



Mackerel, Squid, and Butterfish Committee Meeting Summary

February 14, 2022

Webinar

The Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council's (Council) Mackerel, Squid, and Butterfish (MSB) Committee met on February 14, 2022 from 11:30 am to 1:30 pm. The purpose of this meeting was to review recent public input on Atlantic Mackerel rebuilding and continue development of associated management measures.

MSB Committee Attendees: Peter Hughes (Chair), Sara Winslow, Pat Geer, Joe Cimino, Michelle Duval, Dan Farnham, Sonny Gwin, LCDR Matt Kahley, Kris Kuhn, Adam Nowalsky, Emily Gilbert, Melanie Griffin, and Eric Reid.

Other Attendees: John Almeida, Renee Zobel, Raymond Kane, Wes Townsend, Angela Forristall, Becky Heuss, Brad Schondelmeier, Carly Bari, Deirdre Boelke, Greg DiDomenico, Jason Didden, Jeff Kaelin, Katie Almeida, Kelly Whitmore, Mary Beth Tooley, Megan Ware, Meghan Lapp, Mike Luisi, Mike Waine, Peter Fallon, Peter Kaizer, Purcie Bennett-Nickerson, Shelley Spedden, Tom Smith, Will Poston, and Zack Greenberg.

Jason Didden of Council staff reviewed the current Atlantic mackerel rebuilding options, public input from two January 2022 informational webinars, and recreational catch data. Following a question and answer session the Committee addressed several motions, discussed below:

1. I move to task staff to develop a range of recreational Atlantic mackerel trip limit options (e.g., 10-40 fish).

Griffin/Duval, motion passed committee without objections.

The Committee indicated that it intended staff to have flexibility to suggest a range of trip/bag limits, including options for different limits for the private/charter/party components of the recreational fishery as may be suggested by the available data. Staff will also consider options to account for the apparent digit recall bias in the recreational data (reported catch is focused on multiples of 5 or 10).

2. I move to task staff to (or request Council request GARFO) look at compliance gaps towards a guidance document on Atlantic mackerel permitting and reporting requirements.

Griffin/Duval, motion passed committee without objections.

Given the current regulations and potential permitting overlap, there is some uncertainty about when NMFS-GARFO MSB permits are required for possessing Atlantic mackerel in the EEZ, and what needs to be reported, especially for vessels targeting Tuna. Council staff will coordinate a response to this motion with NMFS-GARFO staff.

3. I move that recreational seasonal closures be considered but rejected.

Griffin/Duval

I move to postpone this motion until the March Committee Meeting.

Griffin/Duval, motion passed committee without objections.

Given the potential economic impact from seasonal closures and difficulty aligning with state measures, the Committee considered recommending moving seasonal closures to the “considered but rejected” section of the action. The Committee will reconsider this issue once more information on potential trip/bag limits can be reviewed.