

AMENDMENT #2 TO THE ATLANTIC MACKEREL FISHERY MANAGEMENT PLAN

November 1980

Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council

in cooperation with the

National Marine Fisheries Service

Draft adopted by MAFMC: 15 October 1980  
Final adopted by MAFMC: 14 November 1980  
Final approved by NOAA: 29 January 1981

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## II. SUMMARY

The Fishery Management Plan for Atlantic Mackerel (Plan) was approved by the Assistant Administrator for Fisheries, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration on 3 July 1979 for fishing year 1979-1980 (1 April 1979 - 31 March 1980). Amendment #1, extending the Plan through fishing year 1980-1981 was approved by the Assistant Administrator for Fisheries on 17 March 1980. The purpose of Amendment #2 is to extend the Plan beyond the end of fishing year 1980-1981. The management unit for this Plan is all Atlantic mackerel under US jurisdiction. The objectives of the Plan are:

- (1) Provide opportunity for increased domestic recreational and commercial catch.
- (2) Maximize the contribution of recreational fishing for Atlantic mackerel to the national economy.
- (3) Maintain the spawning stock size of Atlantic mackerel at or above its size in 1978.
- (4) Achieve efficiency in harvesting and use.
- (5) Minimize costs to taxpayers of development, research, management, and enforcement in achieving these objectives.

The following management measures are included in the Plan, as amended by Amendment #1:

- (1) Restriction of catches as follows: Optimum Yield = 30,000 mt, Domestic Annual Harvest = 20,000 mt, Domestic Annual Processing = 5,000 mt, Non-Processed Fish = 15,000 mt, Total Allowable Level of Foreign Fishing = 4,000 mt, and Reserve = 6,000 mt. The Total Allowable Level of Foreign Fishing is intended to provide only for incidental foreign catches of mackerel. At such time as a foreign nation takes its allocation of Atlantic mackerel, it will be required to cease fishing operations that would lead to an additional catch of Atlantic mackerel.
- (2) All vessels fishing commercially for Atlantic mackerel, either directly or as a by-catch from other fisheries, must be registered. This provision also applies to all vessels for hire for fishing recreationally directly or indirectly for mackerel.
- (3) Weekly reports on mackerel catches must be filed by US and foreign fishermen. US dealers and processors must submit weekly reports on any transactions involving mackerel.
- (4) Foreign fishing is regulated by part 611, Title 50, Code of Federal Regulations.

The recommended alternative for Amendment #2 is to continue the Plan with no changes for up to one year. The annual values would be: Optimum Yield = 30,000 mt, Domestic Annual Harvest = 20,000 mt, Domestic Annual Processing = 5,000 mt, Non-Processed Fish = 15,000 mt, Total Allowable Level of Foreign Fishing = 4,000 mt, and Reserve = 6,000 mt.

The only other alternative considered is to take no action at this time. This alternative would mean that the Plan would lapse at the end of fishing year 1980-1981 unless extended by a Secretarial Amendment or replaced by a Preliminary Fishery Management Plan, which would regulate only the foreign fishery.

The alternatives are discussed in Section XII of Amendment #2.

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#### IV. INTRODUCTION

Amendment #2 to the Atlantic Mackerel Fishery Management Plan is designed to extend the Plan for up to one year beyond the end of fishing year 1980-1981 (31 March 1981) with no changes to Optimum Yield and quotas. The basic data about the fishery have not changed since Amendment #1 was adopted by the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council.

The alternatives for Amendment #2 are to take no action or to extend the Plan in its current form. The Council is preparing a major amendment to this Plan along with the Butterfish and Squid Fishery Management Plans that would merge those Plans and make major changes in the management regimes. However, the National Marine Fisheries Service has advised the Council that the major amendment cannot be reviewed and approved prior to the end of fishing year 1980-1981 (31 March 1981). Given these circumstances, no action by the Council would likely lead to a Secretarial Amendment to the Atlantic Mackerel Fishery Management Plan. However, the Council has chosen the alternative of extending the Plan for up to one year itself to provide time for the review and approval of the major amendment.

#### V. DESCRIPTION OF STOCKS

The most recent stock assessment contains no date which would warrant any changes to this section

#### VI. DESCRIPTION OF HABITAT

No data are available which would necessitate a change to this section.

#### VII. FISHERY MANAGEMENT JURISDICTION, LAWS, AND POLICIES

No data are available which would necessitate a change to this section.

#### VIII. DESCRIPTION OF FISHING ACTIVITIES

The latest landings data are shown in Table 1. No other data are available which would necessitate a change to this section.

#### IX. DESCRIPTION OF ECONOMIC CHARACTERISTICS OF THE FISHERY

No data are available which would necessitate a change to this section.

#### X. DESCRIPTION OF BUSINESSES, MARKETS, AND ORGANIZATIONS ASSOCIATED WITH THE FISHERY

No data are available which would necessitate a change to this section.

#### XI. DESCRIPTION OF SOCIAL AND CULTURAL FRAMEWORK OF DOMESTIC FISHERMEN AND THEIR COMMUNITIES

No data are available which would necessitate a change to this section.

Table 1. Reported US Commercial, Estimated US Recreational, and Reported Foreign Catches of Squid, Atlantic Mackerel, and Butterfish From The Northwest Atlantic, 1965 - 1979  
(in metric tons)

Year	Reported US Commercial Catch <sup>a</sup>		Estimated US Recreational Catch <sup>b</sup>		Reported Foreign Catch In US Waters <sup>c</sup>		Reported Foreign Catch <sup>d</sup> Outside Of FCZ	
	Squid	Butterfish	Squid	Butterfish	Squid	Butterfish	Squid	Butterfish
1965	1,163	3,111	unk	unk	177	749	8,000	-
1966	1,201	2,689	unk	unk	344	3,865	5,000	-
1967	1,744	1,970	unk	unk	1,415	2,316	7,000	-
1968	1,687	1,633	unk	unk	4,920	5,437	98	-
1969	1,479	2,256	unk	unk	9,618	15,063	-	15
1970	1,050	1,791	unk	unk	19,150	9,028	1,385	13
1971	1,238	1,593	unk	unk	17,601	6,283	8,906	3
1972	1,322	744	unk	unk	46,178	5,171	1,868	14
1973	1,777	1,539	unk	unk	55,133	17,897	9,877	-
1974	2,462	1,812	unk	unk	53,056	10,337	437	3
1975	1,987	2,031	unk	unk	49,999	9,069	17,757	119
1976	3,847	1,400	unk	unk	46,389	10,353	41,764	73
1977	2,632	1,317	unk	unk	39,357	3,205	80,476	-
1978 <sup>f</sup>	1,692	3,669	unk	unk	26,666	1,324	94,343	-
1979 <sup>f</sup>	5,989	2,792	unk	unk	29,609	844	111,005	-
Ave.	2,085	2,023	unk	unk	26,641	6,729	25,861	16

(a) Small amounts of the US commercial catch of these species may have come from outside of US waters in some years.

(b) From angler surveys. Although it is known that squid and butterfish are occasionally taken by recreational fishermen, no estimates of these catches are available.

(c) Catches by foreign nations (including Canada) in ICNAF Subarea 5 and Statistical Area 6 for 1965-1977. 1978 and 1979 estimates from FCMA foreign fishing quota reports.

(d) ICNAF Subareas 1 - 4. Includes Canada. Almost all 'squid' is Illex.

(e) Only butterfish catches reported to ICNAF. See 1980 butterfish stock assessment for estimated total foreign catches.

(f) Preliminary estimates.

## XII. DETERMINATION OF OPTIMUM YIELD

XII-1. Specific Management Objectives. The Mid-Atlantic Council adopted the following objectives for this Plan:

- (1) Provide opportunity for increased domestic recreational and commercial catch.
- (2) Maximize the contribution of recreational fishing for Atlantic mackerel to the national economy.
- (3) Maintain the spawning stock size of Atlantic mackerel at or above its size in 1978.
- (4) Achieve efficiency in harvesting and use.
- (5) Minimize costs to taxpayers of development, research, management, and enforcement in achieving these objectives.

XII-2. Description of Alternatives and XII-3. Analysis of Beneficial And Adverse Impacts Of Potential Management Options. Alternatives for Amendment #2 are:

(1) Take No Action At This Time - This alternative would mean that the Plan would lapse at the end of fishing year 1980-1981 unless extended by a Secretarial Amendment. If there were no Secretarial Amendment, the National Marine Fisheries Service would be required to prepare a Preliminary Fishery Management Plan for this fishery.

A Preliminary Fishery Management Plan would annually set Optimum Yield and estimate US capacity and, thus, Total Allowable Level of Foreign Fishing. A Preliminary Fishery Management Plan regulates foreign, but not domestic, harvesting.

One effect of reversion to Preliminary Fishery Management Plan management would be that data on the domestic harvesting and processing industries that would be collected as a result of recordkeeping provisions included in the Plan could not be collected, or could not be collected as effectively. This would seriously limit assessments of the scope and development of the US industry, and would eliminate other fishery and biological information needed to assess Optimum Yield, US harvesting and processing capacity, condition of the stock, etc.

(2) Continue The Fishery Management Plan With No Changes - Under this alternative, the annual values of Optimum Yield, Domestic Annual Harvest, Domestic Annual Processing, Non-Processed Fish, Total Allowable Level of Foreign Fishing, and Reserve would remain the same as those specified in Amendment #1 (30,000 mt, 20,000 mt, 5,000 mt, 15,000 mt, 4,000 mt, and 6,000 mt, respectively). The stock currently appears able to sustain harvests of the magnitude proposed. The estimates of Domestic Annual Harvest and Domestic Annual Processing were reviewed and are considered valid for fishing year 1981-1982.

XII-4. Tradeoffs Between The Beneficial And Adverse Impacts Of The Preferred Management Option. Alternative 2 has been adopted as the preferred management option. The Council believes that it should not rely on the Secretary of Commerce to prepare an Amendment. The Plan and Amendment #1, as prepared by the Council, have been subjected to an extensive public review process approved by the Advisory and Scientific and Statistical Committees, as well as the Council, acting with their broad understanding of public needs and desires. It is unlikely any Secretarial amendment would contain as complete a public review process and changes in the plan would be probable. The Council is developing a major Amendment to this Plan, along with major Amendments to the Squid and Butterfish Fishery Management Plans, to merge all three Plans and more closely coordinate the management regimes for the species

involved. The major Amendment is based on policies that build upon the policies in the plans as they currently exist. The Council is proceeding with this major Amendment but has been advised by the National Marine Fisheries Service that it cannot be reviewed in time for it to be implemented prior to the end of fishing year 1980-1981 (31 March 1981). It is, however, possible that the major Amendment could be completed and reviewed during fishing year 1981-1982. Therefore, the Council considers a continuation of the policies set forth in the current plan necessary until such time as the major Amendment is ready for implementation. A Secretarial Amendment is, therefore, not an acceptable alternative. Given the problems associated with a Preliminary Fishery Management Plan (elimination of regulation of the US fishery and reporting requirements), Amendment by the Council seems to be the only reasonable alternative.

Alternative 2 would have no more impact on foreign nations than the Amendment #1 since the initial Total Allowable Level of Foreign Fishing would continue at 4,000 mt and the reserve provision of the Amendment #1 would be continued.

XII-5. Specification Of Optimum Yield. No changes are required to this section as a result of Amendment #2 except to extend for fishing year 1981-1982 the specification of Optimum Yield and the estimates of Domestic Annual Harvest, Domestic Annual Processing, Non-Processed Fish, and Total Allowable Level of Foreign Fishing established in Amendment #1. Those are:

Optimum Yield	30,000 metric tons
Domestic Annual Harvest	20,000
Domestic Annual Processing	5,000
Non-Processed Fish*	15,000
Total Allowable Level of Foreign Fishing	4,000
Reserve	6,000

\* Estimated Atlantic mackerel catch by US marine anglers.

### XIII. MEASURES, REQUIREMENTS, CONDITIONS, OR RESTRICTIONS PROPOSED TO ATTAIN MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES

XIII-1. Permits and Fees. No changes are required as a result of Amendment #2.

XIII-2. Time and Area Restrictions. No changes are required as a result of Amendment #2.

XIII-3. Catch Limitations. The fishing year for Atlantic mackerel is the twelve (12) month period beginning 1 April.

The initial Total Allowable Level of Foreign Fishing for Atlantic mackerel for fishing year 1981-1982 is 4,000 mt.

The initial domestic quota for Atlantic mackerel for fishing year 1981-1982 is 20,000 mt. The Reserve for Atlantic mackerel for fishing year 1981-1982 is 6,000 mt.

No other changes are required to this section as a result of Amendment #2.

XIII-4. Types of Gear. No changes are required as a result of Amendment #2.

XIII-5. Incidental Catch. No changes are required as a result of Amendment #2.

XIII-6. Restrictions. No changes are required as a result of Amendment #2.

XIII-7. Habitat Preservation, Protection and Restoration. No changes are required

as a result of Amendment #2.

XIII-8. Development of Fishery Resources. No changes are required as a result of Amendment #2.

XIII-9. Management Costs and Revenues. It is expected that the costs of implementing the recommended option in Amendment #2 should be essentially the same as the costs of implementing Amendment #1 to the Fishery Management Plan.

XIV. SPECIFICATIONS AND SOURCES OF PERTINENT FISHERY DATA

No changes are required by Amendment #2.

XV. RELATIONSHIP OF THE RECOMMENDED MEASURES TO EXISTING APPLICABLE LAWS AND POLICIES

No changes are required as a result of Amendment #2.

XVI. COUNCIL REVIEW AND MONITORING OF THE PLAN

No changes are required as a result of Amendment #2.

XVII. REFERENCES

All requests for information upon which this Fishery Management Plan has been based should be directed to the offices of the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council.

Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council. 1979. Final environmental impact statement/fishery management plan for the Atlantic mackerel fishery of the northwest Atlantic Ocean.

Proposed regulations. 13 Sept. 1979. FR 44(179): 53196-53258.

Final regulations. 21 Feb. 1980. FR 45(36): 11497-11502.

Amendment #1, Emergency Regulations. 1 Apr. 1980. FR 45(64): 21256-21259.

Amendment #1, Approval/Partial disapproval; proposed regulations. 3 Apr. 1980. FR 45(66): 22144-22177.

Amendment #1 final regulations. 3 July 1980. FR 45(130): 45291-45296.