the past decade Florida has accounted for about 75 percent of coastwide commercial Spanish mackerel landings, North Carolina for about 22 percent, and then Virginia for about 2 percent. Just for a little perspective on scale. In 2022 Florida had 436 participants in the Spanish mackerel commercial fishery, and the average landings ranged from about 300 pounds per trip in 2022 to about 600 pounds per trip in 2021.

North Carolina over the past decade has had an average of about 374 participants and they average landings about 220 pounds per trip over the last decade. Then Virginia has had about 50 to 100 participants each year over the past decade, with an average landings per trip ranging from about 30 to 200 pounds over that time.

Then the remaining states in the management unit all combined account for less than 1 percent of coastwide commercial landings over the past decade, and these state commercial fisheries, so Georgia, South Carolina and then from the Potomac River north. These are all opportunistic bycatch commercial fisheries. There are variable landings from year to year, with average landings less than 100 pounds per trip, and only a handful of participants. The vast majority of commercial

fisheries are occurring in state waters. All three states with directed commercial fisheries, so Virginia, North Carolina and Florida indicated that over 90 percent of their commercial landings are from state waters in recent years. There are a variety of commercial gear types that are used.

In Florida hook and line and cast net are most common. In South Carolina trawl is the predominant gear, and that is just for their bycatch fishery. Then for North Carolina north, gill nets and pound nets are the most common gear types. Moving on to the recreational fishery. Recreational hook and line fisheries occur in all states, although South Carolina and many of the northern states indicate that the recreational fishery is opportunistic and not necessarily targeted.

Over the past 10 years Florida again has accounted for a majority of landings, 44 percent of the coastwide recreational harvest. This is in numbers of fish. North Carolina has accounted for about 32 percent, South Carolina 14 percent, Virginia 7 percent, Georgia 1 percent, and the remaining northern states for about 2 percent.

The majority again of recreational fisheries are occurring in state waters. There are a few exceptions that were noted. New Jersey noted that about 55 percent of their landings have been from state waters, the other 45 from federal. Delaware noted the majority of their landings have been from federal waters.

Then South Carolina noted that although the MRIP data indicates a majority of their landings are from state waters, their charter logbook data indicate that a majority of charter trips were actually in federal waters. Just a couple other points on the recreational harvest estimates. The TC noted that there are pretty high PSEs for some states, particularly for some of the states at the northern end of the range, and also for Georgia in some years.

The TC did note there is an increase in effort in several states from 2020 to 2021, potentially associated with COVID 19. Then looking at the recreational harvest by mode. In most states the

private and shore modes comprised over 90 percent of recreational harvest. In Virginia that was a little bit lower, private and shore comprised about 81 percent of recreational harvest in the past 10 years.

Addressing the Board’s interest in any trends at the northern end of the species range. It appears that landings in the more northern states have been generally higher for the past four years, as compared to the prior several years. However, the landings are still pretty variable, and the trends can differ state to state. Up on the screen here you will see the commercial harvest for those states at the northern end of the range. On the left you have the dash line on top is Rhode Island through Delaware.

That sort of dotted line underneath is Maryland and PRFC, and the right you have Virginia. Note that the Virginia scale is much larger than those other states. But you can kind of see that the past few years the landing have sort of stayed at an, on average, a bit of a higher level than those past several years, with a very large spike in 2019. Then on the next slide you’ll see the recreational harvest. This is in numbers of fish. That solid line is Virginia, the dash line is Maryland, and then the dotted line is Rhode Island through Delaware. Again, you can see sort of a spike in 2019, and landings on average staying a bit higher these most recent years. But still in the grand scheme of things, relatively small compared to some of the other states. Then just to finish up here. The TC pointed out a couple of points specific to the Florida Spanish mackerel fisheries.

Florida for both sectors typically contribute a large proportion of landings. There has been a recent decline in 2022. One factor that this Board discussed in last year’s FMP review was that there are increased areas that are closed off to vessels to create safety zones associated with space launches.

This has prevented access to traditional fishing areas for Spanish mackerel in Florida. Then also a note that Spanish mackerel concentrate in easily accessible and inshore areas during the winter in Florida, and this has resulted in some conflict between the commercial and recreational sectors, because they are operating simultaneously in the same areas.

That is all I have. That was just a quick sort of highlights to the white paper. You know, I’ll say this TC task was in response to the Board’s interest, so if there is something, any edits or questions that you have on the white paper, please feel free to reach out to me, and we can post the white paper on the website in the near future.

CHAIR WOODWARD: Thanks, Emilie. Thanks to all the states for responding with the information. This will be an important source document as we move forward, and trying to sync up state management of Spanish mackerel with federal management. Any questions for Emilie? If not, I’m going to turn it over to John. Go ahead, Jesse.

MR. JESSE HORNSTEIN: Yes, great report, Emilie. I appreciate you going through that thoroughly, and letting everyone know about the different Spanish mackerel fisheries in each state. I just wanted to point out, I don’t think it necessarily needs to be in the document, but that the U.S. Coast Guard is implementing a new tool called the Space Operations Launch Recovery.

This stands for Solar pool, which is like an online AP that people can go to, to look at where different zones might be closed for upcoming launches to better plan their trips. Hopefully with the implementation of this tool, with the U.S. Coast Guard that this might help with the limitations caused on the fishery from those closures. But more to come on that.

CHAIR WOODWARD: All right if there are no other questions.

**UPDATE FROM SOUTH ATLANTIC FISHERY
MANAGEMENT COUNCIL ON MACKEREL PORT
MEETINGS**

CHAIR WOODWARD: I’m going to turn it over to John to give us an update on Council activities.

MR. CARMICHAEL: Yes, thank you, Spud. I want to update you on the Port Meetings, long awaited. We had the first kick off round in North Carolina a few weeks ago, and it was really a resounding success.

Everyone was very pleased with the turnout we had, about 150, 160 folks across four meetings, pretty evenly spaced as well, you know four different spots along the coast of North Carolina.

That is a great turnout for meetings where you're not proposing a bunch of controversial management measures. The feedback gathered at the meetings was really good, had great conversations between, you know the fishermen and the staff there, and got a lot of good feedback about the fishery. But I really want to highlight the support that we received from North Carolina DMF to make these a success. There are two staffers in particular, Kevin Aman and Amanda Macek.

They just really went above and beyond in terms of a real personal grassroots approach to reach the fishermen, and those involved in the fishery, you know calling individuals. I think Kevin called every tournament operator in the state and said, hey these are coming up, you need to come out and speak.

I just want to stress with the ones that are coming up, we really appreciate the help from the other states and the Commission as well. If you can get a hold of the people that you know are involved in the fishery and interested in it. You know I think we can continue to get great turnout at these meetings, and you know just show us it's a good way to go out and talk to the fishermen and get input.

When you're not going out with controversy and just getting everybody who wants to tell us our data are bad and we shouldn't be managing, but really have good discussions about where the fishery needs to go. You know the Council is going to use this input to then decide where the next amendment actually goes, in terms of dealing with Spanish, and addressing the issues that are out there.

The next round will be coming up. They are doing a series of virtual meetings in New England, May 14 through 16, and this was anticipating that there is going to be lower interest up there, because the fish aren't as common and they are not as traditional of a fishery, but here may be some interest, so that will be virtual. Then there is going to be a meeting in

conjunction with the Mid-Atlantic Council meeting in New York the first week of June.

As the different states come up, of course, you know our staffer, Christina Wiegand in particular, will be reaching out to coordinate with you guys and make sure we're doing everything to get the word out. We just really want to stretch, you know. You're seeing the social media posts and newsletters and that sort of thing, the broadcast approach not necessarily bringing out people.

But to the extent you can get out and really touch base with the folks that are engaged in the fishery, and interested in these issues, are likely to make it a good success. We had a lot of North Carolina staffers and others that came to the meetings too, and that was also really beneficial. I think they got a lot out of talking with the fishermen themselves. Very encouraged by how this has kicked off, and hope it continues.

CHAIR WOODWARD: Yes, that is quite an effort, but I think it's going to yield some very important outcomes, mainly the fact that just getting out and interacting with the people that are affected by our decisions, so that they know that there are real people with real concerns and real interest behind all this magic and voodoo that they see. Any questions for John about the Port Meetings? Chris.

MR. BATSAVAGE: Thank you, John, for going over that. For the New England webinar hearings, are those webinar links posted, just in case myself and any other Board members might be interested in hearing perspectives from the fishermen up in the New England states.

MR. CARMICHAEL: Yes, at this rate they will be posted on our website with all the information about it, yes. We put them there so people can get ready access.

MS. FRANKE: I can send them around to the Board as well.

CHAIR WOODWARD: All right, Jay.

DR. JASON McNAMEE: I think maybe this was just said, so sorry. But we're happy to help do some work up in Rhode Island to drum up some participation, so just let me know when the virtual meetings are, and we will echo that out on our communications and all that good stuff too.

MR. CARMICHAEL: Yes, thank you, Jason, and I think Christine is listening, so Christine, reach out to Jason. Make some contacts there, that will be helpful.

CHAIR WOODWARD: All right, thanks, John.

ADJOURNMENT

CHAIR WOODWARD: We didn't have any other business identified at the beginning of the meeting. Is there anything anybody would like to address under Other Business at this time? We have two minutes. Yes, Emilie.

MS. FRANKE: Switching gears back to Cobia for this Cobia Draft Addendum that has now been approved for public comment. If you will just look out next week for an e-mail from me, asking you all if your state would like to have a public hearing so we can get those scheduled.

CHAIR WOODWARD: Okay, any housekeeping, Bob or Toni, before we break? All right if there is no other business to come before the Pelagics Board, we will stand adjourned.

(Whereupon the meeting adjourned at 11:40a.m. on Wednesday, May 1, 2024)

Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission

**DRAFT ADDENDUM II TO AMENDMENT 1
TO THE INTERSTATE FISHERY MANAGEMENT PLAN
FOR ATLANTIC MIGRATORY GROUP COBIA**

***Recreational Allocation, Recreational Harvest Target Evaluations,
and Measures Setting Timeline***



May 2024



Sustainable and Cooperative Management of Atlantic Coastal Fisheries

Draft Document for Public Comment

Public Comment Process and Proposed Timeline

In October 2023, the Coastal Pelagics Management Board initiated the development of Draft Addendum II to Amendment 1 to the Interstate Fishery Management Plan for Atlantic Migratory Group Cobia to consider reallocation of the recreational harvest quota and consider changes to the overall allocation framework. In January 2024, the Board provided additional guidance expanding the scope of the Draft Addendum to address the process for future allocation updates, addressing uncertainty around harvest estimates, and the timeline for setting specifications. This Draft Addendum presents background on the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission’s management of the Atlantic cobia recreational fisheries; the addendum process and timeline; and a statement of the problem. This document also provides management options for public consideration and comment.

The public is encouraged to submit comments regarding the proposed management options in this document at any time during the public comment period. The final date comments will be accepted is **July 8, 2024 at 11:59 p.m. (EST)**. Comments may be submitted at state public hearings or by mail or email. If you have any questions or would like to submit comment, please use the contact information below. Organizations planning to release an action alert in response to this Draft Addendum should contact Emilie Franke, Fishery Management Plan Coordinator, at efranke@asmfc.org or 703.842.0740.

Mail: Emilie Franke
Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission
1050 N. Highland Street, Suite 200 A-N
Arlington VA. 22201

Email: comments@asmfc.org
(Subject: Cobia Draft Addendum II)

Date	Action
October 2023	Board initiated the Draft Addendum
January 2024	Board provided additional guidance on Draft Addendum scope
February – April 2024	Plan Development Team developed Draft Addendum document
May 2024	Board reviewed and approved Draft Addendum II for public comment
Late May – July 8, 2024	Public comment period, including public hearings; written comments accepted through July 8, 2024
August 2024	Board reviews public comment, selects management measures, final approval of Addendum II

Draft Document for Public Comment

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

The Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (Commission) is responsible for managing Atlantic cobia (*Rachycentron canadum*) from Rhode Island through Georgia in state waters (0-3 miles from shore) under the authority of the Atlantic Coastal Fisheries Cooperative Management Act, and has done so through the Interstate Fishery Management Plan for Atlantic Migratory Group Cobia (FMP) since 2017. Atlantic cobia are currently managed under Amendment 1 (2019) to the FMP and Addendum I to Amendment 1 (2020). The states of Rhode Island through Florida, except Connecticut, have a declared interest in the fishery and are responsible for implementing management measures consistent with the Interstate FMP as members of the Coastal Pelagics Management Board. Although Florida has a declared interest in the fishery, their cobia fisheries are managed as part of the Gulf of Mexico Migratory Group Cobia, which is not managed by the Commission, due to the cobia stock boundary at the Georgia-Florida border.

In October 2023, the Board initiated this addendum to address reallocation of recreational cobia quota based on more recent harvest data, recognizing that the distribution of Atlantic cobia harvest has changed since the terminal year in current allocation calculations (2015). In addition, the Board expressed interest in considering alternatives to the current state-by-state allocation system as noted in the approved Board motion from October 2023:

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.

In January 2024, the Board provided additional guidance on the scope of the addendum. The Board supported adding options to consider the process for updating allocations in the future, and adding options to consider accounting for uncertainty around harvest estimates. For allocation data timeframes, the Board supported considering 2018-2023 as an option with the exclusion of 2020 due to COVID-19 impacts on data collection. The Board also requested an option to consider a timeline of five years when setting recreational measures.

2.0 OVERVIEW

2.1 Statement of the Problem

The Interstate FMP established state-by-state allocations of the coastwide recreational harvest quota based on harvest data from 2006-2015. At the time of the FMP's approval in 2017, these were the most recent data available to inform allocations. The allocation timeframe did not extend beyond 2015 due to cobia fishery closures in federal waters in 2016-2017 which impacted states' recreational harvests. In 2019, Amendment 1 to the FMP set aside one percent of the recreational harvest quota to account for harvest in *de minimis* states, and each state's allocation percentage was adjusted accordingly to account for that one percent set-aside.

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It has been several years since state-by-state allocations were updated. Furthermore, the distribution of cobia landings has changed in recent years and is markedly different from the distribution of state landings observed during the initial allocation data timeframe of 2006-2015. Over the last several years, recreational landings have increased in some Mid-Atlantic states while remaining relatively stable in southern states, indicating a possible range expansion as opposed to a stock shift. Additionally, two states have recently declared into the Atlantic cobia fishery (Rhode Island and New York) due to increasing presence of cobia in state waters. Updating the allocation data timeframe would account for these recent changes in landings and the extent of the fishery. If reallocation is not considered, it is likely that some Mid-Atlantic and *de minimis* states at the northern end of the range will continue to exceed their soft targets resulting in restrictive cobia measures that may not reflect the status of the stock.

In addition to concerns about the outdated allocation data timeframe, there are concerns about continuing to use a state-by-state allocation framework. The Interstate FMP originally implemented the state-by-state allocation framework to provide states with flexibility to adjust management to ensure state access when cobia were available and to suit their specific state needs, while still adhering to the federal catch limits at the time. Due to the high level of uncertainty associated with state-level recreational harvest estimates, there are concerns about continuing to use the state-by-state allocation framework (i.e., performance and management changes based on comparing state harvest estimates to state targets). Cobia harvest estimates from the Marine Recreational Information Program (MRIP) tend to have high percent standard errors (PSEs), which indicates lower precision and higher uncertainty. This is common for species like cobia which is a pulse/rare event fishery with highly variable landings year-to-year resulting from inconsistent interactions with cobia anglers. One way to reduce uncertainty is to increase the sample size, which could be accomplished by considering a regional allocation framework or coastwide allocation framework.

Uncertainty could also be addressed by considering the number of data years included in a rolling average, whether the use of point estimates is appropriate, and/or whether a state or region's performance should be considered on its own or considered relative to other state or region performance (i.e., if one region exceeds their target, and another region is below their target, consider whether that result informs the need for management action).

If cobia harvest continues to increase at the northern end of their range, states that currently have *de minimis* status may exceed that *de minimis* threshold over the next several years. When a state loses its *de minimis* status, it must be factored into the allocation calculations to have its own harvest target. The allocation percentage calculations may also need to change if the allocation source data are updated as part of MRIP's effort to evaluate potential bias in the Fishing Effort Survey (FES) estimates. If these changes to the allocation percentages must be done through the addendum process, that process could take several months. Those changes could be accomplished more quickly if the Board had the ability to make those specific updates to the allocations via Board action, which could be specified in this addendum.

Finally, there is concern about changing management measures too frequently under Amendment 1's specification process which limits specification setting to up to three years at a time. To avoid management 'whiplash', specifications could be set for a longer period of time.

2.2 Background

2.2.1 Status of the Stock

In 2020, the Board approved the SEDAR 58 Atlantic Cobia benchmark assessment for management use. This assessment continued to use the Beaufort Assessment Model (BAM), a forward-projecting statistical catch-at-age model used in the prior assessment, SEDAR 28 (SEDAR, 2013). SEDAR 58, with a terminal year of 2017, provided new reference points (F40% and 75% of SSBF40%). These reference points were selected as they represent the fishing rate and spawning stock biomass (SSB) that allows the population to reach 40% of the maximum spawning potential. These reference points also serve as proxies for maximum sustainable yield-derived relationships due to insufficient data for cobia. Based on those reference points, the stock is not overfished and overfishing is not occurring.

The stock assessment primarily used fishery-dependent data (i.e., data from the recreational and commercial fisheries) as well as information on Atlantic cobia biology, life history, and movement to determine stock condition. The largest changes in SEDAR 58 since the previous assessment included updating data sources with new years of data, updating the natural mortality information, and using newly recalibrated recreational catch and effort data from MRIP.

SEDAR 58 estimated the last strong cobia year class entered the fishery in 2010 (age 1 in 2011) with the four most recent year classes at low levels of recruitment (age 1 in 2014-2017) (SEDAR, 2020). While the SSB remains above the overfished threshold, below-average recruitment led to a decreasing trend in SSB since 2014 (Figure 1). The fishing mortality rate has increased since the late 2000s but has not exceeded the overfishing threshold (Figure 2).

The next stock assessment for Atlantic Migratory Group Cobia (SEDAR 95) is a benchmark assessment currently underway with an estimated completion date of late 2025 or early 2026. The frequency of future stock assessments for Atlantic cobia is uncertain, and the assessment model and methods may change significantly as part of the current assessment, SEDAR 95. The time between completion of the previous stock assessment and the current assessment will be approximately 5-6 years.

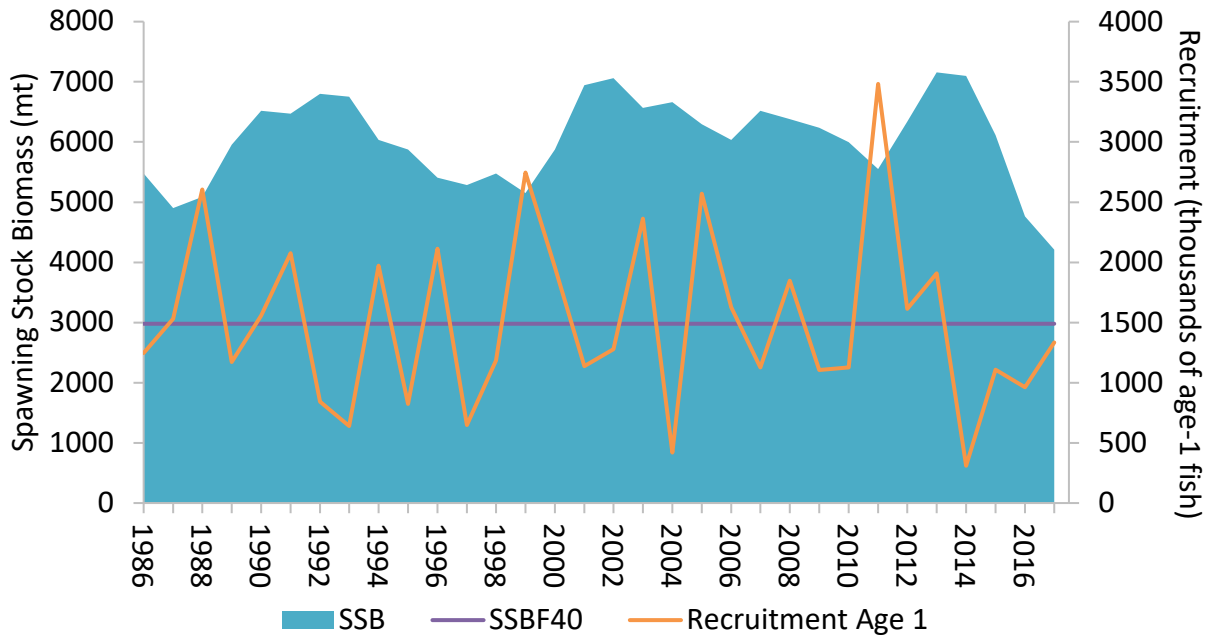


Figure 1. Atlantic Cobia spawning stock biomass (SSB) and recruitment of year 1 fish. (SEDAR, 2020)

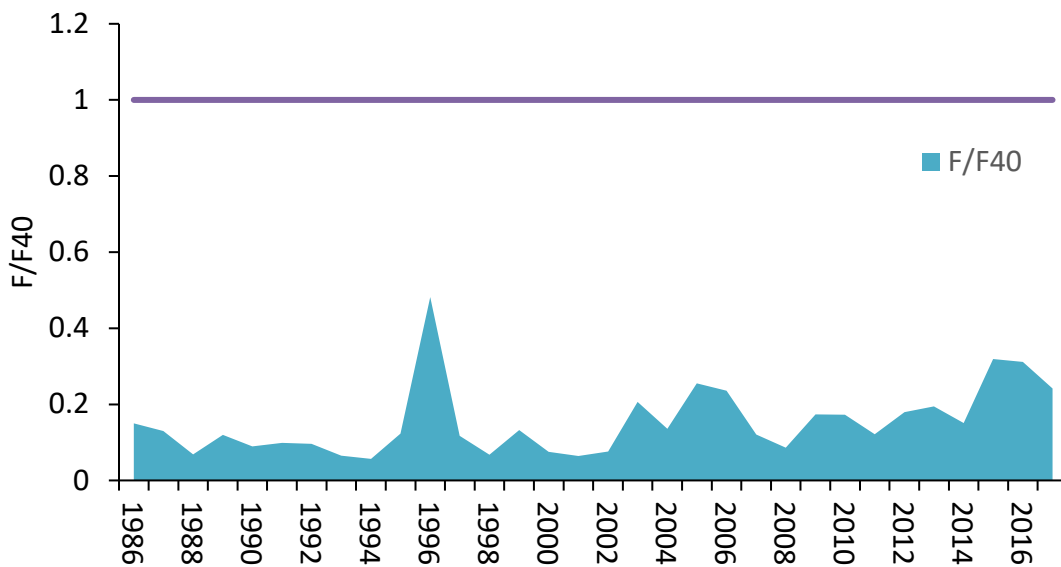


Figure 2. Atlantic Cobia fishing mortality (F) relative to the F40 reference point from 1986-2017. (SEDAR, 2020)

2.2.2 Status of Management

In 2019, Amendment 1 to the Interstate FMP transitioned management of Atlantic cobia from complementary management with the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council to sole management by the Commission. Amendment 1 allows the Board to specify a limited set of management measures for up to three years. This harvest specification process allows managers to specify regulations controlling future harvest through a Board vote, allowing managers to respond quickly to changes in the fishery or react following a stock assessment. Through the harvest specification process, the Board may set the coastwide total harvest quota (combined commercial and recreational harvest), vessel limits, possession or bag limits, minimum size limits, and the commercial closure triggering mechanism for up to three years.

In October 2020, the Board approved Addendum I to Amendment 1, which included modification of the allocation between the commercial and recreational sectors. Addendum I allocates 96% of the coastwide total harvest quota to the recreational sector and 4% of the quota to the commercial sector.

The recreational portion of the total harvest quota is further allocated to non-*de minimis* states as soft harvest targets with a 1% set-aside for harvest in *de minimis* states. Amendment 1 defines the process by which the recreational quota is allocated to non-*de minimis* states where allocations are based on states' percentages of the coastwide historical landings in numbers of fish, derived as 50% of the 10-year average landings from 2006-2015 and 50% of the 5-year average landings from 2011-2015. A 'soft' harvest target means that management measures are adjusted to reduce harvest to the target, but any overage does not need to be paid back. 'Hard' harvest targets (which would have required overage payback) were considered as part of the original Interstate FMP, but soft targets were selected as the management approach.

For the 2024-2026 fishing seasons, the total harvest quota for both sectors combined is 80,112 fish, which is the same harvest quota that has been in place since 2020. The coastwide recreational harvest quota (96% of the total harvest quota) is 76,908 fish. The current management program manages the recreational fishery with a 1 fish bag limit and a minimum size limit of 36 inches fork length (FL) or 40 inches total length (TL) for non-*de minimis* states. Season restrictions and vessel limits are determined by individual states, but may not exceed 6 fish per vessel. Recreational regulations for each state are provided in Appendix A.

Within the coastwide recreational harvest quota, Georgia, South Carolina, North Carolina, and Virginia have the following state recreational harvest targets based on the state-by-state-allocations defined in Amendment 1 to the FMP:

Georgia – 7,229 fish
South Carolina – 9,306 fish
North Carolina – 29,302 fish
Virginia – 30,302 fish

Recreational harvest of state-specific allocations are evaluated over three-year time periods (or when the total harvest quota changes). Each non-*de minimis* state evaluates recent harvest as an average of years with the same recreational management measures against the state-specific soft targets. If a state's averaged recreational harvest exceeds its harvest target, the state must adjust its management measures to reduce harvest to achieve the target, unless otherwise specified by the Board. If a state's harvest is below their target for at least two consecutive years, the state may liberalize management measures, if desired, to achieve its target. Changes to management measures for states with overages or states that wish to liberalize must be reviewed by the Cobia Technical Committee and approved by the Board prior to implementation.

De minimis states collectively have a 1% set-aside of the coastwide recreational quota (769 fish) and are exempt from completing harvest target evaluations. The FMP allows states to request recreational *de minimis* status if their recreational landings in two of the previous three years are less than 1% of annual coastwide recreational landings during that time period. A recreational *de minimis* state may choose to match the recreational management measures implemented by an adjacent non-*de minimis* state (or the nearest non-*de minimis* state if none are adjacent) or limit its recreational fishery to 1 fish per vessel per trip with a minimum size of 33 inches FL (or 37 inches TL).

The commercial fishery has an annual coastwide commercial quota of 73,116 pounds (4% of total harvest quota) for the 2024-2026 fishing seasons, which is the same quota that has been in place since 2020. The current management measures for the commercial fishery include a 33 inches FL (or 37 inches TL) minimum size limit and 2 fish per person limit, with a 6 fish maximum vessel limit. Non-*de minimis* states are required to monitor commercial cobia landings in-season and submit regular landings updates to the Commission. The commercial Atlantic cobia fishery will close once the commercial quota is projected to be reached as determined by the updated Addendum I methodology to calculate the commercial trigger for in-season closures. Commercial regulations for each state are listed in Appendix A.

2.2.3 Status of the Fishery

Note: Since this addendum primarily considers management of the recreational fishery, the following information focuses on Atlantic cobia recreational fisheries. For information on the commercial fishery, see the [Review of the FMP for Atlantic Cobia: 2022 Fishing Year](#) (ASMFC 2023).

Recreational harvest has fluctuated throughout the time series, often in rapid increases or declines. Average recreational harvest over the entire time series (1981-2023) is 1.1 million pounds, or about 40,557 fish (Figure 3). More recently, recreational harvest has increased to the series high of 113,939 fish coastwide in 2018, before decreasing to an average of 86,326 fish from 2018-2023.

Recreational releases of live fish have generally increased throughout the time series (Figure 3). In 2023, 248,890 recreationally-caught fish were released, a 31% increase from 2022. This

coincides with the increase in recreational landings in 2023 from 2022. From 2018-2023, an average 76% of cobia caught recreationally were released alive each year. This is higher than the average 65% released alive during the period of 2013-2017.

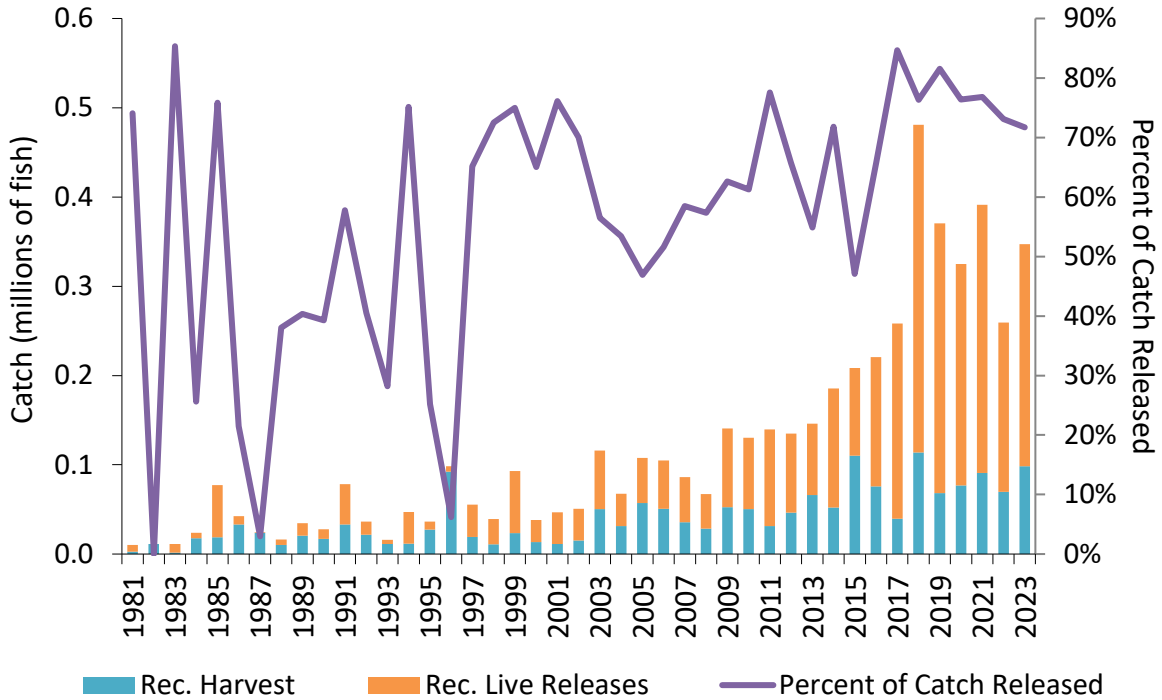


Figure 3. Recreational catch (harvest and live releases) of Atlantic cobia (numbers) and the proportion of catch that is released. Source: Personal communication from the National Marine Fisheries Service, Fisheries Statistics Division (MRIP Query April 2024).

From 2018-2023, Virginia has harvested the majority of the coastwide recreational cobia, with an average of 70.1% of the total fish by count (average of 60,894 fish/year) (Table 1, Figure 4). North Carolina has the second highest recreational harvest with an average of 14.5% of the total fish by count (average of 12,403 fish) for the same timeframe. South Carolina and Georgia have averaged 7.1% and 5.6% of the total coastwide harvest annually for the same timeframe (6,058 and 4,838 fish respectively), and the *de minimis* states made up the remainder (2.6% on average annually, 2,134 fish). Over the last several years, recreational landings have increased in some Mid-Atlantic states while remaining relatively stable in southern states, indicating a possible range expansion as opposed to a stock shift (Figure 4). Recent [research](#) to project future distributions of Atlantic cobia and their suitable habitat indicates similar trends, with cobia habitat during the summer projected to increase north of Virginia in the future (Crear et al. 2020).

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Virginia has harvested above its state recreational target each year since the current state-by-state targets were implemented in 2020 (Table 1). Georgia harvested above their state target in 2021 and 2023. South Carolina has been harvesting just at or under their target each year, while North Carolina has been under their harvest target each year.

From 2018-2023 the *de minimis* states (currently north of Virginia) have exceeded their 1% set-aside in 4 of the past 6 years. The highest harvest by the *de minimis* states for the time period occurred in 2021, with a total of 5,334 fish or 694% of the *de minimis* allocation. This equates to 6% of coastwide landings that year. States north of Virginia currently have recreational *de minimis* status as each of those states' recreational harvest in two of the previous three years was less than 1% of annual coastwide landings. Florida also has recreational *de minimis* status since its fishery targets Gulf of Mexico Migratory Group Cobia (not Atlantic Migratory Group Cobia).

The percent standard errors (PSEs) associated with recreational cobia harvest estimates from MRIP can be quite high due to the pulse/rare event nature of the cobia fishery. Table 2 summarizes the PSEs for each state's recreational cobia harvest estimates over the last six years.

Table 1. Cobia recreational harvest by state in number of fish from 2018-2023 . Source: Personal communication from the National Marine Fisheries Service, Fisheries Statistics Division (MRIP Query April 2024).

Year	RI	CT	NY	NJ	DE	MD	VA	NC	SC	GA	Total Rec. Harvest
2018		569			581	206	80,679	25,331	6,340	233	113,939
2019							55,770	10,090	2,381	72	68,313
2020		219				1,360	50,287	15,067	7,650	2,203	76,786
2021				250		5,084	57,135	10,970	8,858	8,510	90,807
2022			3,462	711			39,668	12,330	6,988	6,641	69,800
2023	361						81,824	629 ⁺	4,129	11,368	98,311
<i>Soft Target for 2020-24</i>	<i>769 de minimis set-aside</i>						<i>30,302</i>	<i>29,302</i>	<i>9,306</i>	<i>7,229</i>	<i>76,908</i>

*Note: North Carolina Division of Marine Fisheries (NCDMF) staff looked into the very low harvest estimate for 2023 and found that windy weather limited the number of fishable days, and cobia were available for about a week. Data showed that MRIP intercepts in North Carolina were considerably lower in 2023 (38) compared to 2019 (85), 2021 (60), and 2022 (78). NCDMF staff noted that the low harvest estimate is also likely influenced by high percent standard error (PSE) because cobia is a rare event species and a pulse fishery.

Table 2. Percent standard error (PSE) for each state’s recreational cobia harvest estimate in number of fish from 2018-2023. Red indicates a PSE greater than 50 (MRIP does not support use of the estimate). Yellow indicates a PSE between 30 and 50 (MRIP cautions use of the estimate in fisheries management). Source: Personal communication from the National Marine Fisheries Service, Fisheries Statistics Division (MRIP Query April 2024).

Year	RI	CT	NY	NJ	DE	MD	VA	NC	SC	GA
2018		100.4			98.1	66.7	35.8	33.2	42.2	53.9
2019							22.6	38.6	70.6	56.9
2020		102.7				69.5	25.0	37.9	39.1	92.4
2021				92.4		43.8	22.9	39.1	41.9	41.4
2022			82.3	102.2			25.1	47	55.9	72.4
2023	71.9						34.2	53.1	61.9	56.0

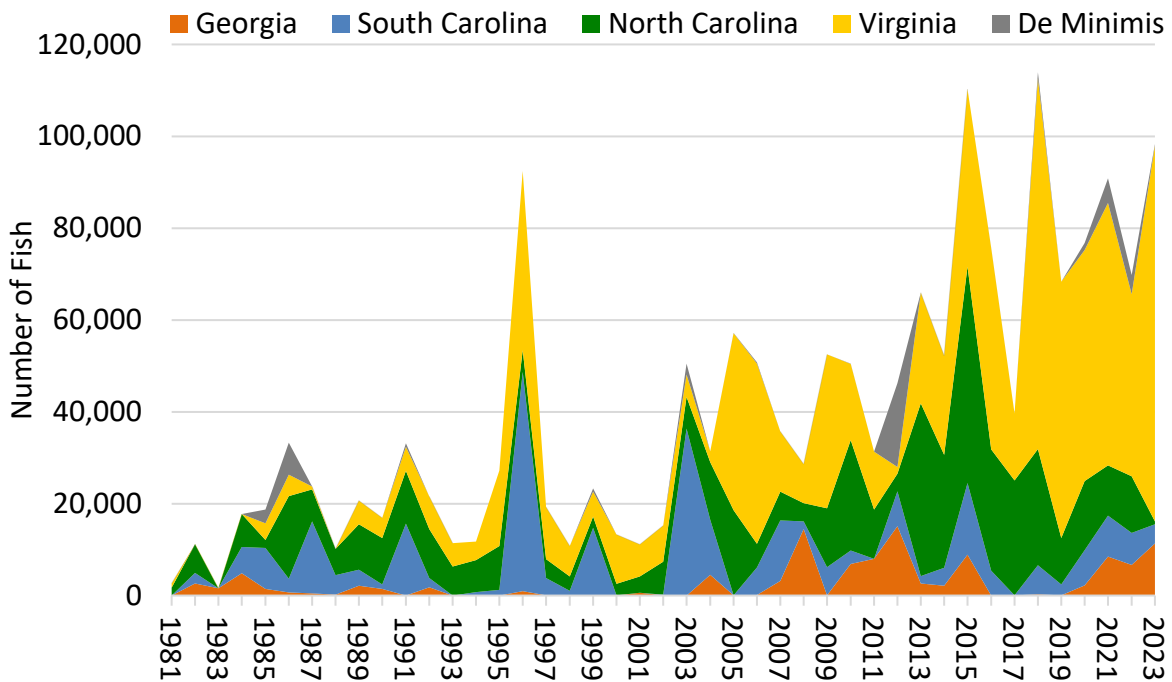


Figure 4. Cobia recreational harvest by state in number of fish. *De minimis* states are states north of Virginia. Source: Personal communication from the National Marine Fisheries Service, Fisheries Statistics Division (MRIP Query April 2024).

The availability of cobia, and therefore harvest timing, differs along the coast. From 2018-2023 (excluding 2020), the percent of recreational harvest peaked in wave 3 for Georgia, South Carolina, and North Carolina at approximately 70% of their total recreational harvest (Figure 5). Total recreational harvest peaked in wave 4 for Virginia (~60% of its recreational harvest). For states north of Virginia, all of which are *de minimis* states, harvest has not been observed every year. When harvest has been observed during this time period, most of Maryland’s recreational harvest and all recreational harvest in Delaware, New York, Connecticut, and Rhode Island occurred during Wave 4, while all recreational harvest has occurred during wave 5 for New Jersey during the same time period.

The distribution of total catch throughout the year is slightly different than the distribution of harvest for some states. For Georgia, South Carolina, and North Carolina, total catch in 2018-2023 (excluding 2020) was more spread out among Waves 3, 4, and 5, as compared to consistent peaks in Wave 3 for harvest (Figure 6). Virginia’s total catch is more evenly spread between Waves 3 and 4, as compared to a sharper harvest peak in Wave 4. For states north of Virginia, most catch has been observed during Wave 4, with New Jersey seeing catch only in Wave 5 in the most recent years.

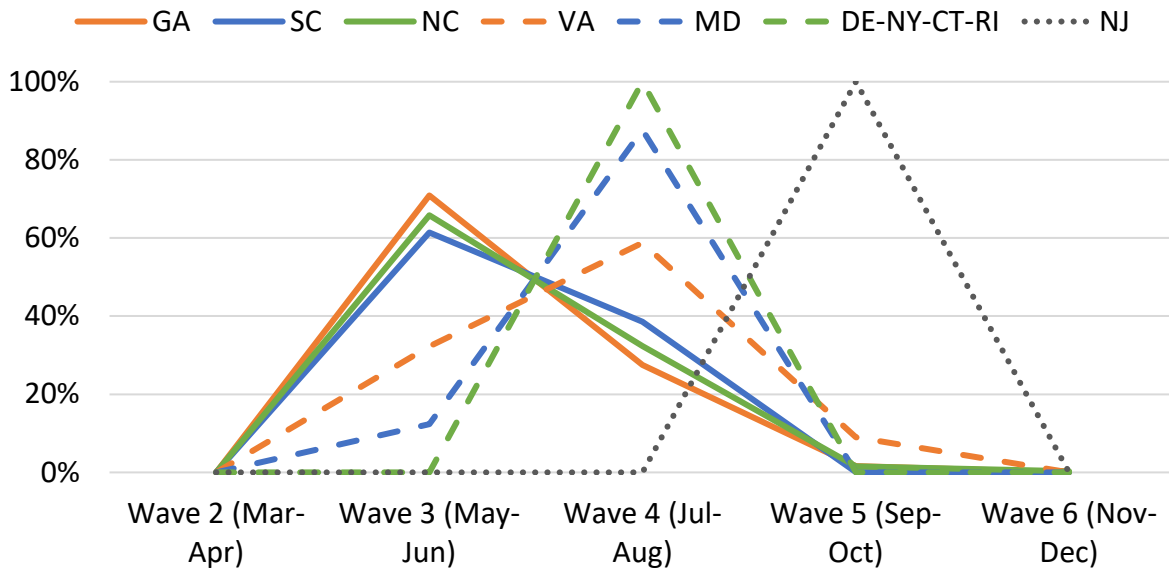


Figure 5. Percent of harvest of Atlantic cobia in numbers per wave from 2018-2023 (excluding 2020). Note: MRIP sampling does not occur in any state during Wave 1 (Jan-Feb) except for North Carolina. North Carolina’s estimated cobia harvest during Wave 1 for this time period was 0 fish. Personal communication from the National Marine Fisheries Service, Fisheries Statistics Division (MRIP Query April 2024).

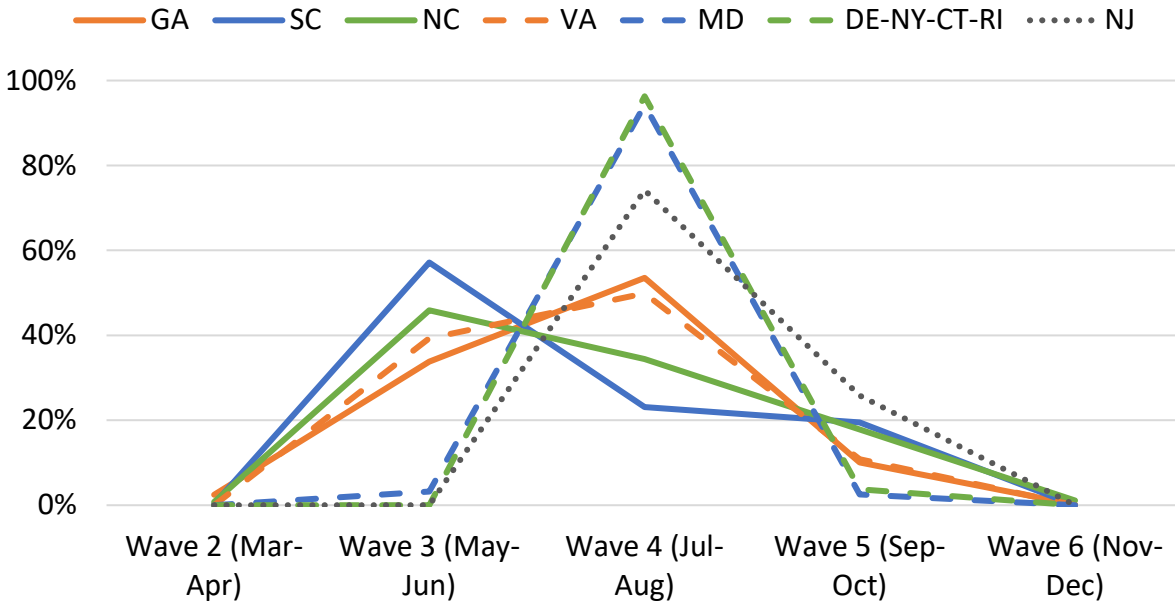


Figure 6. Percent of catch of Atlantic cobia in numbers per wave from 2018-2023 (excluding 2020). Note: MRIP sampling does not occur in any state during Wave 1 (Jan-Feb) except for North Carolina. North Carolina’s estimated cobia harvest during Wave 1 for this time period was 0 fish. Source: Personal communication from the National Marine Fisheries Service, Fisheries Statistics Division (MRIP Query April 2024).

2.2.3.1 MRIP Study of Fishing Effort Survey Bias

In August 2023, NOAA Fisheries released findings of a pilot study it conducted to evaluate potential sources of bias in the recreational Fishing Effort Survey (FES) questionnaire design. This study found switching the sequence of questions in the survey resulted in fewer reporting errors and fishing effort estimates that were generally 30 to 40% lower for shore and private boat modes compared to estimates produced from the current design. However, results varied by state and fishing mode, and impacts on a pulse fishery such as cobia are unknown. These results are based on a pilot study that had a limited time frame (six months) and geographic scope (only four states included). Additional extensive work needs to be done to determine the true impacts of the survey design. NOAA Fisheries is conducting a larger-scale follow-up study over the course of the next few years. At this time, the potential impacts to recreational catch estimates and stock assessments are unknown.

Recent landings information suggests that Atlantic cobia are extending their range northward. Specifically, *de minimis* states have exceeded the 1% *de minimis* set-aside every year between 2020 and 2022, and landings in Mid-Atlantic states have increased over the timeseries. Given these trends in landings, unknown impacts of the FES follow-up study, and lack of updated cobia stock assessment projections, this Draft Addendum is being considered *prior to* potential updates to MRIP catch estimates. A new benchmark stock assessment for Atlantic cobia will be completed by 2026 and could explore how a possible overestimation of recreational catch may

impact cobia biomass. Additionally, this Draft Addendum presents an option that would allow allocations to be quickly updated under certain circumstances, such as potential updated MRIP catch estimates from this study.

2.2.3.2 Summary of Non-De Minimis State Fisheries

Virginia: Virginia's recreational cobia fishery has grown substantially since 2016. Two of the main fishing methods are sight-casting and pier fishing. Sight-casting from custom towers on the top of boats has become more popular than the traditional method of bottom fishing. This shift could be tied to an increase in effectiveness of targeting cobia via sight-casting because of their feeding habits and tendency to swim in schools on the surface of the water. There is also a shore-specific fishery for cobia from the four large piers found within coastal Virginia. While cobia are available, effort will increase on piers as the fish are moving through different parts of the Chesapeake Bay and oceanfront. Anglers will target cobia when they are accessible from the piers, but effort will decrease to almost zero once the fish have migrated to other areas.

While other states may experience pulses of abundance in cobia as they migrate up and down the Atlantic coast, cobia can be found in Virginia waters from mid-May through mid-October. This continuous season in Virginia attracts anglers traveling from out of state to target cobia, contributing to the already large yearly catches from residents. Even with the continuous season, catch peaks from May-June when the fish enter the Bay, and again in August-September as they leave the Bay.

From 2016-2022, Virginia operated the Recreational Cobia Mandatory Reporting Program (RCMRP), a monitoring program to survey recreational cobia anglers. The RCMRP required a free cobia permit for all captains or operators of vessels, as well as those who fished without a vessel (i.e. from a shore, pier, etc.). All permittees were responsible for reporting their cobia activity during the recreational season. Recreational reporting for cobia harvest and releases was mandatory, but revocation of permits was not enforced during the beginning stages of development. Due to low reporting rates, in 2019, reporting became mandatory with revocation to increase reporting rate. That is, permittees who did not report their participation in the recreational cobia fishery within 21 days after the close of the season were ineligible for the following year's recreational cobia permit. At the peak of the program in 2020, there were 8,256 permit holders submitting 12,307 trips total, with a catch of 24,020 cobia (includes kept and released fish). Ultimately the RCMRP was ended in 2022 due to unnecessary burden on recreational anglers. Since the data were not statistically sound enough for any stock assessment use, the program changed to voluntary reporting to try to fill the gap for recreational release data.

North Carolina: In North Carolina, the recreational cobia fishery is seasonal, with cobia primarily available in state waters from late spring through early fall. Cobia are landed mostly in the spring and summer months corresponding with their spring spawning migration (Smith, 1995). Peak landings occur during the latter part of May into June and quickly diminish thereafter. However, recreational landings of cobia can occur through October. Historically,

recreational fisherman targeted cobia from a vessel by anchoring and fishing with dead, live, or a mixture of both bait types near inlets and deep water sloughs inshore (Manooch, 1984). In the early 2000s, fishermen began outfitting their vessels with towers to gain a higher vantage point to spot and target free-swimming cobia along tidelines and around bait aggregations. This method of fishing actively targets cobia in the nearshore coastal zone and has become the primary mode of fishing in most parts of the state.

Despite increased fishing pressure due to a growing number of charter and recreational boats, North Carolina recreational cobia landings have been lower the last couple years relative to previous years. Weather conditions, including persistent winds, have hindered fishing efforts by reducing the number of fishable days. The North Carolina cobia fishery is a pulse fishery, with the primary wave of fish historically arriving in early June and being available for about 6 weeks. In recent years, anecdotal observations suggest the cobia are migrating to Chesapeake Bay much earlier, in April and May, and are residing in North Carolina for a shorter period of time, possibly influenced by temperatures and/or currents.

South Carolina: South Carolina's recreational cobia fishery occurs in both nearshore waters and around natural and artificial reefs offshore. Historically, the majority of cobia landings have occurred in state waters in and around spawning aggregations from April through May. However, due to intense fishing pressure in the inshore zone, annual landings of cobia have fallen drastically since 2009, such that the majority of recreationally caught cobia in South Carolina now come from offshore (federal) waters. Legislative action was taken in 2016 to help protect the inshore fishery by putting a no take of cobia during the month of May, their peak spawning period inshore, within state waters south of Edisto Island. This has also helped shift fishing effort offshore. Due to the size increase from 33 inches FL to 36 inches FL in 2018, most of the captured cobia are under the size limit and are released. Anglers begin targeting cobia in late April-early May with the peak of the season typically occurring May into early June. Late season catches can occur on nearshore reefs through October depending on water temperatures. Additionally, anglers have seen an increase in shark predation over the past few years.

Georgia: A large recreational fishery exists for cobia in Georgia. Most of this fishery occurs in nearshore waters around natural and artificial reefs. While there are some instances of cobia being caught inshore and on beach front piers in Georgia, most landings come from federal waters. Georgia anglers generally begin targeting cobia in late April with peak harvest occurring in May/June. Anglers continue to catch cobia off Georgia through August, and data from MRIP shows that catch of cobia off Georgia peaks during Wave 4 (July-August). There are anecdotal reports of late season (October-December) catch that sometimes occurs on nearshore reefs depending on water temperatures. These are likely migratory fish that are moving back through waters off Georgia as they head south from areas north of Georgia. However, these fall runs are sporadic and may not be observed in MRIP data.

Some evidence suggests there may be two distinct groups of cobia that occur in waters off Georgia. One, a north/south migrating group of fish that appears in early spring as part of their

northward migration. This group of fish may account for the peak in landings that occurs in May/June in Georgia's cobia fishery. And the second, a group of east/west migrating fish that are present off Georgia through the summer months that then retreat to deeper offshore waters to overwinter along the edge of the continental shelf. This theory is supported by the persistence of fish off Georgia well into the summer months (July/August) and after the northward migrating group of cobia has moved out of Georgia waters and into regions north of Georgia.

3.0 PROPOSED MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

Draft Addendum II proposes options regarding:

- recreational allocation framework (Section 3.1);
- updates to allocations (Section 3.2);
- data and uncertainty in recreational landings evaluation (Section 3.3);
- overage response for recreational landings evaluation (Section 3.4); and,
- timeline for setting specifications (Section 3.5).

When the Board takes final action on the addendum, there is the opportunity to select any measure within the range of options that went out for public comment, including combining options across issues.

3.1 Recreational Allocation Framework

The following options would determine how recreational quota is allocated among states (Options A-B), regions (Option C), or coastwide (Option D).

The options consider two different data timeframes as the basis for allocation. One timeframe considers only the most recent six years of harvest data, while the other timeframe considers a weighted combination of the most recent six years plus the last ten years of harvest data. Including the ten-year component gives some consideration to previous harvest distribution before the majority of harvest shifted north.

For all timeframe options, 2016, 2017, and 2020 recreational catch data were excluded from the calculations. Cobia closures in federal waters and some states' waters during 2016 and 2017 resulted in those years being excluded from allocation calculations. Similarly, 2020 was excluded due to COVID-19 impacts on MRIP sampling and use of imputed data for 2020 recreational harvest estimates.

For state-by-state allocation frameworks (Options A-B), *de minimis* states do not have an allocation based on landings, but rather have a set-aside to account for landings across all *de minimis* states. *De minimis* states are exempt from completing harvest target evaluations and have a separate set of standard recreational measures from which to choose. *De minimis* states must request *de minimis* status each year through the compliance report process. The FMP allows states to request recreational *de minimis* status if their recreational landings in two of the previous three years are less than 1% of annual coastwide recreational landings during that time period.

For a regional (Option C) or coastwide (Option D) allocation framework, states could still request *de minimis* status for the recreational fishery, however, *de minimis* states would be part of a larger region subject to regional or coastwide harvest target evaluations. *De minimis* states would be subject to the management measures determined for that region or the coast. So, the current default *de minimis* measures would become irrelevant.

For all allocation framework options, conservation equivalency (CE) is not allowed. The state-by-state allocation framework already affords each state the flexibility to decide how to adjust their management measures to meet their target. The objective of a regional or coastwide allocation framework is to achieve consistent measures within a region or coastwide if a future reduction or liberalization is needed. Seasons could vary within a region or along the coast based on cobia availability, but the size limit and vessel limit would need to be consistent among all states in a region or coastwide. Currently, size limits are mostly consistent among states, with the exception of *de minimis* states. Preliminary vessel limit analysis indicates anglers in states with higher vessel limits are not harvesting their full limit, so reducing vessel limits in those states to be consistent with others in the region or coastwide would not significantly reduce harvest.

It is important to note that upcoming changes to the MRIP Fishing Effort Survey (FES) estimates may affect the state-by-state and regional allocation percentages presented in the below options. If MRIP FES estimates for cobia are changed in the future, associated updates to the selected allocations would need to be considered.

Option A. Status Quo State-By-State Harvest Allocations

Under this option, the recreational quota for Atlantic cobia would continue to be allocated on a state-by-state basis as outlined in Amendment 1. Percentage allocations are based on states' percentages of the coastwide historical landings in numbers of fish, derived as 50% of the 10-year average landings from 2006-2015 and 50% of the 5-year average landings from 2011-2015. To account for harvests in *de minimis* states, 1% of the recreational quota is set aside.

The recreational landings evaluation process and resulting required changes to state measures would proceed as outlined in Amendment 1.

Option B. Updated State-By-State Harvest Allocations

Under this option, recreational quota would continue to be allocated on a state-by-state basis, including a set-aside for *de minimis* states. The allocations in this option include recent data and thereby reflect changes seen in harvest distribution, and the *de minimis* set-aside is increased to 5% to account for increased harvest in *de minimis* states in recent years. This option considers two allocation timeframes outlined in options B1 and B2.

If this option is selected, recreational management measures would remain status quo in each state until completion of the next stock assessment (SEDAR 95), or until a state needs to take a reduction based on evaluation of the state's landings against its harvest target, whichever comes first. States would not be able to liberalize measures before completion of SEDAR 95.

If a state needs to change management measures, the state would work with the Cobia Technical Committee to propose a set of management measures to meet the reduction or, after completion of SEDAR 95, the liberalization. Changes to management measures must be reviewed by the Technical Committee and approved by the Board prior to implementation. Options B1 and B2 include a 5% set-aside of the recreational quota to account for harvests in *de minimis* states.

Option B1. Five-Year Average Allocation Timeline

Recreational quota allocated state-by-state based on states’ percentages of the coastwide historical landings in numbers of fish, derived as 100% of 6-year average landings from 2018-2023 (excluding 2020).

Option B2. Weighted Ten-Year and Five-Year Average Allocation Timeline

Recreational quota allocated state-by-state based on states’ percentages of the coastwide historical landings in numbers of fish, derived as 50% of 10-year average landings from 2014-2023 (excluding 2016, 2017, 2020) and 50% of the 6-year average landings from 2018-2023 (excluding 2020).

Table 3. State-by-state recreational allocation options.

Data Timeframe	Status Quo	6-Year Average	Weighted 10-Year & 6-Year Average
	50% 2006-2015 + 50% 2011-2015	100% 2018-2023	50% 2014-2023 + 50% 2018-2023
	Option A	Option B1	Option B2
<i>De minimis</i> Set-Aside	1%	5%	5%
Virginia	39.4%	69.2%	64.5%
North Carolina	38.1%	13.2%	17.4%
South Carolina	12.1%	6.5%	7.1%
Georgia	9.4%	6.1%	6.0%
Total	100%	100%	100%

Option C. Regional allocations

Under this option, recreational quota would be allocated among regions. Recreational management measures in a region would eventually need to consist of the same size limit and vessel limit for all states in the region. Seasons may differ among states in a region.

Currently, vessel limits and seasons vary by state along the coast. Size limits are mostly uniform with the exception of *de minimis* states that have adopted the default *de minimis* measures specified in the FMP. If this regional allocation option is selected, recreational management measures would remain status quo in each state until completion of the next stock assessment (SEDAR 95), or until a region needs to take a reduction based on evaluation of the region's landings against the harvest target, whichever comes first. At that time, the states in the region would work with the Cobia Technical Committee to determine a set of management measures for all states in the region to meet the reduction (i.e., uniform size limit and vessel limit; seasons may differ). Regions would not be able to liberalize measures before the completion of SEDAR 95. Changes to management measures must be reviewed by the Technical Committee and approved by the Board prior to implementation.

Option C considers dividing the coast into two regions, with sub-options considering:

- which states are in each region, and
- two different allocation timeframes based on historical landings in numbers of fish:
 - 6-Year Average. 100% of 6-year average landings from 2018-2023 (excluding 2020);
 - Weighted 10-year/6-year Average. 50% of 10-year average landings from 2014-2023 (excluding 2016, 2017, 2020) and 50% of the 6-year average landings from 2018-2023 (excluding 2020);

This results in a total of four options as outlined in Table 4. Options C1-C2 consider a southern region of South Carolina and Georgia, while Options C3-C4 consider a southern region of North Carolina, South Carolina, and Georgia. The percent standard error and the regional harvest with associated confidence intervals are available in Appendix B.

Options C1 and C2. Two Region Allocation – Northern Region (RI through NC) and Southern Region (SC and GA)

Options C1 and C2 consider two regions where the northern region consists of the states from Rhode Island through North Carolina, and the southern region consists of South Carolina and Georgia with the above noted allocation timeframes and detailed in Table 4.

Option C3 and C4. Two Region Allocation – Northern Region (RI through VA) and Southern Region (NC through GA)

Options C3 and C4 consider two regions where the northern region consists of the states from Rhode Island through Virginia and the southern region consists of the states from North Carolina through Georgia with the above noted allocation timeframes and detailed in Table 4.

Table 4. Regional recreational allocation options.

Data Timeframe	6-Year Average 100% 2018-2023	Weighted 10-Year & 6-Year Average 50% 2014-2023 + 50% 2018-2023
	Option C1	Option C2
Northern Region RI-CT-NY-NJ-DE-MD-VA-NC	87.24%	86.65%
Southern Region Two State SC-GA	12.76%	13.35%
Total	100%	100%
	Option C3	Option C4
Northern Region RI-CT-NY-NJ-DE-MD-VA	73.77%	68.69%
Southern Region Three State NC-SC-GA	26.23%	31.31%
Total	100%	100%

Option D. Coastwide Target

Under this option, there would be no state-specific or regional harvest targets, but rather only the coastwide recreational harvest quota. A coastwide size limit and vessel limit would eventually be established for all states, but the season may be different for each state or group of states based on cobia availability in each state. ‘Coastwide’ for Atlantic cobia refers to states north of the Georgia-Florida border.

Currently, vessel limits and seasons vary by state along the coast. Size limits are mostly uniform with the exception of *de minimis* states that have adopted the default *de minimis* measures specified in the FMP. If this coastwide allocation option is selected, recreational management measures would remain status quo in each state until completion of the next stock assessment (SEDAR 95), or until the coast needs to take a reduction based on evaluation of the coastwide landings against the coastwide harvest quota, whichever comes first. At that time, all states would work with the Cobia Technical Committee to determine a set of management measures for all states along the coast to meet the reduction (i.e., uniform size limit and vessel limit; seasons may differ). The coast would not be able to liberalize measures before the completion of SEDAR 95. Changes to management measures must be reviewed by the Technical Committee and approved by the Board prior to implementation.

3.2 Updates to State/Regional Recreational Allocations

Option A. Status Quo.

Under this option, recreational allocations can only be changed through the ASMFC addendum process.

Option B. Allocation Changes via Board Action

Under this option, the Board may change recreational allocations via Board action (i.e., voting at a Board meeting; no addendum needed) in the following scenarios:

- A state loses *de minimis* status and therefore needs to be allocated a state-specific harvest target (only applicable under a state-by-state allocation framework).
- Harvest estimates for the allocation source data years are revised (i.e., if MRIP estimates are updated).

If the Board is considering changing allocation via Board action under one of the above scenarios, the Cobia Technical Committee would re-calculate allocations based on the associated scenario and bring the new allocations to the Board for consideration. In the case of a state losing *de minimis* status, the Technical Committee will calculate the new allocations to be presented to the Board at the Commission's Summer Meeting. Following the Summer Meeting when the Board considers state *de minimis* requests for that year, the Board could approve new allocations at the Commission's Annual Meeting in the fall. This faster process of Board action, as compared to the longer addendum process, would be more efficient to address the above scenarios, which could occur multiple times over the next several years.

If the Board would like to consider allocation changes outside the scenarios listed above, an addendum is needed to change state/regional recreational allocations.

3.3 Data and Uncertainty in Recreational Landings Evaluations

Option A. Status Quo.

Under this option, MRIP harvest point estimates and up to a three-year rolling average would continue to be used for comparing recreational harvest to harvest targets.

Recreational landings for each non-*de minimis* state (or each region or the coast depending on allocation framework selected in Section 3.1) will be evaluated against that state's/region's/coastwide target as an average of annual landings. The timeframe for this average will only include years with the same management measures (i.e., measures have not changed from year to year). If the same management measures have been in place for at least three years, the timeframe will include the three most recent years under these regulations (a rolling 3-year average). If the same management measures have been in place for less than three years, the timeframe will include all years under the same regulations.

If a regional or coastwide framework is selected, states in each region or coastwide will have different management measures from each other until the measures are changed to a uniform set of measures (same size and vessel limit; seasons may differ) when a reduction or liberalization occurs. This does not affect the evaluation. This does not affect the evaluation; the evaluation timeframe only depends on if measures have changed from year to year, not if they differ between states.

Option B. Extend Rolling Average to Five Years

Under this option, MRIP harvest point estimates would continue to be used for comparing recreational harvest to harvest targets, but the rolling average timeframe would extend to five years. This allows for inclusion of additional data years, which can be more informative given the variability in and sometimes imprecision of cobia landings from year to year.

Recreational landings for each non-*de minimis* state/region/coastwide would be evaluated against that state's/region's/coastwide target as an average of annual landings. The timeframe for this average will only include years with the same management measures (i.e., measures have not changed from year to year). If the same management measures have been in place for at least five years, the timeframe will include the five most recent years under these regulations (a rolling 5-year average). If the same management measures have been in place for less than five years, the timeframe will include all years under the same regulations.

If a regional or coastwide framework is selected, states in each region or coastwide will have different management measures from each other until the measures are changed to a uniform set of measures (same size and vessel limit; seasons may differ) when a reduction or liberalization occurs. This does not affect the evaluation; the evaluation timeframe only depends on if measures have changed from year to year, not if they differ between states.

Provision on the Use of Confidence Intervals

If a regional or coastwide allocation framework is selected, the Board could decide in the future (via Board vote) to switch from a rolling average approach to a confidence interval approach for harvest target evaluation. This provision gives the Board the ability to make that switch in the future via Board vote. Using confidence intervals instead of a rolling average for evaluation would more directly account for the uncertainty around the MRIP harvest point estimates.

The confidence interval approach would require PSEs and confidence interval values for the regional or coastwide sum total harvest estimates, which are currently only available via MRIP's custom data request process. The confidence interval approach cannot be used for a state-by-state allocation framework due to larger confidence intervals around some state-specific estimates.

For this approach, when regional or coastwide harvest is evaluated against the harvest target to determine if a change is needed, the Cobia Technical Committee would consider the 95% confidence intervals associated with MRIP harvest point estimates for the evaluation timeframe. If the same management measures have been in place for at least three or five

years (depending on whether the Board selects a three- or five-year approach above), the timeframe will include the most recent three or five years under these regulations. If the same management measures have been in place for less than three or five years, the timeframe will include all years under these regulations.

If the harvest estimate's lower bound confidence interval is above the harvest target for a majority of the years within the evaluation timeframe, this indicates harvest has been above the target, and the region/coast must adjust its management measures to reduce harvest to achieve the target. If the harvest target falls within the harvest estimate's confidence interval for a majority of the years within the evaluation timeframe, status quo measures may be maintained. If the harvest estimate's upper bound confidence interval is below the harvest target for a majority of the years within the evaluation timeframe, this indicates harvest has been below the target, and the region/coast may adjust its management measures to liberalize harvest such that the target level of harvest is achieved, but not exceeded. To calculate the reduction or liberalization needed, the average landings over the evaluation time period will be used relative to the target.

A majority of years within the evaluation timeframe means three out of five years or two out of three years. In the event of one out of two years or two out of four years, the Technical Committee will make a recommendation for Board consideration of a reduction or maintaining status quo measures.

To address years with particularly large confidence intervals (i.e., high uncertainty), years that have harvest estimates with a PSE greater than 50 would not be included in the evaluation. Years that have harvest estimates with PSEs between 30 and 50 would be subject to review by the Cobia Technical Committee to recommend whether they are appropriate to include in the evaluation. This aligns with MRIP's guidance to use caution for estimates with a PSE greater than 30, and not support the use of estimates with a PSE greater than 50.

3.4 Overage Response for Recreational Landings Evaluations with Rolling Averages

Option A. Status Quo.

Under this option, the need for changes to recreational management measures is determined at the individual state level by comparing state harvest to that state's harvest target over the evaluation period.

If a state's (or region's or coastwide if selected in Section 3.1) averaged recreational landings exceed its annual recreational harvest target, that state/region/coast must adjust its recreational vessel limit or season to reduce harvest, such that future annual landings would be expected to achieve the state/regional/coastwide recreational harvest target.

States/regions/coast reporting a consistent (i.e., consecutive) under-harvest during an evaluation time period for a minimum of 2 years may present a plan to extend seasons or

increase vessel limits, if desired, to allow increased harvests that will not exceed the harvest target.

Changes to management measures for states with overages or states that wish to liberalize management measures must be reviewed by the Technical Committee and approved by the Board prior to implementation.

Option B. Performance Comparisons

Under this option, if a state/region's averaged recreational landings exceed its annual recreational harvest target, management action to reduce harvest in that state/region would not be required if the following conditions are met:

- another state/region's averaged recreational landings is under their target by at least the same amount, and that state has chosen not to liberalize their measures (if applicable); AND
- the average coastwide harvest has not exceeded the coastwide quota for the same timeframe.

Otherwise, the process remains the same as in Option A.

This performance comparison approach cannot be used in conjunction with the confidence interval approach outlined in section 3.3. If the confidence interval approach is implemented in the future, this performance comparison approach can no longer be used at that time.

3.5 Timeline for Setting Commercial and Recreational Measures

Option A. Status Quo.

Under this option, the coastwide total harvest quota, vessel limits, possession or bag limits, minimum size limits, and a commercial closure triggering mechanism may be specified through Board action **for up to three years**.

New specified recreational management measures may be implemented after the expiration of previously specified measures or following a completed stock assessment. In years when harvest specifications are made, they will occur no later than the Fall Board meeting, and resulting measures will be implemented in the following year. Recreational landings will be evaluated against state recreational harvest targets at the same time (i.e., at the same meeting) as the specification process.

Option B. Five-Year Specifications

Under this option, the coastwide total harvest quota, vessel limits, possession or bag limits, minimum size limits, and a commercial closure triggering mechanism may be specified through Board action **for up to five years**. The rest of the specification process would remain the same as Option A.

A longer five-year timeline would potentially reduce the frequency of management changes (management ‘whiplash’) and better aligns with when new stock assessment information is likely to be available for Atlantic cobia. The time between completion of the previous stock assessment and the current assessment will be approximately 5-6 years. Setting new specifications between assessments can be difficult due to the lack of new information on stock status. For example, the 2020-2023 specifications were informed by the SEDAR 58 stock assessment (2020). When those specifications expired, the Board considered specifications for 2024-2026. Since neither a new stock assessment nor stock projections beyond 2024 were available, the Technical Committee and Board had limited information to consider for the 2024-2026 specifications.

4.0 COMPLIANCE SCHEDULE

TBD upon approval of Addendum II.

5.0 REFERENCES

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- Manooch, Charles S. 1984. Fisherman's guide to fishes of the Southeastern United States. North Carolina Museum of Natural History. Raleigh, North Carolina. 362 pp.
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- Smith, Joseph W. 1995. Life history of cobia *Rachycentron canadum* (Osteichthyes: Rachycentridae), in North Carolina Waters. *Brimleyana* 23:1-23

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APPENDIX A. 2023 State Management Measures for Atlantic Migratory Group Cobia

State	Recreational Measures	Commercial Measures
RI	<i>De minimis</i> Minimum Size: 37 in total length Vessel Limit: 1 fish per vessel Season: year-round	<u>Coastwide</u> Possession Limit: 2 fish per person Minimum Size: 33 in fork length or 37 in total length Vessel Limit: 6 fish If commercial fishing in state waters is closed, commercial fishing in federal waters will be recommended to mirror state closures <u>Deviations</u> -Rhode Island and New York possession limit is 2 fish per vessel -Virginia possession limit is per licensee rather than per person -North Carolina has 36 minimum fork length -No commercial harvest in South Carolina state waters -Georgia possession limit is 1 fish per person (not to exceed 6 per vessel) and minimum size is 36 in fork length
NY	<i>Declared into the fishery in 2023; could qualify for de minimis</i> Minimum Size: 37 in total length Vessel Limit: 1 fish per vessel Season: year-round	
NJ	<i>De minimis</i> Minimum Size: 37 in total length Vessel Limit: 1 fish per vessel Season: year-round	
DE	<i>De minimis</i> Minimum Size: 37 in total length Bag Limit: 1 fish per vessel Vessel Limit: 1 fish per vessel	
MD	<i>De minimis</i> Minimum Size: 40 in total length Bag Limit: 1 fish per person Vessel Limit: 2 fish per vessel Season: June 15-September 15	
PRFC	Minimum Size: 40 in total length (only 1 fish over 50" per vessel) Bag limit: 1 per person Vessel Limit: 2 fish per vessel Season: June 15-September 15	
VA	Minimum Size: 40 in total length (only 1 fish over 50" per vessel) Bag Limit: 1 fish per person Vessel Limit: 2 fish per vessel Season: June 15-September 15	

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NC	<p>Minimum Size: 36 in fork length Bag Limit: 1 fish per person Season: May 1-December 31 <u>Private Vessel Limit</u> May 1- June 30: 2 fish July 1-Dec 31: 1 fish</p> <p><u>For-Hire Vessel Limit</u> May 1-Dec 31: 4 fish</p>	
SC	<p>Bag Limit: 1 fish per person Minimum Size: 36 in fork length Vessel Limit: 6 fish Season: Open year-round</p> <p><u>Southern Cobia Management Zone:</u> Minimum Size: 36 in FL Season: June 1-April 30 (closed in May) Bag Limit: 1 fish per person Vessel Limit: 3 fish</p> <p>-If recreational fishing in federal waters is closed, recreational fishing in all SC state waters is also closed.</p>	
GA	<p>Bag Limit: 1 fish per person Minimum Size: 36 in fork length Vessel Limit: 6 fish Season: March 1-October 31</p>	
<p>*Florida has a declared interest in the Atlantic Coastal Migratory Group, but their cobia fisheries are managed as part of the Gulf of Mexico Migratory Group due to cobia stock boundaries.</p>		

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APPENDIX B. Percent Standard Error (PSE) for State and Regional Harvest Estimates

Table B1. Percent standard error (PSE) for each state’s recreational cobia harvest estimate in number of fish from 2014-2023. Red indicates a PSE greater than 50 (MRIP does not support use of the estimate). Yellow indicates a PSE between 30 and 50 (MRIP cautions use of the estimate in fisheries management). Source: Personal communication from the National Marine Fisheries Service, Fisheries Statistics Division (MRIP Query April 2024).

<i>Corresponds with Section 3.1 Options A-B State-by-State Allocation</i>										
	RI	CT	NY	NJ	DE	MD	VA	NC	SC	GA
2014							42.5	35.8	60.3	71.5
2015							49.3	28.3	48.5	59.9
2016						102.6	18.9	44.9	60	
2017							42.3	46.1		111.4
2018		100.4			98.1	66.7	35.8	33.2	42.2	53.9
2019							22.6	38.6	70.6	56.9
2020		102.7				69.5	25	37.9	39.1	92.4
2021				92.4		43.8	22.9	39.1	41.9	41.4
2022			82.3	102.2			25.1	47	55.9	72.4
2023	71.9						34.2	53.1	61.9	56

Table B2. Percent standard error (PSE) for each proposed region’s recreational cobia harvest estimate in number of fish from 2014-2023. Red indicates a PSE greater than 50 (MRIP does not support use of the estimate). Yellow indicates a PSE between 30 and 50 (MRIP cautions use of the estimate in fisheries management). Source: Personal communication from the National Marine Fisheries Service, Fisheries Statistics Division (MRIP May 2024).

<i>Corresponds to Section 3.1</i>	<i>Options C1-C2 Regional Allocation</i>		<i>Options C3-C4 Regional Allocation</i>		<i>Option D Coastwide Target</i>
	RI-NC	SC-GA	RI-VA	NC-GA	RI-GA
Year					
2014	27.5	46.4	42.5	30.1	24.9
2015	27.1	37.8	49.3	22.6	22.7
2016	20.6	60.0	18.8	38.6	19.6
2017	33.0	111.4	42.3	46.1	33.0
2018	28.0	40.7	35.2	27.7	26.5
2019	20.0	68.6	22.6	33.8	19.5
2020	20.7	36.7	24.4	27.1	18.7
2021	19.0	29.5	21.2	23.6	16.4
2022	21.2	45.5	23.7	32.7	19.2
2023	33.7	44.3	34.0	42.6	29.3

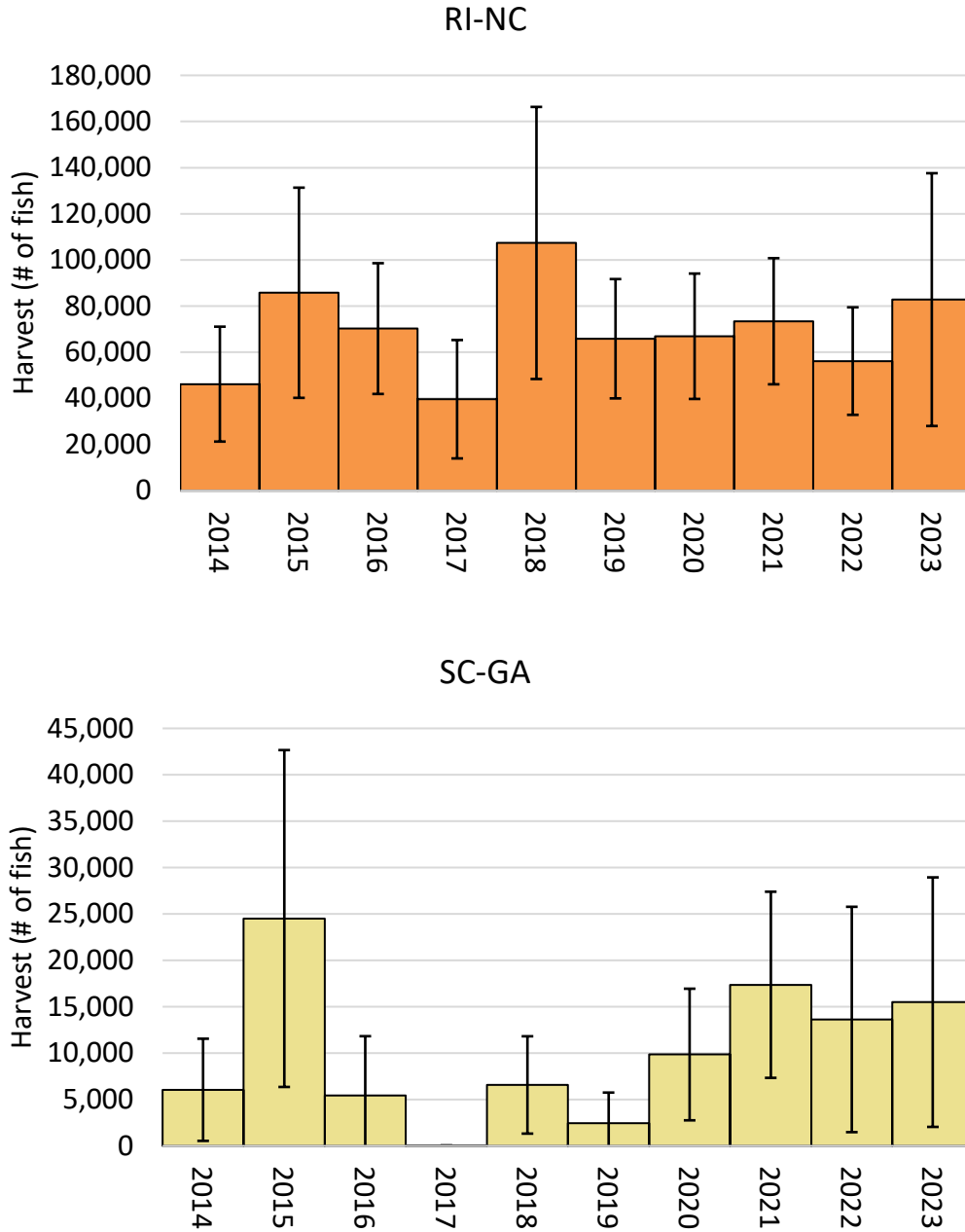


Figure B1. Regional recreational cobia harvest in number of fish from 2014-2023 for RI-NC and SC-GA, corresponding with Options C1-C2 for regional allocation in Section 3.1. Error bars indicate 95% confidence intervals. Source: Personal communication from the National Marine Fisheries Service, Fisheries Statistics Division (MRIP May 2024).

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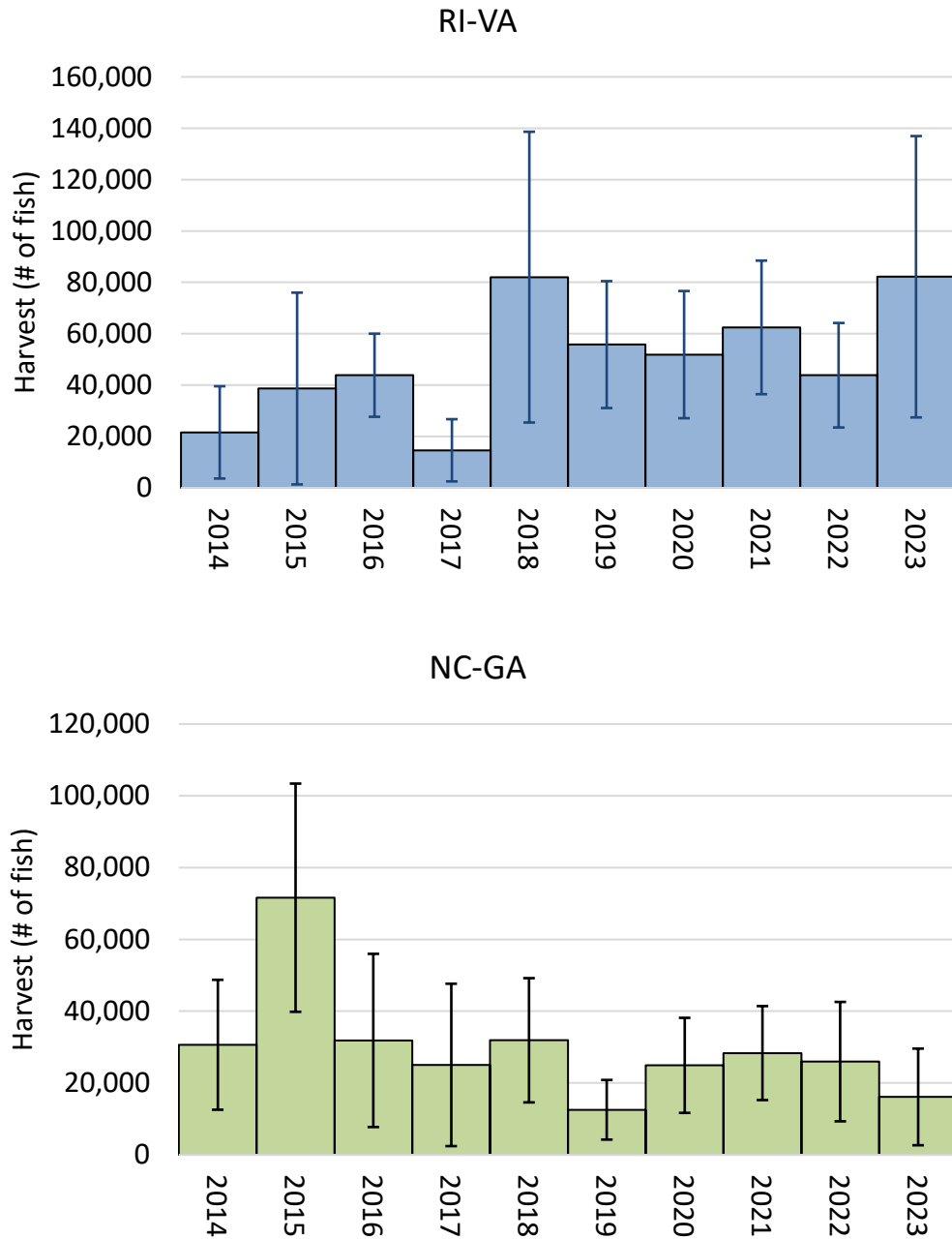


Figure B2. Regional recreational cobia harvest in number of fish from 2014-2023 for RI-VA and NC-GA, corresponding with Options C3-C4 for regional allocation in Section 3.1. Error bars indicate 95% confidence intervals. Source: Personal communication from the National Marine Fisheries Service, Fisheries Statistics Division (MRIP May 2024).

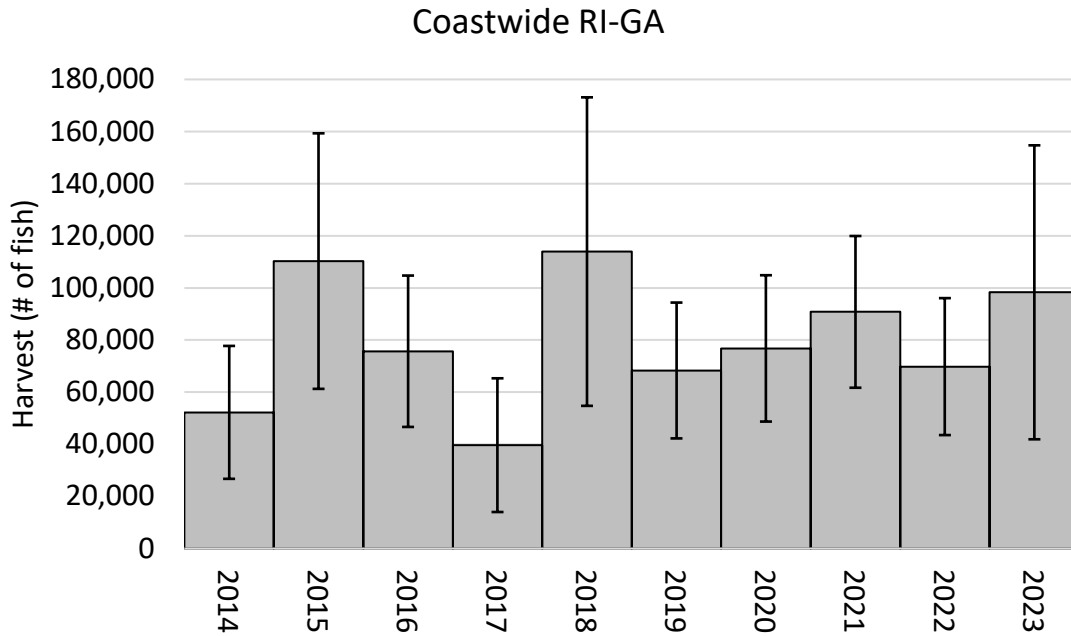


Figure B3. Regional recreational cobia harvest in number of fish from 2014-2023 for the coastwide management unit RI-GA, corresponding with Option D for a coastwide target in Section 3.1. Error bars indicate 95% confidence intervals. Source: Personal communication from the National Marine Fisheries Service, Fisheries Statistics Division (MRIP May 2024).



Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission

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MEMORANDUM

TO: Coastal Pelagics Management Board

FROM: Emilie Franke, FMP Coordinator

DATE: July 22, 2024

SUBJECT: Public Comment Summary for Atlantic Cobia Draft Addendum II

The following is an overview of all comments received by ASMFC on Draft Addendum II to Amendment 1 to the Interstate Fishery Management Plan for Atlantic Cobia as of July 8, 2024 (closing deadline).

A total of seven written comments were received on Draft Addendum II comprised of six individual comments and one organization's comment. Some comments directly addressed the management options in Draft Addendum II, and others discussed cobia management more generally.

Seven public hearings were held for eight jurisdictions from June 5 through June 25, 2024. Four hearings were conducted in-person: Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Georgia. Three joint hearings were conducted via webinar covering states from New York through Georgia. 37 members of the public attended the hearings, and two of those attendees attended multiple hearings. Only some attendees provided public comments.

The following pages include tables summarizing how many comments were received in support of each option proposed in Draft Addendum II. The summary tables are followed by all the written comments received and the state-by-state public hearing summaries and attendee lists.

Total Comments Received and Hearing Attendees

Number of written comments received by individuals and organizations, and number of people who attended each public hearing.

Written Public Comments Received	
Individual Comments	6
Organizations	1
TOTAL WRITTEN COMMENTS	7
Public Hearing Attendance	
Hearing	Public Attendees *
New York-New Jersey-Delaware Webinar	1
Maryland-Virginia-North Carolina Webinar	4
Virginia (Fort Monroe)	3
North Carolina (Manteo)	2
South Carolina (Okatie)	13
Georgia (Townsend)	9
South Carolina-Georgia Webinar	7
TOTAL HEARING ATTENDEES	37

**Public attendees do not include state staff, ASMFC staff, or Commissioners/Proxies.*

Section 3.1 Recreational Allocation Framework

Number of written and public hearing comments in support of each option.

	Option A. SQ State- by-State	Option B1/B2. State-by- State Recent Data	Option C1/C2. Regional Two-State Southern Region	Option C3/C4. Regional Three-State Southern Region	Option D. Coastwide
Individual	1				
Organization					1
Written Total	1	0	0	0	1
NY-NJ-DE Web					
MD-VA-NC Web					
Virginia		1			
North Carolina					
South Carolina		1			
Georgia			1		
SC-GA Web					
Hearing Total	0	2	1	0	0

Note: Five commenters did not select a specific recreational allocation framework option, but noted opposition to increasing Virginia’s allocation. One commenter did not select a specific allocation framework, but noted the combined 10-year/6-year average landings would incorporate the most years of data to reduce error (Option B2, C2, or C4).

The comment in support of Option A. status quo state-by-state allocation framework with data from 2006-2015 noted that given the high uncertainty around cobia MRIP data, the low level of harvest in states experiencing an expansion, and with overfishing not occurring, allocation should remain status quo.

Comments in support of a state-by-state allocation framework using updated data (Option B1 2018-2023, or Option B2 2014-2023/2018-2023) noted the need to use the most recent data available. One commenter noted that state-by-state allocation would be easier to implement as compared to coastwide allocation, which would be politically difficult to implement since states would have to coordinate on consistent management measures. Another commenter noted if state-by-state allocation were continued, the northern *de minimis* states do not need 5% of the quota, and should only get 1-2% of the quota.

Regarding South Carolina’s proposed allocation, two commenters noted that South Carolina’s harvest has been lower in recent years, thus resulting in a lower proposed allocation, due to implementation of South Carolina’s May spawning closure. May historically was the time of

peak cobia harvest for South Carolina before the spawning closures. They noted that South Carolina should not be penalized with the lower allocation for taking conservation action to protect spawning cobia.

The commenter in support of Options C1/C2 regional allocation with a two-state southern region (SC-GA) supports regional management given the uncertainty around how the cobia stock will continue to change. Another commenter noted that if regional management is chosen, North Carolina should be grouped with Virginia (i.e., two-state southern region of SC-GA) since Virginia would bring a large amount of quota to the northern region.

One commenter noted they have not decided which allocation framework option to support, but stated that using the combined 10-year/6-year average (Option B2, C2, or C4) would incorporate the most years of data to reduce error.

The comment in support of Option D. coastwide allocation noted that MRIP data uncertainty would be substantially reduced by using data at the coastwide level, and that the coastwide approach captures the dynamic changes in stock distribution. The comment noted this would also eliminate *de minimis* determinations which are complex and of questionable effectiveness.

Five commenters did not select a specific recreational allocation framework option, but noted opposition to increasing Virginia's allocation. There is concern about giving more quota to Virginia where more fish are being harvested and more people are fishing, and the associated negative impacts on the stock. Commenters noted this is not conservation and would not protect the resource. Some commenters questioned why harvest would be restricted in states with a relatively small impact on the stock, like Georgia and South Carolina, when Virginia is having the biggest impact on the stock. There are concerns about equitability and drastically reducing quota in states with important cobia fisheries, like North Carolina where there are not many other species available to target during the time when cobia are available.

Section 3.2 Updates to State/Regional Recreational Allocations

Number of written and public hearing comments in support of each option.

	Option A. SQ Addendum Process	Option B. Board Action for De Minimis or Data Revisions
Individual	1	
Organization	1	
Written Total	2	0
NY-NJ-DE Web		
MD-VA-NC Web		
Virginia		
North Carolina		
South Carolina		
Georgia		
SC-GA Web		
Hearing Total	0	0

In support of Option A. status quo addendum process to change allocations, one comment notes support for a coastwide allocation framework, which would eliminate specific state/regional allocations and therefore there would not be any state/regional allocations to update. The comment does note concern about how the future revisions of MRIP estimates may impact the cobia coastwide harvest target, and notes that any discussion of allocation should have higher levels of participation and input.

The other comment in support of Option A notes everything should be status quo given the high uncertainty around cobia MRIP data, the low level of harvest in states experiencing an expansion, and with overfishing not occurring.

Section 3.3 Data and Uncertainty in Recreational Landings Evaluations

Number of written and public hearing comments in support of each option.

	Option A. SQ Up to 3-Year Rolling Average	Option B. Up to 5-Yr Rolling Average
Individual	1	
Organization	1	
Written Total	2	0
NY-NJ-DE Web		
MD-VA-NC Web		
Virginia		
North Carolina		2
South Carolina		
Georgia		
SC-GA Web		
Hearing Total	0	2

In support of Option A. status quo up to a 3-year rolling average used during harvest target evaluations, one comment noted concern about the length of time between evaluations and the potential to miss an emerging trend and take management action too late. Therefore, the comment supports using three years of data to evaluate recreational harvest estimates and smooth out MRIP data.

The other comment in support of Option A notes everything should be status quo given the high uncertainty around cobia MRIP data, the low level of harvest in states experiencing an expansion, and with overfishing not occurring.

In support of Option B. up to a 5-year rolling average used during harvest target evaluations, two comments noted the need to use more years of data to level out the landings, especially if there are some years with low harvest due to bad weather, for example.

One comment noted interest in the confidence interval approach and would have preferred it standalone as an option to solicit public input. The comment noted the confidence interval approach would improve how MRIP data are used.

Section 3.4 Overage Response for Recreational Landings Evaluations with Rolling Averages

Number of written and public hearing comments in support of each option.

	Option A. SQ Individual State Evaluations	Option B. Performance Comparisons*
Individual	1	
Organization	1	
Written Total	2	0
NY-NJ-DE Web		
MD-VA-NC Web		
Virginia		
North Carolina		
South Carolina		
Georgia		
SC-GA Web		
Hearing Total	0	0

** Performance comparisons are if a state/region exceeds its target, a reduction would not be required if another state/region is below their target and if the coastwide target was not exceeded.*

In support of Option A. status quo individual state evaluations, one comment noted that accountability must be maintained (i.e., if a state is over their target, a reduction is needed).

The other comment in support of Option A notes everything should be status quo given the high uncertainty around cobia MRIP data, the low level of harvest in states experiencing an expansion, and with overfishing not occurring.

Section 3.5 Timeline for Setting Commercial and Recreational Measures
 Number of written and public hearing comments in support of each option.

	Option A. SQ Up to 3 Years	Option B. Up to 5 Years
Individual	1	
Organization	1	
Written Total	2	0
NY-NJ-DE Web		
MD-VA-NC Web		
Virginia		2
North Carolina		2
South Carolina		
Georgia		
SC-GA Web		
Hearing Total	0	4

In support of Option A. status quo setting management measures for up to three years, one comment noted five years would be too long of a timeframe. The comment also noted that while five years would align with the stock assessments, there are limited cobia index data available in the assessments to provide new information.

The other comment in support of Option A notes everything should be status quo given the high uncertainty around cobia MRIP data, the low level of harvest in states experiencing an expansion, and with overfishing not occurring.

In support of Option B. setting management measures for up to five years, comments noted the need for consistency and continuity for regulations, the importance of aligning management action with the stock assessment data, and the flexibility of having the ability to set management measures for longer if needed.

Additional Topics Raised in Comments

Commenters raised several additional topics regarding cobia management as follows, in no particular order:

- Management options rely on assumption that there is a significant north/south migration of cobia, but research does not seem to support that theory.
- Concern about the health of the stock, and in favor of any regulations that maintain or tighten the current restrictions.
- Support the use of spawning season closures.
- See more value recreationally as a primarily catch and release fishery.
- Lower the minimum size to allow for harvest of both males and female, and/or implement a slot size.
- Implement tags/stamps for harvest.
- Focus on education and enforcement.
- Disappointment that Draft Addendum II did not consider innovative or alternative tools to address the persistent recreational data issues for Atlantic cobia. New ideas could have explored harvest reporting and/or how emerging fishing application technology to improve cobia management.

From: [David Harter](#)
To: [Emilie Franke](#)
Cc: [Al Stokes](#)
Subject: [External] Emilie
Date: Friday, June 7, 2024 9:41:33 AM

Thank you for your concise and informative presentation at the PRSF Maritime Center last night. As a past participant in many SAFMC meetings, I have heard more than my share of dry, rambling and confusing presentations of scientific data to know a good one and yours was well done.

Confirming what I commented on in the meeting, the coastal and regional management amendments seem to rely on a belief that there is a significant north/south migration of cobia. The results of the last 20 years of traditional dorsal tagging, archival satellite tagging, DNA studies and fisherman observations do not seem to support that theory. We would like to see the results of any recent studies that do support this. I have been fishing the SC offshore waters for 50 years including the Gulf Stream and we have observed many pelagic migrations over the years, but cobia has not been one of them. Considering how many fish are caught north of us, that would not be an insignificant migration. Thank you for what can be a thankless service.

David Harter
Hilton Head Reef Foundation

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From: [Brodie Brant](#)
To: [Comments](#)
Subject: [External] Cobia Draft Addendum II
Date: Friday, June 7, 2024 11:23:57 AM

Hello,

My name is Brodie Brant, and I am a lifelong resident and native of Beaufort, SC. I am an avid outdoorsman and enjoy fishing for cobia in the Broad River and surrounding areas. Based on the experience of myself and other anglers I know, the inshore cobia fishery here in SC is still not as healthy as it has been in the past. I am in favor of any regulations that maintain or tighten the current restrictions on the harvest of cobia along the entire east coast.

While I can only speak from experience on the SC coast specifically, the idea of raising harvest targets (and by extension loosening the regulations) in states like NC and VA is concerning to me because of the migratory nature of cobia. I want to see a thriving cobia population all along the east coast and believe that these fish offer so much more value recreationally as a primarily catch and release fishery.

Thank you for your consideration,

Brodie Brant

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From: [Joshua R.](#)
To: [Comments](#)
Subject: [External] Cobia Draft Addendum II
Date: Friday, June 7, 2024 9:14:29 PM

Good Afternoon,

My name is Capt. Josh Rose. I am a life-long, GA resident, born and raised in Savannah. Being an avid outdoorsman there generally isn't a week I'm not on the water. While GA seems to have a weaker fishery, I have enjoyed the benefits of fishing SC's, Broad River. The cobia draft addendum is frankly confusing and complicated. I am a huge advocate for catch and release practices for every species, therefore I am a advocate for tighter regulations and harvest limits. I do not like the idea of loosening regulations in "more populated" states, as cobia are natural migrators, thus affecting weaker states as my own.

I will say I don't know the answer, I'm not so sure I like the state by state, nor by region regulations. As both do effect neighboring states, no matter what. I know currently it is state by state, and I'm not sure how effectly it's working or not. I do like how SC has closed the month of May for harvest, allowing time for successful spawning. I would like to see this be a standard practice for all states, to ensure a future healthy population. However, the state will in the end make up their own minds regardless of what's best for the fishery. I know this because the GA DNR has refused to change current regulations and limits for redfish, even though the fishery is suffering.

Thank you for your time,
Capt. Josh Rose.

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From: [Emilie Franke](#)
To: [Comments](#)
Subject: FW: [External]
Date: Monday, June 10, 2024 11:11:22 AM

From: J.R. Waits <jrwaits@fishcall.com>
Sent: Tuesday, June 4, 2024 8:48 PM
To: Emilie Franke <EFranke@ASMFC.org>
Subject: [External]

Hi Emily, I am a charter captain fishing off of Charleston. I target cobia May-July every year. I will not be able to come to the meeting in Port Royal but wanted to express my opinion on Cobia regulations. With a minimum of 36" we rarely harvest a male fish. I would say that 90+% of the cobia over 36" fork length in Charleston area are female fish. There are many more smaller males than larger egg-carrying females so why only harvest the ones carrying the eggs?

I believe the minimum size for cobia should be lowered to 32" so both males and females can be harvested. I would not be imposed to an upper limit either. I believe 42-45" would be appropriate there. I also believe one per person or 3 per boat is the best creel limit.

Capt J.R. Waits
Fish Call Charters
843-509-7337

credit card required to reserve date

- *Fishing licenses included
- *All redfish are released
- *No aerosol sunscreen even beforehand. It stains the boat.

Cancellation Policy: no charge for cancelling 7 days or more before charter, 50% of trip cost for cancelling less than 7 days to 24hrs before charter, 100% of trip cost for cancelling 24hrs or less before charter or for no shows.

Other policies here > www.fishcall.com/ratesandpolicies.html

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From: [Emilie Franke](#)
To: [Comments](#)
Subject: FW: [External] Cobia Management
Date: Monday, June 10, 2024 11:11:26 AM

-----Original Message-----

From: Captain Phil Smith <captainphil@saltydog.com>
Sent: Tuesday, June 4, 2024 5:51 PM
To: Emilie Franke <EFranke@ASMFC.org>
Subject: [External] Cobia Management

Ms Franke,

I have charter and recreationally fished all over the East and Gulf Coasts for 40 plus years.

I have seen fisheries of all types have cycles of good and bad years and have listened to the fisherman and feds talk about it.

There seems to be a disconnect on the federal and state side.

Let's look at Red Snapper first.

If you go offshore in SC it's about the only thing that bites your hook.

Big 10-20 lb Red Snapper everywhere.

You have a hard time catching Sea Bass, Grouper or Trigger of B liners due to the abundance of Red Snapper.

I can't believe that is good for the ecosystem habitat.

Blue Fin tuna are as abundant as ever in the coastal waters. Another fish that if left unchecked will devastate some other fisheries.

Redfish in SC waters are so numerous in the winter you can catch them with chicken wings, I kid you not.

Cobia is a fish that has had huge swings in numbers over the last 40 years.

People saying they were gone one year and have a banner year the next.

From what I have seen this year and talked to other fisherman they are showing an abundance of small 30-40" fish with fewer large fish.

Cobia grow quickly as you may know.

36" fish is around 2 years old.

Females reach sexual maturity around 3 years.

If you do anything raise the size limit to 40" to allow more brood stock to survive.

With all this you can't do a thing if you only selective enforce.

Few charter boats break the rules.

I know there are some bad actors but if they are caught take their privilege to fish away, recreationally and charter/commercially.

Most of the people breaking the rules are recreational anglers either intentionally or ignorantly.

Education and enforcement not over regulation will work.

Also states and feds should have game tags/stamps for fish.

If a charter or private person wants to catch a certain fish buy a tag/stamp.

Let's just make sure it goes into the resource to replenish and add habitat like artificial reefs.

Capt Phil Smith

Sent from my iPhone

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From: [Lenny Rudow](#)
To: [Comments](#)
Subject: [External] Cobia Draft Addendum II
Date: Tuesday, June 25, 2024 4:33:01 PM
Attachments: [Outlook-1488640139.png](#)

Hi - considering the uncertainty in MRIP harvest data regarding cobia, the relatively low level of harvest in states experiencing an expansion, and with overfishing not occurring, please register my public comment as supporting status quo options in all cases.

Thanks!



Lenny Rudow, Editor - p. 410/798-6503
cell 410/353-1981- Lenny@fishtalkmag.com
www.fishtalkmag.com

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July 7th, 2024

Emilie Franke
FMP Coordinator
1050 N. Highland Street
Suite 200 A-N
Arlington, Virginia 22201

RE: ASGA Comments on Draft Addendum II to Amendment 1 to the Interstate Fishery Management Plan for Atlantic Cobia

Dear Ms. Franke and Members of the Cobia Board,

The American Saltwater Guides Association thanks you for consideration of the following comments on Draft Addendum II to the Cobia IFMP. ASGA represents conservation-minded fishing guides, private anglers, and fishing-related businesses who believe in “Better Business through Conservation” and support the promotion of resource-first, science-based, and risk-averse management strategies that ensure the long-term sustainability of marine fisheries and fishing-dependent coastal communities.

For our members and the recreational angling community, cobia are an increasingly important species that, when seasonally available, offer high-quality fishing experiences. The thrill and challenge of sight-casting a 50” cobia is a huge draw for this fishery, and is the predominant method used by our membership. While some of the fishing guides we represent are highly specialized in the cobia fishery, some aren’t and target cobia when locally available and/or incidentally encounter the species. Anecdotally and according to surveys, cobia are moving northward—cobia landings and catches are shifting northwards too—likely a climate change impact. Anglers in New Jersey and New York can now reliably target cobia, and that opportunity may continue to expand to other states like Connecticut and Rhode Island. However, infrequent stock assessments, limited applied academic research, and inherent challenges in collecting recreational data leave us with huge gaps in our collective understanding of Atlantic cobia and hinders our ability to effectively and sustainably manage this stock.

The primary objective of Draft Addendum II is to consider new recreational harvest allocation strategies and address data uncertainty concerns. ASGA commends the ASMFC Coastal Pelagics Management Board for taking up this management action and earnestly working toward addressing the numerous management challenges with this fishery. For species like Atlantic cobia that are overwhelmingly recreational—96% of harvest allocated to the recreational sector—managers and scientists must grapple with immense uncertainty. The reality of discovering potentially 30-40% overestimation biases in the Federal Effort Survey portion of the Marine Recreational Informational Program further exasperates this challenge.

ASGA’s primary interest in providing input on Draft Addendum II is for ensuring the long-term sustainability of Atlantic cobia; however, the strategies in this document to address recreational data problems and managing a highly dynamic species exhibiting climate change impacts affords

potential lessons learned for applications in other fisheries and regions. In general, ASGA supports alternatives in this document that seek regulatory consistency, effectively capture Atlantic cobia's current distribution, and leverage methods to improve the PSEs of fishery data for management while not sacrificing accountability or sustainability.

As noted above, NOAA Fisheries is currently undergoing a pilot study to confirm potential overestimation biases in MRIP and is concurrently engaged in a re-envisioning process for the recreational data collection enterprise nationwide. While some may have preferred to table Draft Addendum II until new recreational catch and effort estimates are available, ASGA is supportive of progressing forward and reevaluating in the future should new estimates become available. However, ASGA was somewhat disappointed that this document fails to consider innovative or alternative tools to address the persistent recreational data issues that are perverse within Atlantic cobia. As an example, it would have been interesting to gather public input on ideas such as harvest reporting and/or how emerging fishing application technology could improve cobia management. While Virginia's mandatory reporting program was unfortunately abandoned, ASGA remains interested in the idea of leveraging angler catch reporting—voluntary or mandatory—on a coastwide bases to address the data uncertainties with cobia (pulse, rare-event, predominantly recreational by boat). In addition to gauging the public's interest on those ideas, gathering technical input on the potential utility of such data streams would have been a productive exercise.

ASGA's Preferred Alternatives for Draft Addendum II:

- Section 3.1 Recreational Allocation Framework: **Option D-Coastwide**
 - The number one issue in cobia management is recreational data—MRIP is notoriously ineffective at capturing pulse, rare-event species targeted by boat, and managing off state-by-state estimates only worsen data quality in this fishery; managing cobia on a coastwide basis would substantially reduce the data uncertainties and make far better use of the available data. Additionally, ASGA supports the coastwide approach, as we believe it best captures the dynamic nature and observed distribution shifts of this fishery.
 - The Coastwide framework also negates the complexity and questionable effectiveness of *de minimis* determinations.
- Section 3.2 Updates to State/Regional Allocations: **N/A**
 - While the selection of the Coastwide Allocation alternative appears to make this option-set unnecessary, ASGA is concerned about how new MRIP estimates may impact cobia management and the Coastwide Harvest Target. In general, ASGA supports affording ASMFC management boards with the authority to quickly respond to new information to sustainably manage fisheries, but the subject of allocation should warrant enhanced participation and input. That being said, the controversial nature of allocation actions may be similarly smoothed by reliance on a coastwide allocation/harvest target.
- Section 3.3 Data and Uncertainty with Recreational Landings Evaluations: **Option A- 3 year**
 - We understand the intention and effect of moving to a five-year harvest evaluation—it would smooth out potential MRIP variance/outliers and produce a more *realistic* harvest estimate. However, we are concerned that that length of time in-between formal evaluations may miss a new emerging trend in the fishery and trigger a management

reaction too late. Three years remains an effective timeframe to evaluate recreational harvest estimates, react if necessary, and smooth out MRIP data. Additionally, we are interested and see the merit in the confidence interval approach but would have preferred this be its own standalone option set to solicit public input. As an example, what are the Technical Committee's thoughts on this, is 95% the optimal CI? Regardless, moving from point estimates to a CI would be an improvement in how we utilize the available recreational data to sustainably manage this unique fishery.

- Section 3.4 Overage Response for Recreational Landings Evaluations: **Option A, Status Quo**
 - Even with the improvements to data quality and how that data is used, accountability must be maintained.
- Section 3.5 Timeline for Setting Commercial and Recreational Measures: **Option A, Status Quo**
 - Like other alternatives, we understand the rationale for extending specification periods/measures to avoid “management whiplash.” However, we fear five-year specifications may be too long of a timeframe. One of the other stated benefits of the five-year is its alignment with the stock assessment—that benefit may be overstated in this fishery. It is our understanding that the cobia assessment has very limited indices for the species outside of MRIP data. Therefore, we believe maintaining the three-year specifications period, while still considering assessment information when it becomes available, is the best course of action.

ASGA appreciates the CMP Board's work to address the challenges within the Atlantic cobia fishery, and we look forward to working with the ASMFC to tackle these and other challenges facing the recreational fishing community. Please reach if you have any questions or if we can be helpful in any other way.

Sincerely,



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Cobia Draft Addendum II Public Hearings
Georgia
June 5, 2024 – Townsend, GA
9 public attendees
(see enclosed sign-in sheet)

Hearing Officer: Doug Haymans (GADNR)

Additional Georgia Commissioners in Attendance: Spud Woodward

Staff: Emilie Franke (ASMFC), several GADNR staff

Public Comments

- Tim Tarver: With the uncertainty of where the population is headed, it would be better to move to regional management grouping South Carolina and Georgia together in a region (Section 3.1 Option C1/C2).
- One commenter noted they have not decided which option to support, but do note that using the combined 10-year/6-year average would incorporate the most years of data to reduce error.
- General comments noted the high harvest in Virginia. One commenter specifically noted the small impact of South Carolina and Georgia on the stock, and questioned why management in SC/GA should change when the impact is coming from Virginia.

Cobia Draft Addendum II Public Hearings
South Carolina
June 6, 2024 – Okatie, SC
13 public attendees
(see enclosed sign-in sheet)

Hearing Officer: Ben Dyar (SCDNR)

Additional South Carolina Commissioners in Attendance: Blaik Keppler (SCDNR)

Staff: Emilie Franke (ASMFC), several SCDNR staff

Public Comments

- David Harter: These management options depend on the assumption that cobia migrate north-south, and our research has not shown this north-south migration. One of the difficulties of regional or state-wide allocations is it gives fishermen false hope that if the stock is depleted, that stock would be replenished by migrating fish.
- Tony Constant: South Carolina has had high harvest years in the past. The allocation options are set up so the more you harvest, the more you get. South Carolina has a spawning closure in May, which used to be the peak harvest time. Much of South Carolina's harvest has decreased due to this spawning closure, and South Carolina should not be penalized for being conservationist. Support maintaining state-by-state allocation using the new data (Section 3.1 Option B1/B2).
- Tuck Scott: Concern that states harvesting fewer fish get less allocation, and states that are killing more fish get more allocation. Increasing the allocation where more people are killing more fish is not conservation. South Carolina has implemented a spawning closure which lowers our harvest numbers, which then lowers the allocation. Giving more fish to states with higher harvest is the opposite of conservation.

Cobia Draft Addendum II Public Hearings
North Carolina
June 11, 2024 – Manteo, NC
2 public attendees
(see enclosed sign-in sheet)

Hearing Officer: Chris Batsavage (NCDEQ)

Staff: Emilie Franke (ASMFC), two NC Marine Patrol officers

Public Comments

Due to the small size of the hearing, comments were provided by the two public attendees in a discussion format with points summarized below.

- Concern about equitability and the drastic quota cuts proposed for North Carolina, which has been the center of the cobia fishery.
- North Carolina has had some low years due to bad weather, but this year was higher year with higher numbers and different size fish.
- Don't support reducing North Carolina's quota to give fish to Virginia because at the end of the day, you are trying to protect the resource. Virginia has more people fishing, and giving them more quota will hammer the fish, and this is not the right way to do it.
- North Carolina has historically had a cobia fishery for many generations, and is the main species during the month of May. In Virginia, there are more species to target when cobia are around in June, but in North Carolina there are not many other species to target in May.
- North Carolina has a lower mortality rate because of lower water temperatures.
- People travel from out of state to North Carolina to catch cobia, and there is concern about restricting regulations.
- If regional management is chosen, consider grouping North Carolina with Virginia because they have a large amount of the quota.
- Support setting management measures for up to five years and using a five-year average for evaluations (Section 3.5 Option B; Section 3.3 Option B). Continuity and consistency is important for regulations. The five year timeline also better aligns with the data, and allows more time for the data to level out, especially if there are some years with bad weather for example.
- Northern states do not need 5% of the quota. Consider giving them less quota (1-2%).

Cobia Draft Addendum II Public Hearings
Virginia
June 12, 2024 – Fort Monroe, VA
3 public attendees
(see enclosed sign-in sheet)

Hearing Officer: Shanna Madsen (VMRC)

Staff: Emilie Franke (ASMFC), Chelsea Tuohy (ASMFC), Pat Geer (VMRC), Somers Smott (VMRC), Josh McGilly (VMRC)

Public Comments

- Thomas Delbridge: Coastwide management seems to make the most sense, but might be politically the most difficult to implement and manage since states would have to agree on the vessel limits. Keeping the state-by-state allocation framework in place would be easier to implement, but the status quo Option A would not work in Virginia, so need to use the more recent data (Section 3.1 Option B1 or B2). Support revisiting that allocation every few years as the population is moving. Doing things that match the periodicity of the stock assessments makes sense (Section 3.5 Option B).
- Alex Perez: Due to the possibility of *de minimis* status changing for states, would support re-evaluating the allocations regularly. Initially supported setting measures for three years due to how fast things are changing and to be proactive. After discussion, supports having the flexibility to set measures for up to five years (Section 3.5 Option B).

Cobia Draft Addendum II Public Hearings
South Carolina-Georgia
June 20, 2024 – Webinar
7 public attendees
(see enclosed attendance)

Hearing Officers: Ben Dyar (SCDNR), Doug Haymans (GADNR)

Other SC-GA Commissioners in Attendance: Blaik Keppler (SCDNR)

Staff: Emilie Franke (ASMFC), Chelsea Tuohy (ASMFC), several SCDNR and GADNR staff

Public Comments

- No public comments were provided.

South Carolina-Georgia Virtual Public Hearing on Cobia Draft Addendum II

June 20, 2024

Webinar Attendees

Last Name	First Name	State
Batsavage	Chris	North Carolina
Bell	Mel	South Carolina
Binz	Julie	South Carolina
Broach	Jason	South Carolina
Darden	Tanya	South Carolina
Deem	Jeff	Virginia
Dyar	Ben	South Carolina
Franco	Dawn	Georgia
Gooding	Elizabeth	South Carolina
Haymans	Doug	Georgia
Haynes	Captain Jess	South Carolina
Keppler	Blaik	South Carolina
McDonough	Chris	South Carolina
Perkinson	Matt	South Carolina
Poston	Will	Maryland
Schlick	CJ	South Carolina
Scott	Tuck	South Carolina
Shultz	Glenn	Maryland
Swann	Nurse Jane	Maryland

ASMFC Staff: Emilie Franke, Chelsea Tuohy, Kurt Blanchard

**Cobia Draft Addendum II Public Hearings
Maryland-Virginia-North Carolina
June 24, 2024 – Webinar
4 public attendees
(see enclosed attendance)**

Hearing Officers: Lynn Fegley (MDDNR), Shanna Madsen (VMRC), Chris Batsavage (NCDEQ)

Other MD-VA-NC Commissioners in Attendance: David Sikorski (MD)

Staff: Emilie Franke (ASMFC), Chelsea Tuohy (ASMFC), several MDDNR and VMRC staff

Public Comments

- No public comments were provided.

Maryland-Virginia-North Carolina Virtual Public Hearing on Cobia Draft Addendum II

June 24, 2024

Webinar Attendees

Last Name	First Name	State
Batsavage	Chris	North Carolina
Cimino	Joseph	New Jersey
Cuthrell	Billy	North Carolina
Fegley	Lynn	Maryland
Gillingham	Lewis	Virginia
Giuliano	Angela	Maryland
Madsen	Shanna	Virginia
McGilly	Joshua	Virginia
Newman	Thomas	North Carolina
Poston	Will	Maryland
Sikorski	David	Maryland
Smott	Somers	Virginia
Spike	Ali	Maryland

ASMFC Staff: Emilie Franke, Chelsea Tuohy

**Cobia Draft Addendum II Public Hearings
New York-New Jersey-Delaware
June 25, 2024 – Webinar
*1 public attendee
(see enclosed attendance)***

Hearing Officers: John Maniscalco (NYDEC), Joe Cimino (NJDEP), John Clark (DNREC)

Other NY-NJ-DE Commissioners in Attendance: Marty Gary (NY)

Staff: Emilie Franke (ASMFC), Tracey Bauer (ASMFC), several NYDEC staff

Public Comments

- No public comments were provided.

New York-New Jersey-Delaware Virtual Public Hearing on Cobia Draft Addendum II

June 25, 2024

Webinar Attendees

Last Name	First Name	State
Batsavage	Chris	North Carolina
Cimino	Joseph	New Jersey
Clark	John	Delaware
Gary	Marty	New York
Hornstein	Jesse	New York
Maniscalco	John	New York
McMenamin	Kevin	Maryland
Morgan	Renee	New York
Schuller	Zachary	New York

ASMFC Staff: Emilie Franke, Tracey Bauer