



Illustration Courtesy ASMFC

2021 Recreational Cobia Regulations Changes

Background

- New Jersey is a *de minimis* participant in the recreational cobia fishery
 - Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (ASMFC) manages cobia fisheries coastwide
- Cobia Fishery Management Plan (FMP) provides that *de minimis* states' regulations are set by either:
 - a) Matching nearest non-*de minimis* state (bag, size, vessel, season)
 - NJ currently (2020) matches Virginia
 - b) Adopting *de minimis* option provided by FMP
- Non-*de minimis* states must review their regulations every 3 years to evaluate effectiveness for meeting target harvest levels



New Regulations in Virginia

- New recreational allocations to VA (via [FMP Addendum I](#)) = 30,302 fish
- 3-Year Review (2017 – 2019) found annual harvest = 50,354 fish
- Must reduce annual harvest by 40%
- Several methodologies/options discussed
- Shortened season and reduced vessel limit were favored
 - Also elected for gaffing prohibition
 - If NJ matches VA for 2021, not required to prohibit gaffing



Summary

CURRENT (2020)

NJ Recreational Cobia Regulations	
Bag Limit	1 fish
Vessel Limit	3 fish
Size	Minimum 40" TL
Season	June 1 – Sept. 30

OPTIONS FOR 2021

Match VA Regulations	
Bag Limit	1 fish
Vessel Limit	2 fish
Size	Minimum 40", 1 fish > 50" TL
Season	June 15 – Sept. 15

OR

FMP <i>De Minimis</i> Option	
Bag/Vessel Limit	1 fish
Size	Minimum 37" TL
No Seasonal Restrictions	

