

The Full Council Session of the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council convened at the Westin Jekyll Island, Jekyll Island, Georgia, Friday morning, March 9, 2018, and was called to order by Chairman Charlie Phillips.

MR. PHILLIPS: We are going to call the Full Council to order. The first order of business is Approval of the Agenda. Is there any changes to the agenda? Any objection to the agenda? Seeing none, the agenda passes. The next order of business is the minutes. Are there any changes to the minutes? Any objection to the minutes? Seeing none, the minutes pass. I think we have our voice identification, and so we'll start down there with Zack.

MR. BOWEN: Good morning.

MR. HAYMANS: Doug Haymans.

MS. BURGESS: Erika Burgess.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Jessica McCawley, from the great State of Florida.

MR. BREWER: Chester Brewer.

MR. HARTIG: Ben Hartig.

MR. CONKLIN: Chris Conklin.

MR. BELL: Mel Bell.

MR. WAUGH: Gregg Waugh.

MR. PHILLIPS: Charlie Phillips.

MR. BROWN: Mark Brown.

DR. DUVAL: Michelle Duval, from the great State of North Carolina.

MS. BECKWITH: Anna Beckwith, from the greater State of North Carolina.

MR. GRINER: Tim Griner.

MS. BOSARGE: Leann Bosarge, Gulf Council.

DR. WILLIAMS: Erik Williams.

DR. CRABTREE: Roy Crabtree, United States of America.

DR. MCGOVERN: Jack McGovern.

MS. SMIT-BRUNELLO: Monica Smit-Brunello, NOAA General Counsel, a state of mind.

LCDR BENNETT: Lieutenant Commander Patricia Bennett, U.S. Coast Guard.

MR. PHILLIPS: Thank you, all. We want to welcome Leann being here as our Gulf liaison. Tony is gone, and, Erik Williams, we appreciate you being here, and, again, we're looking forward to those assessments fast and furious. Lieutenant Commander Bennett, we especially thank you for being here. I think we have something for you, Lieutenant Commander, and so come on up.

(Whereupon, a presentation was made to Lieutenant Commander Bennett.)

MR. BELL: I was just going to recognize Kevin Mitchell with NOAA OLE, who has been here the whole time, and he's been a great resource with lots of information, and it's good to have him.

MR. PHILLIPS: I totally agree. You just beat me to the punch, because I was fixing to do that second, and he told me that he trained Ben, who is our new agent down in Georgia. We've never had one before, and so we feel special, and he did a really good job training Ben, but we thank you for being here, and we'll be calling and asking you questions on how to get there from here on some of these things, and so you can help keep us between the ditches. Thanks.

While we are thanking people, we want to thank Doug for our very well-run social on Monday night and then Michelle. Since this is your last day, again, we want to thank you, and, if any of the council members or staff want to have a quick word, as a parting goodbye for the queen. It's going to be a change. It's definitely going to be a change around here. Our Gulf liaison, Leann, I am going to let you give your liaison report, if you like, since you've already given most of it, but you can fine-tune it, and, that way, you can get your plane.

MS. BOSARGE: It won't take long. You pretty much have already covered, in your meeting, most of the amendments that might want to be highlighted for you, and so I was just going to tell you maybe a little bit about our meeting of EFPs that we had at our last meeting, and that's what I call it. It was more of an EFP meeting than a council meeting, and we had eight, I think.

We did the five state EFPs, and that was to examine letting the states manage out to 200 miles for red snapper, and so we don't know where that is going to land yet, but we gave a lot of good feedback, after like five years of a state management plan that we've been working on or something like that, and so, if you ever go down that road, I suggest you just skip the state management plan and go to the EFP first.

Then the other EFP that we had, we had three EFPs, actually, for lionfish, and so that was kind of interesting. We, obviously, are seeing a lot of lionfish over in the Gulf, and it's becoming a problem. At this point, we're even catching them on the shrimp boats, in quantities enough to keep and land, and then I was at a conference a couple of weeks ago, and I saw a presentation by one of the oil companies, and this is pretty much the only thing I brought back from that conference, is this one little tidbit of information, but they send their ROVs down to do like maintenance inspections on the legs of the structure and on the riser pipe and everything, and they're starting to see lionfish at about 2,000 feet.

He said larval lionfish, and I don't know, and he was an oilman, and so I'm not sure, but then the last EFP that we had was on aquaculture, and I told you a little bit about that yesterday, and so that's for finfish in a net pen in federal waters of the Gulf of Mexico, and we had some questions,

and they're going to come back again in April, and so maybe Dale will be able to give you an update in June on how that went, and that's pretty much the highlights from the Gulf. Thanks for having me, and I absolutely love coming to see you all. I am not going to be Chair after August, and so I won't get to see you too much more, but I love it. Thanks.

MR. PHILLIPS: You're a pleasure to have here, and thank you. I think I might have covered my list, but, then again, I am notorious for forgetting stuff, and so I'm going to turn it over to Gregg, unless he's got something else to remind me to do.

MR. WAUGH: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. There is just a short Executive Director's Report. I am not going to go through that. We have covered a lot of that material already, and we did include -- This is something the Mid-Atlantic has done in the past, is included the correspondence in between council meetings, and so I did that, so you all can see what correspondence has gone out, and that's it. I will be glad to answer any questions, if you all have any, but keeping it short. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

MR. PHILLIPS: Okay, and I think John is going to give us our Report on Economic Impact of Fisheries.

MR. HADLEY: This is just a very brief update. If you remember, I believe it was at the September meeting, I presented some preliminary results from the economic impact report that we're putting together, and we got some very good feedback from the Socioeconomic Panel on that report, and so we're working to incorporate some of those edits and suggestions, and hopefully we'll have something for you to see at the next meeting, and that's all I have.

MR. PHILLIPS: Thanks, John. Amber, I think you're up next with Update on Electronic Reporting.

MS. VON HARTEN: I just wanted to give you guys an update. We've been kind of doing updates on the outreach for the for-hire electronic reporting, and we've been really busy this first quarter of the year. We have had trainings in North Carolina, Florida, and one small session back in Georgia, just a couple of weeks ago, and I just wanted to kind of give you an update on some of the feedback we're getting.

Michelle, are you going to speak to some of this, too? Do you want me to skip over North Carolina? Okay. We had training in January up there, in Oak Island, Morehead City, and Hatteras. We got stuck in Morehead during that snow event, and we had to cancel one of our trainings, but we came back the next week and had a good turnout there. I think we had about forty participants throughout the whole three trainings.

Just, in general, the captains seem to like eTRIPS/mobile. They thought it was pretty easy, and they seemed pretty positive about the actual tool, but, of course, there were lots of questions raised. They had issues with some of the economic questions, but they gave us some feedback about maybe some ways to tweak that, in terms of asking more in-depth questions at a less-frequent time period, and so, instead of asking for every trip what the fuel use was, the cost of the fuel, the charter fee and everything like that, maybe get more in-depth questions on a less-frequent time period.

There was lots of confusion about Mid-Atlantic permits and understanding even the permits they were supposed to have, and so bluefish was definitely the permit in question. Some folks didn't know that they had to have that permit to begin with, and then the fact that, starting in about four days, they're going to have to report to the Mid-Atlantic, because, as it stands now, the South Atlantic is going to yield to GARFO, in terms of the more stringent requirements. There is definitely going to be some need for some education about that.

I did not include this in the briefing book, and I apologize, but I thought about it yesterday, and let me pull this up really quick. Kathleen, as you know, Kathleen Howington, is our staff person who is coordinating all of this, and she has been great, in terms of responding to needs of captains, to kind of help understand what they're needing, and so she worked on this great graphic that kind of explains how to determine which region you might need to report to, what permits exist in each region, and all the different current things that are happening with electronic reporting.

We worked with GARFO folks and with SERO folks to get feedback on this, and this probably will be an ever-changing kind of graphic, but fishermen have really found this really useful, to kind of understand what they need, and then she's working on a separate one that is going to just specifically address each of the permits and what permits you need to have to fish for which species. I just wanted to share that with you, and, if it hasn't been posted to our website, it will be.

Down in Florida, we had three trainings, the week of February 20. We had about twenty-five participants, and it was the same kind of thing. There was overall support and comfort for using the tool, and everyone was really happy to hear that there is going to be a smartphone app in place for eTRIPS/mobile by August. That is a new development that, if that's approved as a tool to be used, that that will be available on a smartphone, because lots of folks were concerned about having to have a tablet and take those out on the water to report.

They did have some questions about some of the data fields, and it was mostly concern about the impact of the data on them and how it would be used. Of course, we started to run into some dually-permitted captains that had both the Gulf and the South Atlantic permits, and they did indicate, because of some of the requirements that are being considered for the Gulf, that they probably would get rid of their Gulf permits, mainly the hail-in and hail-out and the GPS affixed device to their boats. They did not like that, and they did express concern about that and possibly getting rid of their Gulf permits, because of that.

Again, they didn't like the socioeconomic questions, and they were really concerned about the amount of time that it will take to report, but, as we walked them through it and showed them how to set up favorites and that they could really tailor saving their favorites to get a trip set up, eventually they understood that it wouldn't take as much time, once they got used to reporting.

There was also a lot of mistrust about what the council was trying to do with this. This stemmed from a lot of prior management interactions with the council, mainly red snapper. Red snapper came up in most of the meetings, and, also, captains didn't realize that they were going to not only have to report their species caught in federal waters, but also all trips, and so even trips that are just in state waters. They definitely did not like that, because the permit is associated with the vessel and not a captain.

Future trainings, we're hoping to get down to south Florida, maybe in June, maybe the week before the council meeting. We're still trying to work that out with Jessica and Erika, and maybe even hosting one during the council meeting, in Fort Lauderdale, one evening, if that might be appropriate, since we'll be in Fort Lauderdale, and so we're still planning that, but we'll let you know.

Then we had one training in Georgia. We had a captain that came to one of our first runs with trainings from Sea Island, and that's the island that is on St. Simons. It's a very exclusive, closed, gated community, and they have a whole host of captains that operate out of their marina, and their situation is pretty unique and different, in that they run three to four, up to five, charters a day. They're just very short, one-and-a-half-to-two-hour, charters. Their main captain there, who actually is the permit holder for all the vessels, was really concerned about getting their captains up to speed on exactly what was going to be required of them and how unique their situation was, in terms of how they operate. Again, their concern was about the amount of time to report, because they are running these multiple two-hour trips a day.

They also had some suggestions for improving eTRIPS function, in terms of auto-populating some of the questions, to help save on setting up a trip, and also setting up default trips that kind of are tailored to their types of trips that they are making. Fran Karp and John Levesque with Harbor Lights have been at all of these trainings, which has been so critical in the success of this, because we started out the training with just some education about how we got to where we are in the amendment and the opportunity, when the proposed rule comes out, to provide additional comment and then have hands-on training sessions with the tablets, and so that's been really helpful.

Kathleen will continue to do webinars, and there is one on March 12 and 26 coming up. If you haven't listened in and heard the presentation, I encourage you to do that. It's pretty helpful, and we're planning another round to go back in South Carolina the last week in March, and I've been working with Amy Dukes on setting those up, and then hopefully another round in Georgia the first week of April, in Brunswick and Savannah.

I think that's about it, but, overall, the trainings have been going really well. The captains have been pretty receptive to the trainings and hearing the information and really giving us good feedback on ways to improve how this might roll out.

MR. PHILLIPS: Thanks, Amber. Are there any questions for Amber?

DR. DUVAL: Not a question, but maybe just to add a little bit more context, I think, from some of the feedback we got in North Carolina. I was really pleased with the turnout that we had, and I think particularly even our Morehead City meeting, where we were coming up against the snowstorm that kind of kept getting pushed back, but we still -- We had to make a call on whether or not to continue to hold that training, and I'm glad we did, because we really had a great turnout.

We had two of our captains who had participated in the pilot show up there and provide feedback on their experience with the tool and things that they had wanted to see changed. There were questions raised about if folks have Mid-Atlantic permits, and there were questions raised about the socioeconomic information that was being requested, and I think one of the pieces of feedback that we got from the southern captains was they felt like you're not going to be able to accurately

account for what the economic impact of a trip is with the types of information that are being requested in the current format of eTRIPS/mobile.

Their suggestion was to subsample a set of permit holders, like more intensively do so, and I think the suggestion that was brought forward was, on a weekly basis, you would have a random selection of captains that would be required to fill out their average weekly expenses, not only things like fuel and ice and bait and trip costs, but also trying to get at all of those other expenses that don't come out in this, like any boat payments that you have, your insurance, the repairs, crew costs and things like that, because I think they felt like, if you're just asking for our ice, bait, and fuel, or the charter costs, you're not -- It doesn't give you a sense of what are the actual expenses of running a charter business, and I tend to agree with them.

I am saying this because I want folks to be very sensitive to what we're asking people to do and that there might be a better way to do it, where we would actually get information that is more useful, and so I think that was great feedback that we got. Some of the other feedback that we got, in terms of the location information, and this came more from the northern guys in Hatteras, was they were concerned about the specificity of the location information, I think particularly up there because there is not a lot of bottom that isn't known.

It's like everybody pretty much knows that these are the spots that you go to, and they were very concerned about having to record that in a very specific manner, and the concern was amplified by the fact that they felt like, if this is the level of specificity, people are just going to -- They're not going to give you accurate information and they're going to lie about it, and so that was one of the concerns that they brought forward.

Overall, I think people were just really grateful that we were expending this type of effort to come out to them, and so hats off to Kathleen and Amber and Cameron, who were there for all of these meetings. Those guys did a great job, and so I'm only sorry that we couldn't schedule another round for North Carolina before I left, but, if it's scheduled later in the fall, I'm sure Anna is going to be traveling to those meetings, and I think it will be really helpful for her to be there, and so I just wanted to add a little bit to what we got from North Carolina. Thank you.

MR. PHILLIPS: Thanks, Michelle. Anything else for Amber?

MR. BROWN: I would like to mention that I met with Andrew Peterson this morning, and he developed the vessel program for South Carolina, for our charter boats, and the Southeast Regional Headboat is going to switch to vessel, which is what we're using, so everything is more uniform. It will be on the same platform, and you will be able to switch back and forth between whether you're a state charter, fishing in state waters, or an offshore headboat or charter boat.

I looked at the chart that he's got, that he put out, that will be associated with this, and it's really nice. It's got a real nice reference to it, where you can kind of scroll around on there, and you will see your lat/long and the grids and everything and reference points, and it just looks really good, and I'm excited about that.

MR. PHILLIPS: Thanks, Mark. Anything else? Ben.

MR. HARTIG: Michelle, to your point about getting an overall cost yearly for for-hire vessels, the commercial vessels that fill out the economic information are required, and I don't know if they all are, but I know, every time that I had to do the economic information, that I had to fill out a yearly recap of all those costs that you mentioned, and that may be a way to get at that.

MS. VON HARTEN: I just want to really thank our state partners. We could not have pulled off these trainings without their help, Kathy Knowlton in Georgia and Amy Dukes and her team in South Carolina and Michelle in North Carolina, because having that personal contact with the state folks has really helped captains show up, get them to show up, and so I just wanted to thank them, again, for all of their work to help us find meeting locations and get the word out to their captains.

MR. PHILLIPS: Thanks, Amber. Anything else? Seeing none, I think the next thing on our agenda is going to our SERO presentations, and we've got Nick Farmer with the Southeast For-Hire Integrated Electronic Reporting, unless we've got something else. He is not here yet, or on the phone yet, and so we'll let -- I have got Rick DeVictor with the Status of the For-Hire Amendment.

MR. DEVICTOR: Good morning, and thank you, Mr. Chairman. We talked about this earlier in the week, at length, and we have sent the NOA and the proposed rule package up to Headquarters, and hopefully we'll hear soon about the publication of those in the Federal Register, and then there will be comment periods, sixty days on the NOA and thirty days on the proposed rule.

MR. PHILLIPS: You also have the Status of Commercial Catches.

MR. DEVICTOR: Okay, and, again, we covered most of them in Snapper Grouper and Mackerel Cobia, and I think the ones that are remaining are dolphin and wahoo, perhaps. Dolphin, again, the season is early, and these are January 1 start dates. The landings through February 26 for dolphin were 5,518, and that ACL is over 1.5 million pounds. Then, for wahoo, we are currently at 8 percent of the ACL so far this year. 5,283 pounds has been landed commercially of wahoo. Both of these are tracking to what was landed last year at this time, and so no big surprises with dolphin and wahoo.

MR. PHILLIPS: All right. Is there any questions for Rick? Seeing none, Rick, thank you for a very efficient report. Next, I guess we'll move on to our Protected Resources Update and Mary Wunderlich.

MS. WUNDERLICH: Good morning. I am going to provide the updates since the last meeting that we've had. As you see the handout, the item is listed as whether it is a new item or it's something that has been updated or there is no change from the last meeting. We have had a couple of a new listings, with the giant manta ray being listed on January 22 of this year. We issued the final rule to list giant manta ray as threatened under the ESA effective on February 21. The oceanic whitetip shark was listed on January 30, and it was also listed as threatened, effective March 1.

We had a leatherback sea turtle petition. In September of 2017, NOAA and the Fish and Wildlife Service received a petition to identify a Northwest Atlantic Distinct Population Segment of leatherback sea turtles and to list that DPS as threatened, and we issued a positive ninety-day finding in December, indicating that there was sufficient information to warrant the twelve-month status review. We are actually going to attempt to complete status review for leatherbacks

worldwide, and not just the Northwest Atlantic, to determine if there are discrete and significant populations that should be listed as DPSs. The team had their kick-off meeting in early February.

There has been no change on the shrimp TED rule. That is still under OMB review. We have a number of ongoing Section 7-related action for these new listings, and, in particular, we're looking at dolphin wahoo, spiny lobster, CMP, Gulf reef fish, and we've been evaluating data on all the newly-listed species and how they might be affected by the fisheries.

The Marine Mammal Protection Act updates and news, there has been continuing investigations into the North Atlantic right whale unusual mortality event. The stranding rate for this year, one whale has been stranded in the U.S., and so the total mortalities of right whales were eighteen confirmed dead stranded whales, twelve in Canada and six in the U.S. I have provided the link to the website for the UME for that, and then we still have the population estimates of about 458 whales.

There has also been a humpback whale unusual mortality event. Since January of 2016, elevated humpback whale mortalities have occurred along the Atlantic coast, from Maine to Florida, and there has been partial or full necropsy examinations on about half of the whales, and, of those, about half had evidence of human interaction, either ship strike or entanglement. More research is needed.

We have also had a minke whale unusual mortality event, and those have occurred from along the Atlantic Coast, from Maine through South Carolina, and, on the necropsies, on about 60 percent of the whales, they have shown evidence of human interactions or infectious disease.

As part of this unusual mortality event investigation process, NOAA has been assembling a team of scientists to coordinate with the Working Group on Marine Mammal UMEs to review the data collected, sample the stranded whales, and determine next steps for the investigation. As of now, we don't know if there is any connection between the different UMEs, and so part of the goal will be to see if we can determine if there are commonalities in the findings that could point toward a single cause.

For the list of fisheries, the final list was published on February 7 of this year, and, for the pelagic longline take reduction plan, there has been no change. The bottlenose dolphin take reduction plan, they had a team meeting in December to discuss modified or additional conservation measures to reduce gillnet bycatch of bottlenose dolphin stocks in North Carolina to levels required by the MMPA, and the team provided NOAA with consensus recommendations for additional conservation measures, particularly related to North Carolina gillnet fisheries. That's all for my update. Any questions?

MR. PHILLIPS: Thank you, Mary. Are there questions? Mary, I don't see any questions. Sorry. Ben.

MR. HARTIG: I do. Under the oceanic whitetip, when will you have the take level recommendations for those?

MS. WUNDERLICH: We're still evaluating the catch levels in our different fisheries, and so we're undergoing consultations that will determine how they are being affected, and we'll have to do the jeopardy analyses for those.

MR. HARTIG: So it will be a while?

MS. WUNDERLICH: Yes, I think they're still ongoing, and so at least a few months.

MR. HARTIG: Okay. Thank you.

MR. PHILLIPS: Any other questions? Mary, I have been trying to follow it, but have we had any calving for the right whales for this season?

MS. WUNDERLICH: Not that I am aware of. No, there hasn't been any.

MR. PHILLIPS: Okay. There have been some unusual weather events and stuff, and so maybe that was just part of it. Mary, thank you very much for your report.

MS. WUNDERLICH: Thank you.

MR. PHILLIPS: We are going to go onto the Commercial Electronic Logbook Presentation and Dave Gloeckner.

DR. GLOECKNER: This is Dave Gloeckner, and I run the Fishery Monitoring Branch down at the Center, which is logbooks and ACL tracking for commercial and recreational. We have been working on voluntary e-logbooks for a while now, primarily with ACCSP and a couple other third-party vendors. After discussions with ACCSP a couple of weeks ago, they actually agreed to give us a timeline on when they can have their parts of this complete, and that really is what we're waiting on.

For the Southeast, our infrastructure changes to our databases and modifications to an application that you're building, those are pretty much complete. The changes needed at ACCSP, which will accommodate some of the gear attributes for our logbook, the deliverable date that they gave me was March 23, and then they will have to modify their API, so the third-party vendors can deliver their data to SAFIS. That should be complete by April 13.

There are other modifications to ACCSP applications that need to be done. eTRIPS/mobile needs to be modified to handle our additional gear attributes, and they said that could be ninety to 120 days, and so we're talking June to July, somewhere in there. eTRIPS/online will be decided later. That's going to be dependent on the SAFIS redesign to incorporate the database changes that need to be done to handle our gear attributes, and so we're not quite sure when that might be. It could be a year, or possibly two.

The changes at ACCSP, they need to add user accounts for my staff, so we can manage the data in the system, and that's in progress, and so that should be complete very shortly. They also have to set up access to SERO permit information. SERO is working on a system interconnect agreement with ACCSP, so that ACCSP can get the permit data they need to distinctly identify vessels and fishers.

They also need to develop the ability for ACCSP to track permits as they move from vessel to vessel, which seems to happen a little bit more in the Southeast than with the vessels in the Northeast, and so that's something a little different for them, and so we're still waiting for the permit data from SERO before we start designing that.

They also need to develop a Southeast list table to support the database application, and so we've done that for most of the variables. We've got one gear attribute table remaining, and so they have promised us that that should be in place shortly. Then they plan on developing a materialized view with the additional gear characteristics that will support our integration of the electronic logbooks with the paper logbooks down here. They are giving me three to four months on that.

The software changes, they are modifying the API, and that's March to April, sometime in there. ACCSP staff will complete that activity. Adding the Southeast variables to the tablet application, that should be complete sometime between June and July. The ACCSP contractor, Harbor Lights, will deal with that, and that will be added to eTRIPS/mobile. eTRIPS/online, like I said, that's going to be dependent on the SAFIS redesign, the rebuild, and ACCSP staff will complete that task.

The changes at the Southeast Center, we have developed a user account system and interface to facilitate digital signatures and submit no fishing reports electronically, and we have just tested the in-house phase, and we're recruiting a few people from the industry to do the beta testing on the industry side. I think this should be live by June. We're developing software to extract the eTRIPS data, and we're almost complete with that. We're just waiting on those changes in ACCSP, and we're developing software to integrate eTRIPS data with the paper logbooks. Once again, we're waiting on ACCSP to complete their infrastructure, so we know what tables to pull from. That is going to take about three months to complete, and so we're estimating a June timeline for that.

Our application will present a screen to allow fishermen -- Once they receive a PIN, they can do that by invitation, which we'll send out, or they can go to the website and request a PIN. Once they request a PIN and register, then we will link their permits to the accounts, and so that will be essentially auto-filling what permits they have.

Essentially, they will log on, and they will have their permits and reporting periods auto-filled, and they can dynamically select which permits they are reporting for, and then they can submit, once they fill out the electronic signature stating that it's accurate, et cetera. Then, once they do that, on the next screen, they can actually print out a negative report that actually looks like the no-fish report that they submit on paper, if they want to save that for their own records or if enforcement wants it, but they would have access to it. Any questions on that?

MR. PHILLIPS: Thanks, Dave. Do we have any questions for Dave?

DR. DUVAL: Thanks, Dave, for the presentation and the update on this, and, again, I really appreciate all the work that you and your staff and the ACCSP staff are doing to bring this together. I think I said this in December, when we got an update then, that it's so helpful, I think, for us to understand or to see all of those sort of backside types of things, those backend things, and that it

sounds like this is just a very easy thing to do, when actually there is lots of different systems that need to be able to talk to one another.

There is data transfer issues, and so I really appreciate the detail that you guys provide in these reports to let us know what hiccups are occurring and why things might not be up and running until a little bit later than maybe we had anticipated, but it sounds like, with everything that you have run through here, that it will be sort of -- I am thinking like the second half of the year, maybe July, when things would be fully complete for folks to start using this system, and I also really appreciate the screenshots. I think that's awesome, and it looks like a really clean user interface, which I think is important, but just to -- My question is really on just sort of the timing of the completing of everything, when you think you're going to be ready for the first folks to log in and use this.

DR. GLOECKNER: Mike is telling me by July, and, really, that's the only holdup at this point, is making sure that everything we need at ACCSP is complete and ready to go. We might be able to go a little bit earlier than that with the third-party vendors, but keep in mind those are the vendors that actually cost some money, and so, if somebody wants to actually use those vendors and shell out a little bit of money for the license, then that might be ready a little bit before then, but, as far as the free version on eTRIPS/mobile, they're going to have to wait until July.

DR. DUVAL: Thank you. That's much appreciated.

DR. GLOECKNER: There is that part about accessing the Southeast permits, which, as I said, there is a security issue, and NOAA is trying to work through that right now, and so there may be a holdup at Headquarters, but, right now, we're anticipating that it should be in place by then.

MR. PHILLIPS: Thanks, Dave, and Michelle has got a follow-up.

DR. DUVAL: Just one more follow-up. I think this is like the -- This isn't a question for Dave, but this is just a comment that it's this sort of non-sexy type of stuff that's really critical to bring our data infrastructure up to speed, and it's something that I think the fishermen will really appreciate, and the public doesn't always see that, but this stuff costs time and money and people, and it's really critically important, and so, again, my hat is off to you guys, and my fingers are crossed that ACCSP can follow through on all the items on their list to complete and that we're able to get this up and running by July.

DR. GLOECKNER: I hope so. Thank you.

MR. PHILLIPS: Any other questions?

MR. WAUGH: Thanks, Dave, and I would like to echo Michelle's thanks, both to you all at the Center and to ACCSP. This is something that Mike Cahall is working his staff pretty hard on, and there is a lot of -- When you set up a system like this for the first time, there is a lot of things that have to be done for the first time in working through arrangements, but future logbook programs will move much more quickly, but, just for Jack, and I know they're working on sorting out ACCSP access to the permits in the Southeast Region, and ACCSP already has access to the Northeast, and I was just wondering, Jack, if there is any update on where we stand or any anticipated time when that might be completed.

DR. MCGOVERN: Eric Barton in IT contacted me yesterday and let me know that he had been in contact with the NOAA Policy Office, and he had provided them rationale for why that personal identifiable information would need to be provided to ACCSP. He has also provided them information that Mike Cahall provided with the MOU that he has with GARFO, and so he was hoping to have an answer by today, but he doesn't yet, and so he figures there is still going to have to be more back-and-forth with the NOAA Policy Office to get that done, and so hopefully soon, but I don't have a definite date when that might be done.

MR. PHILLIPS: Thanks, Jack. Any last thoughts or questions? Seeing none, Dave, we thank you very much, and we will do the MRIP next, and that looks like Kelly Dennit and Dave Van Voorhees.

MS. DENNIT: Good morning. This is Kelly.

MR. PHILLIPS: Good morning. Dave is not on yet, but hopefully he'll be joining here in just a second, and so I will go ahead and get started, so you guys can keep rolling through your morning. My name is Kelly Dennit, and I'm the Chief of the Domestic Fisheries Division in the Office of Sustainable Fisheries up in Silver Spring, and I co-chair the transition team with Dave Van Voorhees, and so I'm going to take you guys through an update on where we are with the Fishing Effort Survey transition as well as APAIS, and I will talk a little bit about next steps and what we see coming over the next few months, and I appreciate the help in facilitating the questions, once we get to the end.

We can start with just a general overview of estimating total recreational catch, which is the role of MRIP, and we produce this estimate using two different surveys. The first is our effort survey, which historically has been the Coastal Household Telephone Survey, but is transitioning to the Fishing Effort Survey, and that is giving us an estimate of the number of trips.

In addition, we do a different survey, the APAIS, the Angler Point Access Intercept Survey, to get estimates of fish caught per trip, which gives us our catch rates, and we put those two things together to give us our total catch. Overall, as you all know very well, there is a number of inputs that inform stock assessments, and so it's not just recreational catch, but it's commercial data, and it's fisheries-independent research, and a number of other surveys that inform those overall stock assessments, and so that's an important part to remember as we talk through some of the implications of the transition to the Fishing Effort Survey.

The Fishing Effort Survey, as I said, is replacing our Coastal Household Telephone Survey, which was a phone survey, and so I really want to emphasize that the Fishing Effort Survey is only estimating fishing effort, and it's not changes to catch rates, and, as you can see by our little icons there, it is specific to private boat anglers and shore anglers, and it's only on the Atlantic and Gulf Coasts, which I know you guys are intimately familiar with, and we produce those efforts in two-month waves that are broken out by state, region, and type of fishing.

The big change here is, instead of the random digit dialing that the Coastal Household Telephone Survey, CHTS, used, the FES is reaching more anglers, using a combination of coastal service address databases, along with the state-based license and registration information, and the critical

point here is that this is providing us with more accurate estimates of fishing effort than what we were getting in the CHTS.

Those more accurate estimates, that is largely being driven by the fact that we're actually reaching more anglers and getting to actually more households where anglers are, and it also is getting into the hands of folks in the household who are doing the fishing, as opposed to whoever just happens to answer the phone at the time of the CHTS survey. By coming in the mail, it's actually getting into the hands of the folks who are out on the water.

We have also improved the questionnaire to increase the likelihood that people will respond, and the mail survey is also giving folks an opportunity to provide more complete answers. I don't know about you all, but I know, for me, if someone asks me a question and I'm on the phone, you kind of have that awkward silence, where you're trying to think, but you know the person is waiting, and so you're trying to go as fast as you can, and you may not be able to give the best answer that you otherwise would if you had a little bit more time to think about it, and so that's one way that the survey is helping improve that.

In addition, we're getting three times the response rate. Again, I won't speak for those in the room there, but I know, if a phone number pops up on my phone that I don't know, I am less likely to answer that, and that has increased over time, and so, with this mail survey, we're getting three times the response rate that we were with the CHTS.

This is just citing for folks that we have done extensive testing and peer review of the FES. It, most recently, went through a National Academy of Sciences review, where they found that the FES methodology is a major improvement over the previous CHTS.

What does all of that mean? We have been going through a three-year transition plan. This plan was developed with the states, the councils, and the interstate commissions over the course of the last few years, and so there had been an opportunity to do side-by-side benchmarking between the CHTS and the FES from 2015 to 2017.

As a result of that, that process is now complete, and we have been able to develop the FES calibration model that allows us to compare between the two different effort surveys. I am also going to touch a little bit on the APAIS adjustment, and those two things together have allowed us to be in a position where can re-estimate our historical recreational catch to inform both stock assessments and management decisions.

The side-by-side benchmarking, I'm sure you have all heard a little bit about this already, but, just to run through it very quickly, the FES estimates are several times higher than the CHTS, and I wanted to emphasize that it does vary by mode, state, and wave, but, on average, for the private boat anglers, we are seeing approximately three-times more effort. For shore, it's approximately six-times higher.

It's really important to emphasize that, just because those effort levels are higher, that does not necessarily mean that overfishing has been or is occurring. We won't know that for sure until we get into annual stock assessments, and that has to do with a number of factors, including -- It depends on the proportion of the fishery that is recreational fishing and, specifically, what

proportion is private boat and shore, the productivity of the stock, and there is just a variety of factors that will impact, ultimately, whether there has been overfishing or not.

To quickly touch on the FES calibration model, this has been developed with independent consultants, and it was recently peer reviewed. It is a model that is going to allow us to create a common effort currency going back all the way to 1981, and what it does is it allows us to calibrate between the two effort surveys, and it does not necessarily mean that there has been a recent increase in effort, but it's just giving us a tool by which we can convert between CHTS and the fishing effort survey.

The APAIS, I think you guys are familiar with this as well. This is our changes to our dockside intercept, and we will be going through a peer review workshop for that coming up in just a couple of weeks, and this is to account for survey design improvements that were implemented back in 2013, and that is going to allow us to also look at changes going back historically versus those that we implemented there in 2013. The magnitude of adjustments due to the APAIS calibration are significantly lower than those based on the FES-based adjustments, but they are two changes, and we're going to be incorporating them both at the same time, as part of this recalibration.

By July 1, our plan is to have the re-estimated effort numbers, and we mean the historical effort information converted into FES, and now we're using the FES starting in 2018, and then we will also have the calibrated data incorporated for the APAIS changes. Together, that will give us the new calibrated total catch that we can feed into stock assessments, and, as you guys can imagine, we can't do all stock assessments all at once, and so we have been working, through the transition team, with the councils and the commissions to prioritize those stock assessments, and we have done so, and we'll begin with those starting this fall.

There is multiple potential impacts from this. As I just mentioned, we will get those stock assessments, and those will be done over the course of the next year to two or three years, and there were three major implications. The first will be stock status, and those will be informed by those stock assessments and whether in fact we have any overfishing or overfished stocks, and, as I mentioned, it's important to remember that, because we've seen these increases in effort, it doesn't necessarily automatically mean that there is overfishing or overfished status. We will have to see what those stock assessments show.

In addition, there are implications for annual catch limits and management measures, any number that comes out of those stock assessments, whether there will be an ability to reduce restrictions or whether there will have to be more, all of which will be informed by the stock assessments, and, finally, there are also implications to potential allocation decisions. As you all are well aware, historical catch has largely been the mechanism that councils have used to determine allocations, and so the changes in this information, this recalibrated data, will inform whether the council would want to look at any changes to those allocation decisions. Again, I just want to reiterate that this is specific to the shore mode and private angler mode and that it does not cover the charter mode.

2018, and I've just got two slides left here, is one that will be a little bit complicated, and so we wanted to have a specific slide that talked folks through that. The 2018 ACLS for all of our stocks have been set using the CHTS estimate. As I mentioned, we're using the FES in 2018 only to get effort, and so our calibration model allows us to convert that back to CHTS effort numbers, and

so that means that we will be in a position to compare the catch from this year with the 2018 ACLs that were set in what we're calling the CHTS currency, and so we will be able to compare catch in 2018 to 2018 ACLs in that same currency and not be in a situation where we're using the FES numbers.

What is next, as I mentioned, we'll have the total catch estimates available on July 1 for use in the planned stock assessments that are coming up this fall and into the winter, and that will inform any preliminary management changes that could be made for 2019 for those stocks that are able to be reassessed in 2018. In addition, over the course of 2019, those recalibrated data will be incorporated into additional stock assessments, and that will continue on through 2020, until we're able to get through all of the stocks that we need to.

I think one last point, just on that slide, is we are very interested in getting out and talking to as many folks as we can. We have already been working with the council folks who are on the transition team, and we will be going to each of the councils over the course of the next couple of months, and we plan to be coming back to you all after we actually get all of the recalibrated data in July.

In addition, we are setting up webinars with the different SSCs, to talk with them about the changes and go into more detail on the models, and we are also working to get out with stakeholders, as much as possible, and so, if you have suggestions, please make sure and let us know, either Dave or myself or John Carmichael. Please give us your suggestions, so that we can make sure and get out, so people know about these big changes that will be coming here this summer, and, with that, I am happy to answer any questions, and I think, while I was talking, Dave Van Voorhees was able to join, and so he can help answer any questions as well.

DR. VAN VOORHEES: Yes, I'm here.

MR. PHILLIPS: Thanks a lot, Kelly, for the presentation, and it's nice to hear that you're back, Dave, and so are there questions?

MR. HARTIG: Thank you very much for a great presentation. One of the concerns that I had in your presentation, and I don't know how much of the area you put on your map goes into your general talk about what is happening within the recreational fishery, but, basically, there is a statement in there that said that you don't see effort increasing in the recreational fishery, and so what we do know -- I mean, we've seen information from the 2008 economic crisis that we have seen numbers that recreational effort was down as much as 50 percent for a number of years in that timeframe between 2008, and I would say at least the last four to five years.

In the area where I am, which certainly won't go through the entire area where you guys have looked at, but we still see effort coming back on the recreational fishery, and so it will be interesting to look at that, to see how this all pans out with what we know we have for figures of decreasing recreational effort versus the numbers that come out of MRIP for this.

MR. PHILLIPS: Thanks, Ben.

MR. BROWN: Thanks for the presentation. I have just got a couple of questions. Do you have a sample survey anywhere that we could have seen?

DR. VAN VOORHEES: Are you talking specifically about the surveys that are generating the effort and catch estimates?

MR. BROWN: Yes, the mail-out that you were going to start using. I was just curious how it was going to be processed, and I was wondering what the survey looked like. I was just wondering what kind of manpower it was going to take to process the survey by mail rather than the phone option.

DR. VAN VOORHEES: Basically, the mail survey is replacing our telephone survey as a very simplified questionnaire. It's not as detailed as the questionnaire that we use for the phone survey. It's basically a one-pager, two sides of a page, that comes in the mail, and we would be glad to provide a copy of the questionnaire to the council, if you folks would like to see that.

We have had the survey operational, as Kelly pointed out, for the last three years, and so this is the fourth year where we're actually conducting it, but this is the first year where we're relying on it alone without doing the phone survey, but there is a process we follow, where the first round of mailings go out, and then, if we don't get a response from a particular household that is in the sample, we send out a second mailing by postcard, as a reminder, and then, if we still don't get a response from that household, there will be a second mailing of the questionnaire.

That is basically a third mailing, and then the subsequent mailings have a -- We do have an incentive included, a two-dollar incentive included, and that actually is cost-effective, because it improves our response rates enough that we end up spending less money to get the same amount of responses by using the two-dollar incentive, and so that's a little more detail than you may have asked for, but I just wanted to make sure that you know that we would be glad to provide a copy of the questionnaire and any information that you want about the survey itself.

MR. BROWN: Yes, I think we would like to see it, Dave, if you wouldn't mind sending it to the council, so we can distribute that. Also, I wanted to ask you how is the information going to be processed? I was wondering if the survey is sent out and then returned and if there was some type of a scan or something, to where it was processed faster, or do you have to do it by hand?

DR. VAN VOORHEES: This is very important, because we were concerned about this when we were initially testing the mail survey, because one concern that you have with mail is that the responses won't come back as fast as if you're just getting an answer over a telephone from a phone call, and we found that a large percentage of the responses actually come back after the first mailing, and we have looked at whether or not there are differences in the responses that we get from people who respond later versus the people that respond immediately, and we have not seen a significant difference in fishing effort from the early responders and the later responders, but what we do is we use the initial responses, which is greater than 70 percent of the total, and we can use those for the two-month estimates.

Then, as we get more returns coming in, over the next couple of months, when we have produced the estimates for the next two-month wave, we can then incorporate the late responses for the earlier wave, to revise the earlier wave estimates. We have a process whereby we're including as many responses as we can in the estimates, but the majority of them come back soon enough that

it doesn't change our schedule for producing estimates. We can still produce them bimonthly and combine the effort estimates with the intercept survey estimates.

MR. BROWN: This survey is just for effort and it doesn't have anything to do with the catch?

DR. VAN VOORHEES: That's correct. The mail survey does not collect any catch data. All the catch data we use comes from the onsite intercept survey.

MR. BROWN: Okay. Thank you.

DR. DUVAL: Dave and Kelly, I appreciate the presentation. I guess one question. Here in the Southeast, we've been suffering from two competing versions of best scientific information available for some years, and, by that, I mean the MRIP weight estimation procedure and the Southeast Fisheries Science Center weight estimation procedure, and I know that you all are aware that we have brought this up multiple times as being confusing to the public to have two sets of numbers out there, and I guess my concern rises when I see the presentation and we're looking at effort estimates that are much greater than they have been before, understanding that there are no changes in effort and this is just a recalculation, a recalibration, and a better way of doing that, but that affects the overall estimate of harvest. Have you all addressed this issue of two versions of BSIA within this process? Thanks.

DR. VAN VOORHEES: Yes, we certainly have discussed this issue before, and we have been discussing it in recent months with the Southeast Center and with the Northeast Center. We do realize that it will be important for us to move forward with trying to integrate the approaches to come up with one standardized approach, if possible, across both the Northeast and Southeast for how we come up with mean weight estimates to apply to the estimates of catch in numbers.

For those people who may not know what this is about, we do generate an estimate of catch in pounds that is on the MRIP website. They have used a procedure that was developed when we developed the new estimation methods back in 2012, and implemented those back in 2012. The Southeast Center uses a slightly different approach, and it's very similar, but a slightly different approach, to come up with the mean weight estimates that they have used historically for many years, and so what we need to do is get together with them and see if we can compare how we're doing the conversions and coming up with the appropriate mean weight estimates and develop some sort of a standardized approach.

We do recognize that, and we haven't done it yet. It is on the list of things to do, and, as we move forward to complete this transition, or produce these calibrated estimates, it will be one of the things that we're focusing on in the coming year.

MR. PHILLIPS: Anything else for Dave?

MR. CARMICHAEL: Dave and Kelly, thanks for giving that. It went pretty smoothly, and so I'm glad that you guys could be on here today. I just have a couple of questions from other stuff that's come up during the week. One was about the new information being rolled out, and so does that mean that say I go to the website on July 2 and do a query and I will see the fully-calibrated numbers for the whole time series and everything?

DR. VAN VOORHEES: John, that is our plan. We are planning to have our calibrated estimates available, obviously, for the folks doing the stock assessments, and that's our top priority, but we are going to try to have the estimates available to the public at the same time, and so the plan is to actually provide access through the website for people to be able to see the before and after. They will be able to see what the estimates looked like before we applied the calibration, and then they'll be able to see what the estimates look like now, after applying the calibrations.

MR. CARMICHAEL: That sounds great, and I would just remind people that that's very much how it was handled last time there were some changes made. You could go and do a query and look at comparisons. Then the other one is about -- The 2018 catch, at the end of year, we'll see that old and new methods, and will that also be the case in 2019, or will it be all new currency for 2019?

DR. VAN VOORHEES: We're working with the Science Centers in the Northeast and the Southeast to be sure that we would have a process that they will be able to continue to convert back to the CHTS currency as needed, depending on the schedule of stock assessments.

MS. DENNIT: John, that's going to depend on what stocks are being assessed when and when the council is able to incorporate that information into the setting of ACLs. What we want to avoid is a situation where an ACL has been set based on the CHTS numbers and then catch is being calculated using the FES, and so we wouldn't compare FES/APAIS combined catch to an ACL unless that ACL was set based on the recalibrated data.

MR. CARMICHAEL: Exactly, and so one of the thoughts here has been we have many unassessed stocks that our SSC has based ABCs on things like average landings over some historical period of time, and so we're probably going to have to look at getting the SSC into those using the new numbers some time in 2019, to be able to do the update, and so thanks.

MS. DENNIT: Yes.

MR. PHILLIPS: Thanks, John. Anything else? Gregg.

MR. WAUGH: As I understand it, the Center and the Regions are the ones that are going to be helping do some of this calibration for our existing ACLs, and we usually get a presentation in June. That's the first time we get a look at this year's recreational catch. Is the calibration methodology available for them to do that such that we would have that information in June, or is it going to be September before we see any of our 2018 recreational catch estimates in the currency that we can compare it to our ACLs?

DR. VAN VOORHEES: I will answer that question. Basically, we've been communicating already with the Southeast Regional Office and the Southeast Fisheries Science Center, and we'll also be reaching out to the Northeast Center very shortly to develop how we're going to provide the estimates in the CHTS currency for the first few waves, prior to July 1, for Waves 1 and 2, for the most part, and, the Wave 3 estimates, we would actually have the calibration completed by that time, and so the answer to your question is yes, we will have those estimates available.

We are working out how we're going to get those in the hands of the managers, fishery managers, that are having to compare to ACLs, but, basically, we'll be working together with the Southeast Center and the Southeast Region to provide those estimates in the old currency.

MR. WAUGH: Thanks.

MR. PHILLIPS: Okay. Do we have anything else for Dave or Kelly? Seeing nothing, Dave and Kelly, thank you very much for the presentation.

MS. DENNIT: Thanks for having us.

MR. PHILLIPS: We are holding our breath waiting on these new numbers, to say the least. I think Nick Farmer may be on the line, and so we'll go back to Nick's presentation.

DR. VAN VOORHEES: Thank you for the opportunity, and thanks, John, for setting this up for us.

MR. CARMICHAEL: You're welcome, Dave, and I look forward to continuing our efforts to roll this thing out.

MR. FARMER: This is Nick Farmer, over at the Regional Office. It's a pleasure to get a chance to talk to you guys, and thank you for being accommodating and allowing me to do this via webinar, to save me a trip, and save the government some money. I wanted to just give you a brief overview of where we're at with the Southeast For-Hire Integrated Electronic Reporting Program, or the SEFHIER Program.

For those of you who have been involved in the process, this will be a little bit of a repeat, but, basically, we've got an implementation team that involves fifty-three individuals now from various council staffs, the marine fisheries commissions, ACCSP, Highly Migratory Species Division, two of the Science Centers, two of the Regional Offices, NOAA General Counsel, NOAA Headquarters, MRIP, and then we have George LaPointe as our strategic planner.

We have broken that implementation team into some sub-groups, in order to do some of the more detailed evaluations, and those sub-groups are Data Housing, Minimum Standards, Survey Design, Compliance & Enforcement, Outreach & Education, and then a Program Management and Budget Sub-Group, and so I will tell you a little bit about those in a moment.

The implementation team has been meeting biweekly for a long time now. Those biweekly meetings are information-gathering sessions designed to stimulate group discussion, and we have also tried to really encompass lessons learned by all the various pilot programs and existing electronic reporting programs that are out there, and I've got a list here that I won't read to you, but you can see that we've received a dozen presentations thus far from programs all throughout the Southeast. There has been a lot of work done on electronic reporting thus far, and it's been really interesting to me, as the implementation team lead, to see those presentations and hear such consistency in a lot of the lessons learned from those various programs.

Our Data Housing Sub-Group has had two meetings, and we actually have a white paper that's been completed by the sub-group and reviewed by the sub-group that will go out to the overall

group soon, but what we've focused on, in those two meetings, was a discussion of the ACCSP, SERO's Information Technology Group, and the Southeast Fisheries Science Center's Information Technology Group and their competing abilities to provide us these six main points, which was access to the data, a clearly-defined minimum standards, or API, that vendors could use to design their software programs for the fishermen, an ability to adapt to any changes that we realize that we may need down the road, an ability to integrate with other data streams, because we want to avoid double-counting and duplicated effort, wherever possible, for the fishermen that are doing this reporting, and, also, we wanted to focus on the cost portion of data housing, which would be staffing needs and funding needs.

ACCSP made a very compelling case for their ability to meet a lot of these needs at a relatively low cost, and we have made a recommendation, which has been approved now by the Regional Administrator and the Science Center Director, to use ACCSP as our data housing provider for the program.

Our Minimum Standards Sub-Group had one meeting. Basically, what we're talking about there is data transmission from the user to the agency and how that would work. We have drafted a white paper on location devices for the Gulf of Mexico, due to their location device requirement, and we have we have drafted codified regulations for the Atlantic, and they are underway for the Gulf. We have developed a draft technical guidance document for the Atlantic, for the SERO website, and we will be working on a type approval list for hardware as vendors are submitting information to us that meet those minimum standards.

The document that we have developed thus far will borrow heavily from work that has been accomplished in other regions. GARFO recently went through this process, and so we've borrowed heavily from their work and adapted it to our purposes. ACCSP has a clearly-defined API, and so we would be requiring folks to meet those minimum standards for transmission, and so this sub-group feeds nicely into the next sub-group.

If you go to the next slide, that's going to be our Survey Design Sub-Group, which is focused on what are the minimum data elements that we want to collect. The goal of the SEFHIER Program is, in order for it to be a good choice, from an agency perspective and a cost-benefit perspective, it would be to provide data that are more robust and more timely than those that are delivered by the MRIP charter survey.

We also would really like this program to integrate well with existing programs, including the Southeast Region Headboat Survey, highly migratory species for-hire surveys, and the MRIP for-hire survey, which would carry on for state vessels, unless the states wanted to join the SEFHIER Program. Some general categories that we focused on for survey design were the data elements, the validation of data, integration of data with other sources, and calibration to the existing MRIP for-hire survey, and I will talk about each of those individually.

I am not going to get into the nitty-gritty of the data elements, because that's still in a draft form, although I do have them at the end of the presentation, for folks who want to look through it. It's kind of where we are right now, but the elements that we're looking at collecting were basically focused on trying to have consistency with fields that are collected by other surveys, to reduce issues with creating kind of an all-new database and also allowing us to make easy comparisons between the elements.

We want it to be quick to complete, and we want to make sure that we're only collecting critical elements, and one of the ways that we're streamlining the data collection process is thinking about collecting the dynamic elements every trip, and that would be the things that change every trip, which would be like the catch and effort, whereas we would collect some of the more static elements that are also important via kind of an occasional random selection, and so you would be filling out your app and, every once in a while, you would be prompted to complete an extra few questions, to save time on a day-to-day basis, but still get the data that we need in order to do effective stock assessments and economic evaluations of the fishery.

Then we focused on validation, and we have an issue here where SEFHIER is going to be collecting self-reported data, and so it needs to be validated to be useful, and I believe that Roy has already given you an overview of the Science Center's review of the South Atlantic's proposed plan and what it would be used for. Basically, the validation, the dockside validation, is going to be useful to verify catch and effort, but, in order for that to function correctly and to provide robust catch and effort estimates, it needs to be independent of the vessel trip report.

That was accomplished by the Gulf Council by requiring the data to be transmitted prior to the vessel being offloaded, and we also will need dockside biological sampling, which you're already familiar with from MRIP, getting length and weight and age data by pulling otoliths and then reproductive data by pulling gonads from the fish.

A long-term dream would be to have some at-sea validation sampling, because discards are such a big factor in a lot of our stock assessments, and having accurate reports of those discards would be extremely useful. We recognize that at-sea validation is burdensome and expensive, and harder on most for-hire vessels than it is on headboats, where some at-sea validation is taking place currently, just due to vessel size and capacity.

Then, finally, for validation, we need compliance monitoring to estimate non-reporting rates. In the Gulf, we have a requirement for a permanently-affixed location tracking device, and so a lot of that can be automated. On the Atlantic side, we'll need to come up with a different approach, which will probably be more like a roving validation survey for verifying whether vessels are engaged in fishing activity or not, recording comings and goings from marinas, in order to get a sense of what percentage of vessels that are supposed to be submitting electronic logbook reports to the program are not doing so, because we will need to account for their potential catch and effort as well when creating statistics.

Then we want to make sure that we integrate, where possible. We have got, as you saw just from that pilot study list, we've got a lot of different surveys ongoing. We've got the headboat survey, we have HMS, we have the MRIP for-hire survey, which will still apply to state vessels, and we want to have as much consistency across regions and programs as possible, and we want to reduce the burden on anglers and also streamline the data collection, so that the data managers don't have to have a specific expertise on a particular program and it all kind of translates fairly well across programs, and it also simplifies the development of software for the fishermen and the software for receiving the data and the quality assurance and quality control programming associated with that.

We want to avoid double-counting, and we also want to avoid duplication of effort, and that's both for the fishermen and for our port samplers. We want to coordinate with existing surveys, including the Louisiana Creel Survey and the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department's creel survey, where possible.

On the Atlantic side, the trip management system is going to be a critical design element. It will also be critical in the Gulf. It's a little easier in the Gulf of Mexico to assign a unique value to a trip, due to the requirement for a hail-out prior to the vessel leaving the dock, because a unique trip ID can be generated at that point, which will be associated with the logbook report and also with any intercepts made for verification sampling, biological sampling, or an enforcement intercept, and so it's all integrated.

On the Atlantic side, that's going to be a little bit trickier, because we don't have a hail-out. The vessels are required to report on a weekly basis, and so almost always the intercepts will happen prior to the logbook reporting taking place, and there will have to be some retrospective matching. The South Carolina MRIP pilot logbook study found those matching rates to be somewhat low, and there are a few things that could be done to improve those matching rates, but they will create additional burdens on the fishermen in order to do that.

The more you increase your matching rate, the lower your requirement for portside intercepts, which reduces your personnel costs, which greatly reduces the cost of the program, because people are one of the most expensive elements within the program, and so that would be something that will be a cost addition for the Atlantic program.

Calibration is going to be critical. I think everyone is interested in SEFHIER being able to provide some information that could be used in stock assessments. Once SEFHIER's design on the Atlantic side is sufficient to provide robust catch estimates, it will need to run concurrently with existing surveys, like the MRIP for-hire survey, for a minimum of three years, in order to allow some calibration between those surveys, so that it can be used in stock assessments. This calibration is going to require some duplication of effort and an additional expense, both in terms of time and money and personnel, but it's necessary if we want to make the transition between the programs, and it will be critical that we partner with the states as that moves forward.

Compliance and enforcement is something that is a hidden expense within the program that we hadn't really thought about, and, the more we got into it, we realized that this is going to be an absolutely critical element. The critical element for compliance and enforcement is accounting for vessels that are not reporting, and so we can deal with the timeliness of reports in somewhat of an automated fashion. If a vessel has not submitted a logbook or a no-fishing report within the time requirement passed by the Atlantic amendment, then that will be flagged, and we'll have a series of cascading protocols for contacts and follow-up.

Non-reporting could be partially automated by cross-referencing no-fishing reports and logbooks. However, when we have intercepts that aren't associated with a logbook report, we're going to need to follow up on those, and, like I said, we're also going to need this roving verification sampling to determine if vessels are engaged in fishing activity that don't end up submitting logbook reports or if a vessel submits a no-fishing report, but then is observed engaged in fishing activity during that time period. That would be something we'll also have to account for and deal with in our catch estimate process.

We have talked with our General Counsel for the Southeast with regards to penalties, and we have a pretty clear understanding of how delayed permit renewal and summary settlements would work for the SEFHIER program, and we have also talked about the flip side of that, which is how can we recognize vessels that are actively participating in the program and delivering data in a timely manner, and we felt that one thing that we probably could do was provide a list of compliant vessels that basically would show potential people looking to book trips which of these vessels are engaged in conservation-oriented practices, where they're participating in the program to develop superior catch estimates and provide good information to stock assessments by delivering data in a timely manner and that sort of thing. That is in development right now as an option.

We learned some important lessons from compliance and enforcement, and it's staff intensive to have effective compliance and enforcement. It's going to be critical to partner with the states and involve all the relevant federal offices, of which there are several, and automate anything that is possible to automate, in order to save on staff time. Outreach is a critical element for compliance. We want to make sure that fishermen, early on and often, clearly understand both what the requirements of the program are and the consequences for not participating.

There is going to be a need for training prior to program implementation, and there is going to be a need for ongoing training, in order to promote compliance. There was some discussion that a phase-in of the program with eager participants may help with implementation and compliance, and we also discussed how important good, ongoing communication will be between staff, captains, and vessel owners, recognizing that, a lot of the time, the captain who is going to be completing the logbook may not be the permit owner, but the permit owner will be the one who is responsible for the timely reporting.

We also discussed how compliance protocols should be established from the start, including how we'll deal with permit holds and sanctions. We talked about how permit renewal is somewhat ineffective, just because of the time that lapses between reports not being submitted and the request to renew a permit. On the Atlantic side, this is even more of a problem, given the open access permit structure, because there is not really a stick there that is very powerful, in terms of permit renewal, because someone could just apply for a new permit if they are denied a permit renewal.

We talked about how we would need to coordinate with General Counsel and the Office of Law Enforcement, in order to carefully track the chain of custody and law enforcement requirements, especially where we have third-party vendors involved, and so, if we have a transmitting software, we have a third-party data housing in ACCSP, and then we have the data coming over to the Fisheries Service, we are going to need to carefully track and make sure that there is no breakdown in the data transmission infrastructure that is resulting in the lack of compliance, and that the lack of compliance is actually attributable to the fishermen who should have been doing the reporting.

We've had one meeting for our outreach and education group, and I should say that the Survey Design and Compliance & Enforcement Sub-Groups both have white papers that have been developed, and they've undergone an internal review with the Southeast Fisheries Science Center and the Office of Science and Technology, and that internal review is being finalized. Then they will be distributed to the sub-groups. Then, after that is passed, they will be distributed to the SEFHIER implementation team at large.

The Outreach & Education Sub-Group, we took somewhat of a different approach, because we received all those presentations on pilot surveys, and we developed an outreach and education white paper prior to the meeting, and we used that as our launching-off point encompassing all the lessons learned from programs that had gone before us.

We are going to have about 3,000 new participants between the Gulf and South Atlantic in this logbook program, many of which who have never reported to logbooks before, and so outreach is going to be critical. We need the permit owners to understand the program requirements and understand the rationale of why are we asking for this.

I think there are some folks who are plugged into the program, but there is probably a high percentage of fishermen who are unaware of these requirements coming down the road who need to be aware of what we're going to be asking and why. We also need to give them clear lines of communication with information sources that they can go to with questions, and we're going to need to discuss the various reporting applications with them, and they will need to be trained in the use of those applications.

We also are going to need to talk about what access they will have to their data for personal use, and that would be a good incentive for participation in the program, if they can use the data that they're reporting in order to improve their fishing practices and understand when they're doing well, where they're doing well, what time period, et cetera.

We're also going to need some outreach for the data and resource managers. This will be a very different way of collecting catch and effort information from the for-hire fleet, and we're going to need to deal with the implications of that with the folks who need to use the data for management, and law enforcement and dockside agents are going to be quite busy with these programs, and so they're going to need a lot of outreach as well.

From the pilot studies that we heard from, we identified ten different approaches to outreach and education. There was workshops, webinars, letters and emails, websites, print media, social media, talks with industry organizations, online training videos, working with early adopters, and dockside discussions.

The unanimous recommendation was the use of a multipronged approach, and the best advocates for the program will be the fishermen, and so they will be the best advocates for the program and they will be the best trainers of other participants, and so we need to get fishermen involved early. The South Atlantic pilot program that's been going on thus far is a great step in that direction, and I think you all have identified some eager early adopters of this stuff, and hopefully they can spread the word on how to use these things as we finalize the program requirements.

Then we have a Program Management & Budget Group. Currently, the Southeast Fisheries Science Center, SERO, and the Office of Science and Technology are developing preliminary cost estimates and timelines for the program. Those are incomplete at this point, but they're definitely in progress, and so we'll be scheduling a meeting with our Program Management & Budget Group after further progress is made in those other sub-groups and with those two portions of cost estimates and timelines. With that, I think the next slide is for questions, and that will be the end of my presentation. Thank you, guys, for your time.

MR. PHILLIPS: Thanks, Nick.

MR. HARTIG: Thanks, Nick. I, for one, am going to miss you. I'm sorry you're going to Protected Resources, but the question I had was there has been some confusion about what's going to happen with this three-year concurrently running MRIP and this program and what happens after the three years. Can you explain what happens exactly after three years?

DR. FARMER: I think we're still working through the details of that, but I think the vision that I have of how that would work, and I am not necessarily speaking for the agency right now, because we're still working on that process, but I would picture it working kind of like the two programs running in tandem, with the federally-permitted for-hire vessels still reporting to the MRIP for-hire survey for three years as well as reporting to SEFHIER. With the for-hire survey, that will be a random selection process. With SEFHIER, it's going to hopefully be everybody reporting for it to really be the census type of logbook program that we're looking for.

After that point, the idea would be that the federally-permitted for-hire vessels would drop out of the for-hire survey and report exclusively through SEFHIER. MRIP will still probably be developing the overall for-hire estimates and will be working hand-in-hand with the Southeast Fisheries Science Center to develop the estimates for the SEFHIER program independently, but, yes, that would be the end of kind of the duplication of effort with regards to the fishermen.

The SEFHIER program, in order for it to work during that calibration time period, it's probably going to need its own personnel doing that kind of dockside work and compliance monitoring work, and there may be some opportunities to leverage, further on down the road, if those vessels drop out of MRIP, to leverage some MRIP staff to do that work, but I am not quite sure how that would work yet, or it may be that the MRIP staff drop down and the SEFHIER staff remain, but the funding is coming from the same source, and so it's not really all that critical how that would work.

The idea is that the South Atlantic program would have to be developing robust catch estimates through SEFHIER for three years while the for-hire survey was also generating catch estimates, in order to do some calibration, and it seems like, based on the Science Center's evaluation of the program, that there is some work that needs to be done prior to that SEFHIER program on the Atlantic side developing robust catch estimates. The calibration, it's my impression, would not begin until those adjustments were made.

MR. HARTIG: Thank you.

MR. PHILLIPS: All right. Are there other questions for Nick?

MR. WAUGH: Good morning, Nick. A big shout-out of thanks to you and everyone else in the region and the folks at the Center, and I know our staff was involved in a lot of these meetings. It took a lot of time and effort, and I think the investment is well worth it now to understand the utility of using ACCSP as a data repository. I think that's going to help across-the-board. The question I have, and we're dealing with this with our commercial logbook enforcement as well, is there going to be a mechanism for automatic email notification to a vessel owner if they have not turned in either a fishing trip or a no-fishing report?

DR. FARMER: Yes, and so, on the compliance and enforcement slide, there was a point about timeliness being potentially automated, and our intent, and a lot of our discussions within that group, has been to provide exactly that, and I think that's what HMS does as well. What we want to have, and we've got templates from those other groups, in order to feed into SEFHIER, if SEFHIER ever gets funded and implemented, would be to allow the agency to make an initial contact via an automated email. Then, if we don't receive a response within a set period of time, there would be a second contact with documentation, probably via phone, and then potentially some sort of penalty, if there is no response or resolution after that, such as a summary settlement.

My understanding is that's how it works with HMS right now and with commercial, and so we're following that model, but, like I said, we're gathering information from other programs and looking at how it will work, and we've got white papers in draft form, and so I can't say that that's the final determination, but that has certainly been an element of discussion and probably the biggest element of discussion with regards to that sort of timeliness enforcement approach, and so I see it going that way, but it's not final yet.

MR. PHILLIPS: Thanks, Nick. I think those electronic emails are going to help a lot with your compliance. Any other questions?

MR. HARTIG: Thank you, Nick. Have you given any thought to giving back, at the end of the year, some kind of synopsis of catch rates and things, so you're actually giving back something to the people, a synopsis of how the program worked throughout the region, the number of trips and things of that nature, number of fish caught, something to give them back something for their effort for participation?

DR. FARMER: Yes, and so we have talked a lot with various folks who have run programs similar to this, and a good example is the shrimp electronic logbook program in the Gulf of Mexico. The Science Center in Galveston has done some pretty tremendous work developing a really nice interface for that program, where fishermen can pull a summary of overall program effort, similar to what you described, and they can also access their personal summaries with some really nice kind of graphical things and bells and whistles.

That is something that we have discussed with ACCSP as a potential deliverable from them or from the Science Center, writing some code to give that approach, and so, obviously, any time you add a bell and whistle, it takes time and money and resources to do it, but we understand that that would be a nice thing to give back to the fishermen, and it's definitely not something we have ignored. We have talked about it and seen presentations of what that might look like.

The intent also is for fishermen to be able to access their own personal data through the ACCSP system, so that they can at least see their data. I recognize that just being able to access your data isn't all that useful for folks, as compared to some sort of nice summary application that helps them identify trends in CPUE seasonally for various species and that sort of thing, and I don't think that's a super heavy lift for our programmers, but, right now, we're certainly understaffed in our IT department here at the Regional Office even for existing programs, and the Science Center is in a similar place, and so that would just require this program to have sufficient funding for that sort of work to be done, but certainly, if there was a large interest expressed by the fishermen to have that sort of application, that could be something that we could work towards. It's one of those classic things where you can do anything with the right amount of money, right?

MR. HARTIG: I understand.

MR. PHILLIPS: Thanks, Nick.

MR. BELL: Nick, I was just going to suggest that, for a number of this stuff -- I mean, Amy Dukes has got a lot of experience with different aspects of this, everything from the enforcement aspect or the compliance to interface with the fishermen and reports and things like that. We've been doing this since 1993.

DR. FARMER: We received a spectacular presentation from Amy that was really integral in informing a lot of the work that we've done with the program, and she has been absolutely fantastic in terms of her willingness and desire to kind of work with SEFHIER, so that we're not duplicating effort, and so we very much appreciate her input, and we have definitely taken advantage of that, where we can.

MR. BELL: I will say congratulations on coming up with a way-cool acronym. I mean SEFHIER is better than MRIP. It's got to have a cool logo or something.

DR. FARMER: I'm glad you like it.

MR. CARMICHAEL: I just want to follow-up on Ben's first question about what happens after three years, and, Nick, I think I would say that we just got the presentation from MRIP, which is essentially the culmination of three years of side-by-side on the effort survey and their efforts to bring in previous side-by-side on the APAIS changes and put that all out there comprehensive, and so I think there is a pretty good model within the agency as far as how do you go about then transitioning from the existing survey into whatever can come out of this. I think we can rely on Dave and others to help guide us through that, and I would expect that there will be a similar effort for calibration and transition and everything that SEFHIER will probably have to move into a couple of years down the road.

DR. FARMER: Yes, and my understanding is that it will need to go through a similar certification process as these various other elements that MRIP has been adding through time to improve their catch and estimation programs, and we have the MRIP staff heavily involved in the survey design for SEFHIER, and we have also called upon the MRIP consultants and given them a presentation and a white paper to chew over, which has fed into some of our initial discussion with regard to coverage levels and personnel and that sort of thing, and so we're all working together on that, and it's good that we need three years of calibration, because I'm sure it will take quite a bit of effort to bring this very different program online for all those vessels. Again, it really -- The clock starts when we can start getting robust catch estimates from SEFHIER, which is going to be an important thing for the council to discuss, how to go about making that happen.

MR. PHILLIPS: Okay. Do we have any other questions for Nick? Seeing none, Nick, thank you for the answers and the presentation. Even though we're not scheduled for a break for a little while, I think we're going to go ahead and get our break before we start Exempted Fishing Permits. We will take ten minutes.

(Whereupon, a recess was taken.)

MR. PHILLIPS: All right. If we can kind of start gathering on up to the table. We want to call the South Atlantic Council back to order, and we're going to start with our EFP request, and we had an overview on Monday. Then the public had the option to give comments, and so this is one of our -- I guess I will say it's one of our more contentious issues, and so I'm going to start with letting the Chair of HMS start, and then I will come to the other side of the table and go to Chester.

Being in the spirit of the South Atlantic Council, we're going to conduct ourselves, and not that I have any doubt, but just so noted, because we can agree to disagree, and then we'll just kind of see how it comes out. That being said, those are the ground rules, and I will start with -- One other note. John has got the presentation up, if we need to go back through the presentation and look at anything, pull up any numbers or verify something, and, that being said, John, do you have anything to say?

MR. HADLEY: There are no additional comments from me.

MR. PHILLIPS: All right.

MS. BECKWITH: Thanks. I would like to share my perspective on this EFP as a council HMS Committee Chair and as a participant of the HMS AP as well as a member of the ICCAT AC. This is a citizen science project, at its core. It is a cooperative research project which partnered longtime members of the HMS AP, the agency, and the Science Center. Working together, they developed a thoughtfully-designed protocol to collect data necessary to properly evaluate current management measures. It will also pilot new technology with the electronic logbooks and monitoring, paring catch location and geographic details.

I think that, as a council, we can agree that fisheries management is most effective when it's based on sound, rigorous science and up-to-date research. This research, with its ample protocols in place to protect sharks and other protected species, will help evaluate if the original goals of the closure are still being met. This council has had direct experience with closing areas and take of certain species, which comprise collection of data, making it difficult to manage effectively.

Specifically, as a council, our purview for this EFP is habitat, dolphin, and wahoo, and we sent a letter of comment the first time around addressing those concerns. Most of our concerns were taken into account, but we can certainly update that letter, reiterating concerns over our overlapping habitat management areas and suggest that they further reduce the number of sets and hooks, as possible, while still allowing for a highly-confident, statistically-valid result.

We could also suggest that, if they approve the EFP, the agency should require quarterly evaluation of the data to assure that a disproportionate number of juvenile swordfish or excessive bycatch of protected species are not being caught, as well as additional considerations, as needed, for the oceanic whitetip sharks.

As a council, we should encourage the larger data collection effort, promoting use of system management plans, similar to our efforts with our spawning special zone managements, or management zones, and support the concept of citizen science and cooperative research efforts. Additionally, there is an international management component that should be considered. It is

clear that the U.S. is in danger of losing a portion of the swordfish quota to countries with significantly less stringent regulations.

By allowing additional access to an area with the potential to increase swordfish landings, the U.S. will be better able to negotiate and maintain our current quota. We will protect more marlin and sailfish by maintaining our quota than losing it to a less-conservative-minded country. I do not expect this council to support this EFP, but I think we should provide an updated comment letter with appropriate and productive comments for agency consideration.

MR. PHILLIPS: Thanks, Anna.

MR. BREWER: This is the fourth attempt to longline this area, all four of which are associated with David Kerstetter. The last three are associated with Dayboat. Dayboat is an organization, and it is not a citizen, that has been trying to get in and longline this area for years. Dayboat is a very successful company. They started out, just as their name implies, as a buoy gear fish house, and they have been very successful at it.

Now they want to switch over into longlining, and their dock is located right at the foot of the closed area. Now, when I say closed area, that's what this area has been called, in common parlance, and that causes some confusion, because, as actually Tony asked me -- He said, well, why can't you allow commercial fishing in that area, and, in fact, we do. Dayboat Seafood was probably out using buoy gear in that area last night. You can commercially fish that area for all legal species, and you can commercially fish in that area for swordfish, but you use buoy gear and hand gear, hook-and-line.

When I first heard that this thing was coming around again, I was reminded that I had had questions about how many sets would be statistically necessary so that the findings would be statistically valid, and those answers -- I never really got an answer to that, and so, when it came out again, this being the fourth time, I did a little searching around, and I saw a name that was mentioned in the application of a Dr. Steven Smith, and so I called Dr. Smith, and he's down at the University of Miami.

I asked him if he could shed some light with regard to essentially his involvement in the application, and he told me that, yes, he had been consulted by NMFS in the initial stages when they were trying to put together the parameters of the design and whatnot, words that are not really familiar to me, but that he had given NMFS information on how the thing could be set up so that the results could be considered valid. He told me that it was four sets per quarter per area for three years. That's forty-eight sets per year.

I then began reading to him from portions of this application, and when I told him that it was for 1,080 sets per year, he asked me if I was kidding. When I read to him page 13, paragraph 2, he started laughing. For you all that didn't catch it, but Dr. Duval had to read page 13, paragraph 2 to the gentleman that made the presentation. He didn't even realize that it was in there. That is the passage by which David Kerstetter of Dayboat Seafoods can allow other pelagic longline boats to fish in this conservation area in exchange for a contribution fee or whatever you want to call it.

The young man, and I believe his name was Rick Pearson, admitted that negotiations as to what the fee or contribution would be would be between the non-Dayboat boat and Dayboat and David Kerstetter. They would determine how much would be charged to fish in this area.

At the close of my conversation with Dr. Smith, he made me promise that if I mentioned his name that I would tell this council that he had nothing to do with putting this application together other than the consultation early on with the National Marine Fisheries Service and that I would inform this council that he did not know David Kerstetter and he had never even spoken with him over the phone.

We know that, when this permit was granted in I want to say August or so, when the higher-ups at NOVA Southeastern found out that their name was on it, they demanded that it be taken off. David Kerstetter went and, through the Florida Secretary of State, on November 20, 2017, formed Florida Fisheries Solutions LLC, and he put that name on the application page for the associated institution. The entity has one number, one manager, and its place of business is David Kerstetter's home. Now, that might not be that big of a deal, but he put it down as an institution. It's anything but an institution, and that kind of speaks to his integrity.

We talked about some of the bycatch issues, and Mr. Pearson -- I asked him a question about the bycatch of blue marlin, and his response to me was did I realize that the bycatch would go down, and I was flabbergasted. He said, oh, yeah, we did an additional analysis, and I was dumbfounded and didn't react to it terribly well, because I had seen the analysis, and I knew that the bycatch for blue marlin did not go down.

It came to me the other night -- It was running through my head, and it came to me that he's talking about bluefin tuna, which in fact the bycatch will go down, because this area does not have a lot of bluefin tuna. It does have blue marlin, and it does have white marlin, and it does have sailfish, and it does have a lot of juvenile swordfish.

Using Dr. Kerstetter's own numbers from the 2008 to 2010, quote, study, the blue marlin bycatch will be 1,335 animals. The white marlin bycatch will be 391 animals, and the sailfish bycatch will be 2,421 animals. The juvenile swordfish bycatch will be 5,199 animals. To put that into some perspective, and because I've got a fair amount of ICCAT experience as well, the United States allowance for blue marlin, white marlin, and roundscale spearfish is 250 animals, and that's total. We're going to be doing better than that just on blue marlin.

I thought that the announcement that came out from HMS was a little strange, because there was nothing in there -- Normally, they say public comment will be taken, and it will be such and such a date and location and all that. It wasn't in there. Instead, it said that the HMS would consult with us and would consult with the HMS AP. They kind of put us out there, I think, to take the heat, and so we have had a lot of public comment on this, not verbal so much as written.

I looked at the comments this morning, and there is I think 690 comments. Of those, over 630 relate to this EFP application, and there is not a single one that supports or is in favor of this application. Additionally, some groups apparently were putting out alerts, and one or more of them put out my personal email account. I got 200 to 300 emails, which is a different population, I think, and it is a different population than the comments that are on our webpage.

Every single one, every single one, is begging us to please -- They think that we were controlling it. They think that it's in our power to reject it, and they were begging that we reject this thing and not support it. ASA, CCA, the Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation, the Center for Sportfish Policy, RFA, on and on and on, and there has not been any support for this EFP.

Two to three weeks ago, at the Miami Boat Show, Chris Oliver was asked why a permit was issued for Attempt Number 3, and his response was because it was approved by the South Atlantic Council, and so I don't think that reworking the letter that Michelle sent last time is going to be of much benefit. Somebody misinterpreted that letter, or Mr. Oliver was intentionally misled.

When I said there has been no entity that has supported this, I misspoke by one. Somebody sent me, in one of the comments, a news release from the Environmental Defense Fund praising this thing as innovative research and cooperative research, and they used a bunch of words like "geocentric tags" or something, and I didn't understand what it was, but it was obviously talking about the geographical area, and so I got to thinking about, well, exactly where is this thing and what is around it.

I asked Roger if he could take the area that's being suggested to longline in the conservation area and plot it out as to what is there, and Roger was able to do it. This request is asking for permission to longline in the Oculina Bank HAPC, the Stetson-Miami Terrace C-HAPC, and the North Florida MPA. You've got a conservation zone that is superimposed on these areas of concern, and that is why they want to -- That is where they want to longline.

This area was put there for a reason, and the main reason that it was put in place is to stop the killing of juvenile swordfish. It was a problem, and this thing seems to have solved the problem, and so, since it solved it, we are now talking about going back into this nursery. The only reason, the only reason, that Dayboat wants to get in there with longline boats is because it is located, essentially, within I guess maybe sixty miles of the southwest corner of the conservation area.

They have bought a bunch of coastal longline boats from folks that went out of business, and they're not fishing with the blue water fleet, and so they want to be able to longline in an area that is closed to others, but not to them. They want a monopoly to longline in a conservation area, and I think that this council should very strongly, this time, respond to the Highly Migratory Species Division that we cannot support something like that. Thank you.

MR. PHILLIPS: Thank you, Chester.

MR. HAYMANS: I can neither support the request for the EFP. It doesn't -- We have had this discussion at past councils, and, to me, it just doesn't fit the definition for an EFP, which is basically public display, data collection, exploratory fishing, compensation fishing, conservation engineering, health and safety surveys, environmental cleanup and/or hazardous removal purposes.

In his application, he is asking for bycatch determination, to determine catch and bycatch rates of target and non-target species. To me, that work has been done. It's been thoroughly done over the last many years, and, from the other side, if this were the council or NMFS or a state asking for research on this topic to be done in the closed area, I would think that one of those entities could contract that work to this very same entity or someone different, with rigorous scientific

bounds and an observer on the boat, and I would be more inclined to support it, coming from that direction, but this just doesn't pass, in my opinion, the smell test, for many reasons that Chester just outlined, and so I would not be in support of this EFP.

MS. MCCAWLEY: I want to first reference the letter that our commission wrote, signed by our chairman, against this particular EFP, and I can't think of an item that our commission hates more than this particular longline EFP. I just wanted to reiterate some points that are in this particular letter.

First, I would like to say conservation gains lost, and let me say that again. Conservation gains lost. We feel that the improvement for the swordfish, sailfish, and marlin fisheries in the Atlantic off of Florida are likely the result of the implementation and the continued existence of this pelagics longline closed area, and we cannot support any action that may contribute to the reversal of this positive trend, as these fisheries are of significant economic importance to Florida.

Also, I want to talk about swordfish underharvest, and this is something that is outlined in our letter as well. Anna mentioned that the U.S. is not fully utilizing its allocation of swordfish and, therefore, may potentially lose part of that quota allocation. Swordfish harvest had been increasing until 2014, when the new individual bluefin quota regulations were implemented, and, since that time, bluefin tuna dead discards count against that individual bluefin quota. Vessels must stop fishing when they have met their quota, including fishing for species where bluefin tuna may be the bycatch. Vessels are fishing less for non-bluefin tuna species and catching less swordfish because they are reaching their bluefin quota sooner.

Since the bluefin tuna bycatch is possible within the pelagic longline closed area, vessels are not expected to shift their effort to the area after reaching their bluefin quota, and so the reopening of the pelagic longline closed area to longlines will not solve the problem of swordfish underharvest.

I also want to bring up another point in our letter of dusky shark overfishing. Dusky shark is overfished and undergoing overfishing, and the recreational and commercial harvest of dusky sharks has been prohibited since the year 2000. The 2016 stock assessment says that fishing mortality needs to be reduced by 35 percent, and NMFS is actually proposing prohibiting recreational harvest of all HMS sharks, in order to reduce the overfishing.

Given the status of the dusky shark, we do not think that NMFS should consider permitting a study that would expand the use of gear that is known to interact with dusky sharks into an area that is designated as a dusky shark essential fish habitat. This is inconsistent with the 2016 stock assessment for this species and addendum, which identifies that fishing mortality for dusky sharks needs to be reduced by 35 percent.

In addition to that, our letter also goes into looking at how the project will conduct their analysis, and we looked at the proposed methods, and we looked at some of the post-project documentation, and, as outlined in our letter, we don't feel that they're going to provide adequate results for all the hypotheses that are proposed to be tested, nor do we think that what they're suggesting would be accomplished with the proposed project purpose, goals, and objectives.

The post-project documentation, in our minds, is not sufficient to reflect the successful achievement of the project purpose, goals, or objectives. We don't feel that this will provide results

for all the hypotheses that are proposed to be tested, and so we don't feel the data collection activities are justified for authorization. I will not be supporting recommending approval of this EFP. Thank you.

MR. PHILLIPS: Thank you, Jessica. Any other comments?

DR. DUVAL: This is an issue that we have struggled with. I mean, we agree with Anna, with regard to the research goals of the proposed exempted fishing permit, and I think we, as an agency, certainly support the letter that the council sent in last time outlining the concerns that we previously had, some of which were addressed, the concerns with regard to dolphin and wahoo, and the concerns with regard to the overlapping of the council's spatial management areas were not addressed.

I think the reason we have struggled with this is because we do support the research goals, because I think any of our spatial management areas need research in order to determine if they're actually meeting those intended goals. I feel like it's no different than when we put a deepwater marine protected area in place or we put a spawning special management zone in place. There needs to be work that is done to determine whether or not those areas are actually meeting their intended goals and purposes, and that's why the council is moving down the road of a system management plan for these areas.

I think our concerns with regard to this particular project don't have anything to do with the researcher or the proposed methods, necessarily, but I think it's really more the scale of the project. I think we would be more comfortable if the scale of the project was smaller and if it was taking place in a spatially-smaller area and if there were fewer sets. I think, if there were more frequent or quarterly assessment of the activity within the closed area, we might be more comfortable.

I disagree with Doug. I do think this meets the purpose of an exempted fishing permit. It's data collection, but my -- We agree with Anna's comments about the research needs, but I think our discomfort is mostly with the scale of the project and the total number of sets, and I think the other concern, really, that we have here is that we're sort of getting into another management organization's wheelhouse a bit.

Management of highly migratory species is not really the purview of this council. Dolphin and wahoo are the purview of this council, and we have concerns about the overlap with our existing spatial management areas, and so that's why this has been such a struggle, I think, for us with regard to determination of support or not. It might be more appropriate to update the letter that we have already sent, and I don't know if this council is prepared to take a vote or make a motion on support or non-support. If it comes to a motion, based on the concerns that we have about simply the scale of the project, we would not support a recommendation to move forward. Thank you.

MR. HARTIG: I struggle with this as well. I mean, the science would be great to have, but, when you go to what the intent of the science is going to be, the intent of the science is to reopen this area for longlining for swordfish, and we have a vibrant recreational fishery that has developed in this area over the last eighteen years. Not so much when it was just a nighttime fishery, but, in the last six or seven years, as they have developed that daytime fishery for swordfish, there is a lot of recreational fishermen that participate in that fishery, and they are really alarmed at this potential that they could have to be now competing with this long-term for their swordfish.

The other thing is we have a commercial buoy gear fishery. I have three boats, we have three boats, in our Port Salerno Dock Authority that target swordfish with buoy gear, and that fishery has developed over time, and these fishermen do well. They're able to make a living mostly targeting swordfish and not doing much of anything else. Then, long-term, if this goes through and the fishery reopened, they would have to compete with the longline gear, and it wouldn't work. They would be out of the fishery, and so you would be picking winners and losers, long-term, in this EFP for what it is directed to do. The industry, the commercial industry, has adapted over the last eighteen years to be able to continue operations without fishing in this area, and so, putting those together, I can't support this EFP.

MR. PHILLIPS: Thanks, Ben, and, just for some notes, I talked with one of the fishing group reps earlier in the week, and they understand. I think everybody understands that we need to figure out how to get science and know what's going on in closed areas. Even they understood that we need the science to know what the closed areas are doing.

We've got these system management programs that we're coming up with, but they said, well, maybe NOAA can do it and get some money. Well, NOAA really doesn't have the money to do it, and they probably don't have the expertise to do it, and so we need to figure out how to do CRP work with industry that makes sense. Does this make sense or not? I am not going to make that call. I am going to let the committee make that call, but we've got to figure out how, and, like Anna says, we're consulting. We're asked to consult, and so that's what we're going to do, and we're going to do the best we can.

MR. BROWN: Ben, how many buoy gear boats do you think fish in that area, total?

MR. HARTIG: All three fish in a portion of it.

MR. BROWN: No, I mean up and down the coast. I wonder how many there are.

MR. HARTIG: I don't know. There is a number of them. I don't know, and so I'm not going --

MR. BROWN: Don't they do reporting in there, some sort of reporting for them, or --

MR. HARTIG: I absolutely sure that they have reporting requirements, but it's just that --

MR. BROWN: So then you've got data that is coming back.

MR. HARTIG: That would be available. I was kind of looking for it in the EFP, but I haven't found it yet.

MR. PHILLIPS: I had John pull up the letter we sent last time, and so if the council wants to use that for a template, and I guess we will have a motion on what you want sent and how you want it sent and what you want said.

MR. BREWER: First, I do want to make a motion, but I would like to make a request of staff that all of the written comments that we got be transmitted to the HMS Division, so that those comments become part of their record. This is in their wheelhouse, and those comments should

have gone to them in the first place, as opposed to us. Do I need to make a motion to have that done, or is that --

MR. PHILLIPS: No, I think we can do that direction to staff.

MR. BELL: I agree with Chester, because I think what we've become is kind of a conduit, perhaps, or a focal point for a lot of comments, and I think Michelle stated my views on this clearly. I am not comfortable telling HMS to do it or don't do it. It's sort of out of our area of jurisdiction, if we have satisfaction that dolphin wahoo are covered. Yes, there is overlap with areas, but then our interest in area is really on the bottom, but I do think that we've received a lot of input.

I will note that I think 95 percent of what I have seen was through my junk box, and the reason it went to my junk box is because it was all formatted the same way, and it was developed in the same way, and people -- That was an interesting mechanism, that people were passionately commenting, but that's how I received the majority of my input, was the email, and it was kind of all formatted.

The other thing that I am uncomfortable with, and this isn't the first time, is putting on the different hats I wear, and the longline fishery exists, and other fisheries exist, and they have a competing interest sometimes, if you will, and they don't necessarily tend to see eye-to-eye on things, and we're kind of being dragged into the middle of a fight over just whether or not you like this approach or this approach, but I do think Chester's point about simply providing what we have received somehow, if we can do that, that's fine, but it's sort of not our purview to say whether or not that is -- I mean, we can point out that there are perhaps issues that Chester has brought up and others have and that they might want to take another look at this, because some things look a little odd, but that's sort of not our call, I guess, is what I'm saying. Thanks.

MR. PHILLIPS: Thanks, Mel.

MR. BREWER: Now can I make my motion, please?

MR. PHILLIPS: Yes.

MR. BREWER: I agree this is not our wheelhouse, but I think that we can tell them whether we can or cannot support this EFP application. **I would like to make a motion that a letter be sent to Randy Blankenship with a copy to Chris Oliver and a copy to Earl Comstock and a copy to Wilbur Ross stating that the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council does not support the application for an EFP submitted by Dayboat Seafood.**

MR. PHILLIPS: We have a motion. Do we have a second? It's seconded by Jessica. Is there discussion?

MS. BECKWITH: Eventually, I will make a substitute motion, because I actually don't think that this is appropriate, but what I do think is appropriate is that we send a letter to all those individuals with our consultation on the EFP and not stating if we support or don't support it, because it's not in our wheelhouse, and it doesn't matter if we support it or not support it.

What we're concerned with is habitat, dolphin, wahoo, and some additional suggestions that we could provide them for their consideration. I think the points that we need to make are that we reiterate our concerns over our overlapping habitat management zones, which were not taken into consideration the last time, through our first letter, and so that needs to be restated.

I think that we absolutely should suggest that they further reduce the number of sets and hooks as absolutely possible if they're going to move forward with the EFP, that we consider the number of hooks and the number of sets to be too high, and it should be reduced to a number that will still allow for a statistically-valid result with appropriate confidence levels.

I think we should suggest that they require a quarterly evaluation of the data. Right now, it's an annual evaluation, and so, if the agency chooses to move forward with this, I think a productive suggestion from the South Atlantic Council is that they require quarterly evaluation of the data to assure that there is not a disproportionate number of juvenile swordfish or an inappropriate amount of bycatch that wasn't sort of factored into the environmental assessment, so that they can react to those numbers in a quick fashion, and, if there is a lot of swordfish, juvenile swordfish, being caught, then, yes, they absolutely need to stop the EFP, if they choose to move forward with it, but the choice is theirs and not ours.

We need to consult on the things that are practical for us to do, and I also think that we should give them examples of our system management plan efforts, because they should be monitoring their closed areas to see if they're doing what they're supposed to be doing and to figure out a way to get up-to-date research.

With those points in mind, and certainly looking for additional points that we might consult with the agency on this EFP, I would make a substitute motion to send a letter raising our concerns and our suggestions without an explicit support or un-support. I'm fine with sending all of the comments that the council received, but I think this path is a much more appropriate way forward for us to consult with the agency on this matter.

MR. PHILLIPS: All right. We have a substitute motion. Do I have a second on the substitute? It's seconded by Mel. Is there discussion?

MR. BREWER: We did that last time, and they reduced the number of sets from 1,080 per year to 720 per year, when the amount that is necessary to be statistically valid is forty-eight sets per year. They didn't address, contrary to -- Well, they did not address very many of our concerns, but, most importantly, Chris Oliver was told that we approved of that last EFP. That wasn't right. That is not true, and he used that as a justification for the issuance of the permit. I think they need to be told in no -- While it's not in our wheelhouse, we got put in that wheelhouse, and I think we need to tell them, unequivocally, that we don't support this in its current form.

I am not saying that, at some point down the road, if somebody comes in and they want to do or conduct, pursuant to a valid permit, research in this area that is justified, that is minimally invasive, that can generate the needed data, and I will be for that 100 percent, but that's not what we're looking at right here, and we can only speak to what's in front of us, and what's in front of us right now is this application, and we said that we don't approve of this, and maybe they will change it in response to a letter, and maybe they won't, but I think we're pretty clear that we don't approve of this document as it is right now, and so I can't support the substitute motion.

MR. PHILLIPS: I have Jessica and Doug, but I want to ask John a question, and the answer may or may not be in there, but they were talking about the observer coverage and having cameras on the boat, and did it say who was going to pay for all of that?

UNIDENTIFIED: Dayboat is.

MR. PHILLIPS: Dayboat was going to pay for all of that? So, that's -- I can see one reason why they want more sets, because it would take some sets to help amortize that gear and that cost, for lack of other things, and -- Anyway, I was just curious, but we're going to go to Jessica and then Doug.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thanks. I just want to agree with Chester that I think that our letter last time, although I think it has some really good suggestions in it, and, yes, they weren't addressed, but I agree that people even asked me that it seems like the South Atlantic approved this EFP, and there seemed to be a lot of confusion and a lot of question about that coming out of that particular letter. I think that, this time -- I agree with Chester that it's not in our wheelhouse, but we are being asked to comment, and I think we need to be more clear in our letter with the suggestions, but stating that we don't approve of it and then here are some of our points, but I agree with Chester.

MR. HAYMANS: Magnuson 600.745(b)(3)(ii) says that that Regional Administrator or Director may consult with appropriate councils concerning the permit application during the period in which comments have been requested. I guess the definition for "consult" could be up for argument, but, in my opinion, that extends to this council's ability to provide a written comment letter suggesting either we agree with or we don't agree with, and I think it's within our right to suggest that as part of the consult.

I was also reminded by Roger that there is other gear in that area, i.e., it's the Northern rock shrimp area and there is golden crab area both inside these closed areas that could have potential conflict with the high number of sets that are in the application, and so, again, I think it's perfectly within our right to make an up or down recommendation, based on the consult.

DR. DUVAL: I disagree that the letter that was sent in last time wasn't clear, unless you're illiterate. The sentence that says, "A vote regarding this EFP was taken by the South Atlantic Council at the council's March 2017 meeting that resulted in an evenly-split opinion as to whether or not to recommend that the EFP be permitted." I disagree that it wasn't clear. Thank you.

MR. BELL: Just following up on something Doug said, related to the habitat piece, if we have some specific concerns related to things that are under our jurisdiction, if you will, then we should comment on those, and, in addition, we can certainly serve as a conduit for all this other input we received, but I think we should stick to what is under our jurisdiction, in terms of yea or nay, and, at this point, I am not saying support it or don't support it, but I am just saying there are things that are under our jurisdiction.

DR. CRABTREE: **I would like to call the question.**

MR. PHILLIPS: You beat me to it. All right. I think we've pretty much covered all the bases, and so we need to have a vote on the substitute motion. **All in favor, raise your hand, seven in**

favor; all opposed, three opposed. The motion passes. That now becomes the main motion, and so, as the main motion, a show of hands in favor of the main motion.

MR. WAUGH: Mr. Hartig.

MR. HARTIG: Yes.

MR. WAUGH: Dr. Duval.

DR. DUVAL: Yes.

MR. WAUGH: Ms. Beckwith.

MS. BECKWITH: Yes.

MR. WAUGH: Mr. Bell.

MR. BELL: Yes.

MR. WAUGH: Mr. Bowen.

MR. BOWEN: Yes.

MR. WAUGH: Mr. Brewer.

MR. BREWER: No.

MR. WAUGH: Mr. Brown.

MR. BROWN: Yes.

MR. WAUGH: Mr. Conklin.

MR. CONKLIN: Yes.

MR. WAUGH: Mr. Griner.

MR. GRINER: Yes.

MR. WAUGH: Dr. Crabtree.

DR. CRABTREE: Abstain.

MR. WAUGH: Mr. Haymans.

MR. HAYMANS: No.

MR. WAUGH: Ms. McCawley.

MS. MCCAWLEY: No.

MR. WAUGH: Mr. Phillips.

MR. PHILLIPS: Abstain, as the Chair.

MR. WAUGH: **The motion carries eight in favor, three no, and two abstentions.**

MR. PHILLIPS: All right, and so are we clear on what is going to go into the letter? We have pretty much reached our time, but I want to make sure that we get in the letter all of the concerns that have been raised here.

MR. HARTIG: Is it appropriate to send the minutes of the discussion to the on this, attached to the letter?

MR. PHILLIPS: If we're going to send all of those emails, I don't see what one more document is going to hurt.

MR. BELL: Regarding the emails, how -- I guess how do we do that?

MR. WAUGH: We can easily package those that came in on the comment form and send them to them, but are you talking about --

MR. BELL: I am talking about what we received that you didn't receive.

MR. BREWER: I mean, I've got stuff on there that is attorney-client privilege, and I really would have preferred that whoever put that out put out my SAFMC address, but they didn't, and so all that stuff got mixed in.

DR. DUVAL: I think we can send all of the comments that came in on the online comment form. There is six-hundred-and-some-odd of those, and that was the vast majority of all the comments that were received. I think, Chester, when you asked about appending those comments to the letter, that's what I thought you were talking about, was all of that online comment. I agree with that, and I agree with Ben's suggestion to send the minutes of this discussion, and I think perhaps we could send the minutes of the discussion that we had in March of last year. I think that would be appropriate as well.

The other thing that I would add to the list of points is I think we need to state our disappointment that the overlap of this project with our council's managed habitat areas was not addressed. We appreciate the -- I think we can acknowledge and appreciate the measures that were implemented -- Well, not implemented, but the measures included in the final EA with regard to dolphin and wahoo that did address some of our concerns, but I think we need to point out our disappointment with regard to the habitat overlap.

MR. BREWER: That package is going to need to be put together pretty quickly, because they are moving, and have moved, very rapidly with regard to this particular EFP, and it might be that our package gets there after they issue the permit, the way they're moving.

MS. BECKWITH: I will send those suggestions that I made on the record to John in writing, so he's got a reference, my suggestion that they require the quarterly evaluation of the data and also, of course, that they further reduce the number of sets and hooks as possible and so on.

MR. GRINER: Could we also reference our earlier letter, the part about that, in March of 2017, we did take a vote, and just reiterate that, back then, we were split and that we did not see the need to vote on something this time that's really not in our purview?

MR. PHILLIPS: But we did vote. All right. Gregg says we'll have this ready to go out early next week, and I think this is going to be a pretty thorough letter and explain exactly where we are and everybody's concerns, with all the comment that we got online, and that will go, and so I would hope that they got what they asked for. Is there anything else? John, are you good over there?

MR. HADLEY: I believe so, and we'll get this drafted up fairly quickly and turn it around.

MR. PHILLIPS: Thank you very much, and I want to thank the committee. They did a very good job of making your points and counterpoints, and I appreciate the discussion. We are going to move on, I think, to our committee reports. Give me just a second to get back on the right page. Michelle, you get to start with Snapper Grouper.

DR. DUVAL: All right, and we do have some outstanding items to address here at Full Council specifically with regard to Regulatory Amendment 26 as well as golden tilefish, and so we'll go ahead and get into the committee report.

The committee met on March 6 and 7, and we approved our minutes from the December 2017 meeting and the agenda, and we received an update on the status of commercial and recreational catches versus quotas for species under annual catch limits. We received an update on the status of amendments under formal review, and then we jumped into Amendment 46, which is recreational reporting and best fishing practices, and so we provided guidance and made the following motions.

The first motion is to approve inclusion of Action 1 in Amendment 46 and approve the range of alternatives under Action 1 for detailed analysis, and, on behalf of the committee, I so move. Is there any discussion? Any opposition? Seeing none, that motion stands approved.

The next motion was to approve inclusion of Action 2 in Amendment 46 and approve the range of alternatives under Action 2 for detailed analysis, and, on behalf of the committee, I so move. Is there any discussion? Any opposition? Seeing none, that motion stands approved.

We did provide guidance on this action to restructure the alternative to reflect how Action 1 is structured, with options for vessel and individual fishermen, and to provide alternatives for frequency of reporting as well as including the pros and cons of individual versus vessel reporting under this action.

Motion Number 3 was to remove Actions 3 and 4 from Amendment 46 and create a separate amendment (framework), and, on behalf of the committee, I so move. Is there any discussion? Any opposition? Seeing none, that motion stands approved.

We also provided guidance on these actions, with regard to enforceability, some language changes, how best fishing practices could be encouraged, and some other language changes, in order to provide consistency and clarity.

Next on our list was the Vision Blueprint Regulatory Amendment 26, which is the recreational amendment, and so one of the things that I would like to tackle right now, as you see highlighted in blue, is to discuss and select a preferred alternative under Action 1, and one thing I want to draw the committee's attention to is the flowchart that has been appended to the last page of the committee report, and so I think hats off to Mary Vara and the Regional Office for putting this together, because I think it really clarifies how -- It provides the big picture of how this amendment is structured.

I have also talked to Chip and Myra about some other visual aids that we could include in whatever goes out in the public hearing summary of this amendment, so that folks have some sense of how these different aggregates would work, in terms of like the total number of fish that they have the potential to keep under these different aggregate groupings, and so I am hopeful that this will help facilitate selection of a preferred alternative under Action 1.

I think this is probably one of the -- We skipped around, in terms of our preferred alternatives on this amendment, and I think this might be one of the most important actions to provide a preferred for, because it informs the public of the direction that we're leaning towards, and so is there a desire on the part of the committee to select a preferred?

MS. BECKWITH: I move that we select, under Action 1, Alternative 2 as our preferred.

DR. DUVAL: There is a motion by Anna to select, under Action 1, Alternative 2 as our preferred. I will just note that there are a couple of sub-alternatives in there, and so 2a is to include our species that already have individual bag limits, and those will be black sea bass, vermilion snapper, greater amberjack, hogfish, and red porgy, into this other shallow-water species aggregate. Sub-Alternative 2b is to exclude those. Now, you don't necessarily have to pick a preferred sub-alternative right now. I just wanted to bring this to the committee's attention. Is there discussion on the motion?

MS. BECKWITH: I have sort of arrived at this alternative. I don't have an opinion yet on the sub-alternatives, and that's why I didn't specify that. I think we would need some more discussion on that, but, based on some of the bag limits that we chose later on in the document, it seems like the original concern over the shallow-water snappers could be taken into account via the bag limits for that other shallow-water species, and so the additional aggregate would be unnecessary, and so that's how I arrived at that conclusion.

MR. PHILLIPS: Michelle, was there a second?

DR. DUVAL: I don't believe there was a second. Doug seconds for discussion. Thank you for keeping me straight, Charlie. That's good.

MR. PHILLIPS: You trained me.

DR. DUVAL: Are there other thoughts on this? Again, when this comes back to the committee in June, you may decide that, based on public comment, you select a different preferred, and I think that it's just important to at least give some indication to the public on a direction that we might want to go, and so is there any other discussion on this motion?

MR. HARTIG: Functionally, with the bag limits we chose, and I can't remember what those were right off the top of my head, but was that ten? I can't remember. I just want to see how this would work with the bag limits that we chose, and that was all.

DR. DUVAL: Right, and so there are a few -- We selected a few preferred alternatives, and I am sort of scrolling back up to -- We did not select a preferred alternative for bag limits under the deepwater aggregate, and we were unable to -- We had a couple of failed motions for selection of a deepwater aggregate bag limit, and what we did under the shallow-water grouper aggregate was we added a new sub-alternative that was three fish with no more than one of any one species, and then we selected that as a preferred. Then we did not select preferreds for the rest, and so I think, if you select a -- Just because the committee has selected a preferred, it does not mean that you cannot change that preferred alternative based on public input.

That's where you are. You actually have not -- The only one of these aggregates for which you have selected a preferred, in terms of a bag limit, is the shallow-water grouper, which was that three fish and no more than one of any one species. Does that help inform people's ability to take a vote on this motion? Myra, can you put the flowchart back up again, please? Can I at least get a little input on the flow chart? Do people feel like this is useful to include in the public hearing summary? Okay. Great.

MR. BELL: The motion was to adopt the entire Alternative 2 as preferred, and so --

DR. DUVAL: Right, and that just sort of outlines what other actions you would need to address when you select that --

MR. BELL: That was the direction you're going in.

DR. DUVAL: Exactly. As Anna said, she didn't specify a sub-alternative as to whether or not to include or exclude those species that already have recreational bag limits, in the hopes of getting some input on that. Okay. Is the committee ready for the question? Okay. **Is there any opposition to this motion? Seeing none, that motion stands approved.**

I think it's important to note that we have provided a bunch of guidance on -- **I am getting ahead of myself, and so we're on Motion Number 4, which was to select Sub-Alternative 2b, May 1 through August 31, under Sub-Action 2.1 as the preferred, and, on behalf of the committee, I so move.** Is there any discussion? **Is there opposition? Seeing none, that motion stands approved.**

I will just draw your attention to the guidance that we provided, which was -- I think the most important was to retain specification of the recreational season in the title of the sub-action and to modify that language accordingly to present expected changes in landings and numbers of fish, instead of percentages, and include that clarification that the in-season closures have influenced those landings and intercepts and clarify why the predicted reductions for snowy and blueline,

which reflect current recreational seasons for those species, include some discussion of the goal and the intent of this action, language regarding just the low level of information that we have and the high level of uncertainty in the analyses, and so I just wanted to make sure that folks know that this was all included.

The next motion was Motion 5, which was to select Alternative 2 under Sub-Action 2.2 as a preferred, and, on behalf of the committee, I so move. Is there any discussion? Any opposition? Seeing none, that motion stands approved.

The next motion was to select Sub-Alternative 2f under Sub-Action 2.3 as a preferred, and that motion failed, for lack of a second. We had another motion to select Sub-Alternative 2c under Sub-Action 2.3 as a preferred, and, again, that motion failed, for lack of a second.

MS. BECKWITH: **I would remake the motion to select Alternative 2, Sub-Alternative 2f. I think Ben had made that motion, and I had not seconded it, because I think my true vision is to have one bag limit without any exceptions, but, given that that's not getting a lot of traction at the council, then I do think it's important that we go out with a preferred, and so I would remake Ben's motion to choose Alternative 2, Sub-Alternative 2f, which is three fish per person, with the existing restrictions on golden tilefish, snowy, and wreckfish, and choose it as a preferred for public comment.**

DR. DUVAL: Is there a second to that motion? It's seconded by Ben. Is there discussion on that motion? **Is there any opposition to that motion? Seeing none, that motion stands approved.**

Again, we provided guidance on this sub-action as well, and then we moved on to Sub-Action 2.4, which is the last of the actions pertaining to the deepwater species aggregate. **Motion Number 6 was to select Alternative 2 under Sub-Action 2.4 as preferred, and, on behalf of the committee, I so move. Is there any discussion? Any opposition? Seeing none, that motion stands approved.**

The next motion, Motion Number 7, was to move Sub-Action 3.1 to the Considered but Rejected Appendix. **We had a substitute motion to select Sub-Alternative 2a under Sub-Action 3.1 as the preferred, and that is the January through May spawning closure. The substitute motion became the main motion, and that was approved by the committee, and, on behalf of the committee, I so move. Is there any discussion? Is there any opposition? Seeing none, that motion stands approved.**

The next motion, which doesn't have a number next to it, was to select Sub-Alternative 2a under Action 3.2 as the preferred, and, again, this would have specified an aggregate bag limit for the shallow-water grouper aggregate. That motion failed. The next motion, Motion Number 8, was to select Sub-Alternative 2d under Action 3.2 as a preferred. **We had a substitute motion to add a sub-alternative to specify a three-fish aggregate bag limit, where no more than one fish can be of any one species in the aggregate. That substitute became the main motion, and that main motion was approved, and, on behalf of the committee, I so move. Is there any discussion? Any opposition? Seeing none, that motion stands approved.**

The next motion was to select the new sub-alternative as a preferred, and, on behalf of the committee, I so move. Any discussion? Any opposition? Seeing none, that motion stands approved.

Next, we had a discussion on improving recreational estimates, and you can see all the bullet points of our discussion included there in the report. After that, we had a presentation by Dr. Kari MacLauchlin on the socioeconomic profile of the South Atlantic snapper grouper commercial fishery, and, after that, we jumped into Vision Blueprint Regulatory Amendment 27, and we made the following motions.

Motion Number 10 was to select Sub-Alternative 3c under Action 1 as a preferred. **We had a substitute motion to select Sub-Alternative 3a as a preferred, and that substitute motion became the main motion and was approved by the committee, and, on behalf of the committee, I so move.** Is there any discussion? **Any opposition? Seeing none, that motion stands approved.**

Motion Number 11 was to select Alternative 2 under Action 2 as a preferred. We had a substitute motion to select Alternative 1 as a preferred, and the substitute motion failed. **We then had a substitute motion to select Alternative 3 as a preferred, and that substitute motion was approved and became the main motion, and, on behalf of the committee, I so move.** Is there any discussion? **Is there any opposition? Seeing none, that motion stands approved.**

Motion Number 12 was to select Sub-Alternative 4a under Action 3 as a preferred. **We had two substitute motions, the second of which was to select Sub-Alternative 2c as a preferred, and that substitute became the main motion, and that motion was approved by the committee, and, on behalf of the committee, I so move.** Is there any discussion? **Any opposition? Seeing none, that motion stands approved.**

Motion Number 13 was to select Alternative 2, Sub-Alternative 2c, under Action 4 as a preferred, and, on behalf of the committee, I so move. Is there any discussion? **Any opposition? Seeing none, that motion stands approved.**

Motion Number 14 was to select Alternative 2, Sub-Alternative 2b, under Action 6 as a preferred. **We had a substitute motion to select Sub-Alternative 2a as a preferred, and the substitute became the main motion, and the main motion was approved, and, on behalf of the committee, I so move.** Is there any discussion? **Any opposition? Seeing none, that motion stands approved.**

Motion Number 15 was to select Alternative 3, Sub-Alternative 3a, under Action 7 as a preferred, and, on behalf of the committee, I so move. Is there any discussion? **Is there any opposition? Seeing none, that motion stands approved.**

Motion Number 16 was to move Alternative 2 under Action 7 to the Considered but Rejected Appendix, and, on behalf of the committee, I so move. Is there any discussion? **Any opposition? Seeing none, that motion stands approved.**

Motion Number 17 was to select Sub-Alternative 2a under Action 8 as a preferred, and, on behalf of the committee, I so move. Is there any discussion? Is there any opposition? Seeing none, that motion stands approved.

Motion Number 18 was to select Alternative 2 under Action 9 as a preferred, and, on behalf of the committee, I so move. Is there any discussion? Any opposition? Seeing none, that motion stands approved.

Motion Number 19 was to approve Vision Blueprint Regulatory Amendment 27 for public hearings, and, on behalf of the committee, I so move. Is there any discussion? Any opposition? Seeing none, that motion stands approved.

We actually need a motion to approve Vision Blueprint Regulatory Amendment 26 for public hearings. We failed to do that, and so I would entertain a motion from the committee at this time.

MR. CONKLIN: I will make that motion, that we approve Vision Blueprint Regulatory Amendment 26 for public hearings.

DR. DUVAL: Motion by Chris. Is there a second? It's seconded by Anna. Is there discussion? Is there any opposition? Seeing none, that motion stands approved.

Next, we had a discussion on the snapper grouper for-hire permit moratorium, and you can see all of the points of discussion that we had. If you scroll down past those bullet points, you can see a list of items to be added to the scoping document, additional background information, further develop the bullet points under why is the council considering action, ways to address regulation that prevents charter vessels with federal permits from possessing species that are open to harvest in state waters, but closed in federal waters.

There was an option to tie a permit to a person or entity rather than a vessel and some clarification on Coast Guard inspection requirements, including requirements of the Magnuson Act and the National Standard Guidelines in the scoping document, and research and information on other moratoriums that might have been implemented, and you will see that there's a note at the bottom that it's the understanding of staff that no sections or subjects included in the options paper presented will be removed before scoping occurs. I think we gave direction that we wanted to see all of those discussion questions in the scoping document. I think the one clarification that staff would like is what you all would like to see again in June, should Motion Number 20 pass.

MR. BREWER: I am confused, because I thought that we were going to try to have the additions to the scoping document in some kind of format prepared for Full Council, so that we could look at the final scoping document.

DR. DUVAL: I think Gregg clarified that staff is good, but they're not that good, and so it was to send to John additional bullets of items that you would want to see included in the scoping document that would be prepared.

MR. BREWER: So we're not going to see the final scoping document before it goes out? Is that what you're telling me?

DR. DUVAL: Unless the motion fails or you would like to make a substitute motion, once I offer it up on behalf of the committee.

MR. BREWER: I would like to make a substitute motion then.

DR. DUVAL: Well, let me get the motion on the floor for the committee, so that you can make a substitute. **Motion Number 20 was to send Snapper Grouper Amendment 47, the for-hire permit moratorium, as modified, out for scoping in April of 2018, and, on behalf of committee, I so move.** Is there discussion?

MR. BREWER: **Madam Chair, I would like to offer a substitute motion that the scoping document be modified, in accordance with either instructions to John or taking a look at the transcript of the committee meeting and pulling from that the different options that were set forth there and have that scoping document ready for the June meeting, so that we can vote it up or down once we have the full document to look at.**

My discussion here is there are times when will ask staff to modify a document or modify an issue or a point in a certain way, but that issue is in front of us to ask and to say what modifications we would like staff to make. Here, I had a whole series of new options, and not modifications, but brand-new options, and it was voted on that, with those options included, that it could go out for scoping, but we haven't seen the scoping document yet, and I think that it would be appropriate to go over the scoping document in June and vote it up or down, whichever.

DR. DUVAL: Doug, is that a second to the motion? Okay. Great. I appreciate that, Chester, and, again, I just want to make clear that, if you have any other specific additions that you want to see added, I strongly encourage you to email those to John. Certainly he will go back and read the minutes to capture, and he was taking notes to capture what you said, and I think a lot of those are captured in these bullet points here, but, if there's anything additional, definitely send it his way.

MR. HAYMANS: I would simply reiterate what you just said. Page 3, John, the bullet points that are there of why is the council considering action, I would just like to see those bullet points fleshed out a little more, such that there is justification for each of them. Thank you.

DR. DUVAL: Thank you, and so let's go ahead -- Is there any other discussion before we take a vote on this?

MR. HARTIG: Motion 20 is as modified, and the substitute motion is as modified, and so what's the difference?

DR. DUVAL: I think the difference is that Chester is saying, with this motion, that it would be modified according to the council guidance and prepared for the June council meeting, and so, instead of going out to scoping now, between now and June, it would come back to the council in June for review and then you would vote to send it out to scoping. Any other discussion? **Is there any opposition to this motion, five opposed; those in favor, seven in favor. The motion passes seven to five.** Thank you.

Next on our list was red grouper rebuilding, and the next motion was to direct staff to begin an amendment to revise the rebuilding plan for red grouper, and, on behalf of the committee, I so move.

MR. PHILLIPS: Didn't that become the main motion?

DR. DUVAL: You're right. Sorry. I am just trying to move us along. Okay. The substitute motion becomes the main motion. **Could I please see a show of hands of the folks in favor of the main motion, in favor of the main motion, seven in favor; those opposed, five opposed. The main motion passes.** Thanks, Gregg. Man, I am falling down.

Now we can move to red grouper rebuilding, and so Motion Number 21 was to direct staff to begin an amendment to revise the rebuilding plan for red grouper, and, on behalf of the committee, I so move. Is there any discussion? **Any opposition? Seeing none, that motion stands approved.**

Next, we took a dive into Regulatory Amendment 28, which is golden tilefish, and this is something where we have a little bit of work left to do still, and so I'm going to start with the first motion. **Motion Number 22 is to approve the range of alternatives under Action 1, as modified, and, on behalf of the committee, I so move.** Is there any discussion? **Is there any opposition? Seeing none, that motion stands approved.**

The next motion, Number 23, was to select Alternative 2, ACL equals ABC, under Action 1 as the preferred alternative, and, on behalf of the committee, I so move. Is there any discussion?

MR. PHILLIPS: I think I talked to Roy, and we were going to -- I would like to recognize Roy and Erik from the Science Center.

DR. CRABTREE: We heard a lot of comment about the magnitude of the buffers. We heard that Tuesday night at the Q&A and then in public comment, and so I just had a question for Erik. My impression is the P* approach that has been applied to this golden tilefish assessment has resulted in what seems to be an unusually large difference between the OFL and the ABC, and I am just wondering if that's true, one, and, two, if it is true, can you explain why that is?

DR. WILLIAMS: Thank you, Roy. Yes, for whatever reason, this stock assessment is showing an unusually high level of uncertainty compared to our other assessed stocks. We actually spent a little time trying to figure out what the source of that was, because it struck us as well, and we were unable to pin it down to any one particular cause, but it is true that this stock, for whatever reason, is showing unusually large amounts of uncertainty.

DR. CRABTREE: I guess my question for the council is do you want to try and pursue this again? You've got one more SSC meeting, and I guess the question would be do we want to again explain to the SSC that we're concerned about the magnitude of the buffer and that we're willing to accept more risk and go to some approach like 75 percent of FMSY, which is what was used in the interim rule, and would be at that level? I guess that would be up to the council as to what you want to do.

MR. PHILLIPS: Maybe John can come up to the table, and maybe we can reframe the question to the SSC, so it's not the same question that we've been asking before.

DR. DUVAL: I would certainly recommend that, since there is a pretty detailed discussion of the SSC's response to some of our previous requests in the April 2017 SSC report.

MR. CARMICHAEL: We've been trying to work, the last couple of days, to come up with something and capture the concerns that have been raised, working with Ben and Roy and others to maybe have something to clarify what the council is asking of the SSC and why. That is what this addresses. I will probably just go ahead and say it.

The council is willing to accept the risk of overfishing associated with an ABC of 362,000 pounds whole weight for 2019 and 2020. This is the ABC level currently implemented through an emergency rule for 2018. The council accepts the risk associated with this ABC level for the following reasons. The council can accept a higher risk level, based on prior discussions regarding ABC control rule modifications. Both the council and SSC agree that it is the council's responsibility to set the accepted risk of overfishing. Revisions to the ABC control rule are currently under consideration by the council, and that would allow the council to specify the risk level, but such provisions are not yet in effect. The SSC has the ability to deviate from the existing ABC control rule. This ABC level will only be in effect until the next assessment is completed, and a standard assessment is planned in 2019 to address the issues noted by the SSC with the previous update. I think, once I read these last couple, we'll talk about that a little bit.

The level of harvest proposed by the council is in effect for 2018, and projections indicate that it will result in a fishing mortality rate of 0.173, below the overfishing limit of FMSY equals 0.24, and so that's from the projections that you guys looked at, and I think that's an important fact. This level of harvest represents a 42 percent reduction from the annual catch limit that was in effect prior to 2018 and was in effect during the 2012 to 2014 period that led to the stock assessment finding that overfishing was occurring. This is a significant reduction from what we had in place in the terminal years.

The current management actions successfully controlled the fishery to the ACL from 2012 to 2017, and cumulative commercial landings total 1.02 percent of the commercial ACL, and annual landings exceeded the ACL in only one of those six years, and so that makes the point that the management uncertainty is fairly low in this stock. We have done a very good job of managing it.

The P* approach applied to golden tilefish has resulted in an unusually large difference between OFL and ABC, creating the largest buffer of any South Atlantic Council-managed stock. This unusual buffer has been acknowledged by the SEFSC and discussed by the SSC on previous occasions. No clear explanation for it is available, and that's what Erik was just mentioning. There is no one single thing that we've been able to put our finger on that says this is really what's going on with this stock and why we're getting such a high buffer that has been discussed so many times.

The council is concerned by the considerable social and economic impacts resulting from the current ABC recommendation. The last time the SSC talked about it, there was some discussion by them about that they didn't feel that the council had really stated that was one of the reasons the council was coming back to the SSC and that perhaps, if the council had been more clear about

trying to moderate those social and economic impacts, which is part of the council's responsibility, then perhaps that would be a better justification for looking at alternatives.

Then the last point is the golden tilefish fishery is primarily, 97 percent, allocated to the commercial sector. Primary harvest occurs in the longline fishery, which takes place over about three months, from an opening on January 1 to a closure around mid-March, when its ACL is met. This isn't a fishery where you have say the recreational uncertainty, which can be so powerful, and where you have the large recreational discards, which can be such a concern, or you have something that is difficult to control and manage, and this is just a point that may not be at the front of the mind of many of the SSC members when they're not thinking about say this fishery and depth, when they're looking at an assessment or something, but it certainly gets to the potential for overfishing resulting from discards and things of that nature.

DR. CRABTREE: Just one question. The 2019 assessment, my understanding is, because this fishery mostly takes place very early in the year, that we could likely get the ages earlier and then have this assessment in front of the council in time to do an abbreviated framework and adjust the TAC for the 2020 season. I guess, to Erik, is that doable?

DR. WILLIAMS: Yes, and I consulted with Jennifer at our lab, and she said, if she can get the ages by April, which I think is reasonable, that she can have them done by December, and so we could start the assessment essentially in December then, at that point.

DR. CRABTREE: So what you're really talking about here is the 2019 catch levels, and then, beyond that, it would be set based on the new assessment.

DR. DUVAL: I guess maybe just a couple of questions. It seems like this is going to require a substitute motion, since the motion we have on the floor is to select this preferred alternative. Then this will still, Roy, require the council to go ahead and extend, potentially, depending on what the SSC says -- If the SSC comes back with advice in June, if this substitute motion comes forward - - I guess my question speaks to the emergency rule, if that's going to need to be extended for another six months.

DR. CRABTREE: That needs to be extended under any circumstance, because the handline fishery and all would still be going on, and so, regardless of what we do here, we need to extend that.

DR. DUVAL: Okay. I just wanted to make sure that everybody understood that we would still need to extend the existing interim rule, which is at this level that we're asking the SSC to reevaluate based on our acceptable level of risk that we are willing to incur.

MR. PHILLIPS: Madam Chair, you may have to help me wordsmith it, but I think the substitute motion would be select Alternative 1 and take it back to the SSC with all the reasons that were laid out here before us and look at it again in June. Is that how we would phrase it?

DR. CRABTREE: I would not select Alternative 1. I would just refer this back to the SSC, and then we'll choose a preferred at the next meeting.

MR. PHILLIPS: Okay, and so we just want -- **The substitute motion would then be to de-select Alternative 2 as a preferred and send this back to the SSC with our rationale for looking for the 75 percent FMSY.**

DR. DUVAL: Yes, and so let's let Myra get the wording of the substitute up here on the screen, but is there someone willing to second that substitute motion? Jessica. As part of that motion, do we need to include the refer the selection of an ABC back to the SSC, with the rationale provided? Would that be helpful? Roy is nodding his head. Okay. I like it when Roy nods his head yes.

MR. CARMICHAEL: Michelle, one clarification. Where I said the commercial had been at 1.02 percent, I actually meant 102 percent. It's only been 2 percent over for that like five-year period, and that was on one year, where it was like 125 percent of the quota. Most years, you do quite well, and so don't think they're leaving a ton of fish unharvested.

DR. DUVAL: Thank you, John. Okay. Any discussion on the substitute?

DR. CRABTREE: I just think -- I guess, for John, assuming this passes and you go back to the SSC, make it clear that we're not asking them to revisit the stock assessment, and we're not questioning the assessment here, but this is just about the application of the control rule and the risk policy of the council.

DR. DUVAL: Any other discussion?

DR. CHEUVRONT: This is going to have some implications on the document that you're going to see in June, in terms of what's going to get into the briefing book in time. The SSC meeting is in the first week of May, and your briefing book is due I think at the end of the second week of May, and so it's going to depend on how we're going to get all of that analysis done and get it all to you, in case this changes. I am just letting you know, upfront, that we'll do what we can to get this to you, but I'm just saying that it may take us a little time to do more work on the document after the council meeting to get it ready to be sent in for secretarial review, and so we now have a really tight timeline to put a document together for you all.

We're going to do the best we can. We'll get you the best document we can, but don't expect a ready-to-submit document in June, should this change, and I just wanted to not give you false expectations of what you're going to see. We'll get you what you want, but I'm just not sure how the timing of it is all going to work out.

DR. DUVAL: Thanks, Brian. We definitely appreciate that, and I think your workload might be reduced once we get to the other actions that were included in this document, because my sense is that the committee will probably address some of those as well. Is there any more discussion on this motion? **Is there any opposition to this motion? Seeing none, that motion stands approved, and it now becomes the main motion. Is there any opposition to the main motion? Seeing none, that motion stands approved.**

We did not -- We punted on discussing any of the additional actions in Regulatory Amendment 28, which were modifications to the longline trip limit, an action that would have included a one-week-on-and-one-week-off and two-weeks-on-and-two-weeks-off type of fishing approach, and then the final action, which was to modify the start date of the golden tilefish hook-and-line sector.

I think we received public comment from folks indicating that they were not interested in changing the longline trip limit, and I think we received public comment from folks that they were not interested in a one-week-on-one-week-off or two-weeks-on-two-weeks-off type of thing. The public comments that I did see were in regard to the hook-and-line start date of the fishing year, and so, in the online comment form, we had several comments of folks who were in favor of changing that start date to sometime in the fall, and so what is the committee's pleasure?

MR. HARTIG: Essentially, we can get rid of those two options that you mentioned at the public hearing, because I had conversations with fishermen as well, and we could never arrive at any consensus on any of those, and so I think we're safe in removing the under the longline actions, to remove those two from consideration, move them to the Considered but Rejected.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Ben, but don't we want to look at changing the start date of the fishing year?

MR. HARTIG: Yes, we do, and that was the third action in that amendment.

DR. DUVAL: It was actually Action 4 in the document, and so I think you would be removing Actions 2 and 3, and, Brian, was this even -- Do they even need to be removed to Considered but Rejected, or it's just remove them from the document? Okay. I would entertain a motion in that regard.

MS. MCCAWLEY: **I move that we remove Actions 2 and 3, but leave Action 4 in the document.**

DR. DUVAL: We have a second by Chris. **The motion is to remove Actions 2 and 3, but leave Action 4 in Regulatory Amendment 28.** Any discussion on this? **Is there any opposition to this motion? Seeing none, that motion stands approved.**

MR. WAUGH: Before we leave golden tile, was there any action to request an extension of the emergency rule, because it sounds like we need to do that.

DR. CRABTREE: We will, and we're working on that now, but we won't file it until after the June meeting, and so I think you can wind up all of this in June and take care of it.

DR. DUVAL: Great. Thank you. Next, Brian gave us a presentation on the wreckfish ITQ review, and we provided guidance with regard to review of the draft document by our advisory panels and with the shareholders, and so the council will see that again in September. Next, we had a discussion about yellowtail snapper, and Jessica provided us with an update on all the conversations that she is having, and so that resulted in the following guidance to look at developing both a short-term and a long-term option, which led to our Motion Number 24.

Motion Number 24 is to direct staff to begin work on an amendment to revise accountability measures for yellowtail snapper to remove in-season closures for either sector until the total ACL is met, and, on behalf of the committee, I so move. Is there any discussion? **Any opposition? Seeing none, that motion stands approved.**

Next, we provided some guidance on the vision blueprint review and how to obtain public input on that. Next, we went to the system management plan review guidance and provided input on what the review should look like, as well as a report card. Finally, we got to modifications to sea turtle release gear and the snapper grouper framework, and so we provided some suggestions with regard to language and made the following motion.

The motion is to recommend taking sea turtle release gear document to scoping, and, on behalf of the committee, I so move. Is there any discussion? Any opposition? Seeing none, that motion stands approved.

We also tackled a couple of items under Other Business, one in regard to gear conflicts between fishermen using commercial spearfishing gear and hook-and-line gear, and we also discussed the topic of regional quotas, and a motion to begin development of a white paper to explore regional commercial quotas was offered up and failed.

Next, we have a timing and task motion, which is to direct staff to continue development of Amendment 46, including Actions 1 & 2, and begin work on a separate amendment to address Actions 3 & 4 and prepare a scoping document for Amendment 47 according to the committee's guidance, and so you will see a scoping document in June. I think that next timing and task item of conducting scoping for Amendment 47 via webinar and during the spring 2018 Snapper Grouper AP meeting probably needs to be removed. The next is to prepare Vision Blueprint Regulatory Amendments 26 and 27 for public hearings in the spring of 2018; obtain input for the vision blueprint biennial evaluation via webinars and listening stations, as appropriate; request input from the SSC, Law Enforcement AP and Snapper Grouper AP on the draft wreckfish ITQ review; complete the evaluation of the spawning SMZs system management plan by December; conduct a meeting with wreckfish shareholders in late June or early July; prepare the wreckfish ITQ review document for the September 2018 meeting; begin work on an amendment to address management of yellowtail snapper according to the committee's guidance; and begin work on an amendment to address sea turtle release gear and revisions to the snapper grouper framework and conduct that scoping via webinar.

Then I think Jessica had made a point, and I'm not sure this is necessarily a tasking, because it's not a tasking of council staff, but that the FWC was going to make a request of the Science Center with regard to yellowtail landings.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Yes, and I saw it listed under yellowtail as "FWRI", and can you put that as just "FWC"?

DR. DUVAL: Yes, we can make that correction. Up under yellowtail, we just need to make sure -- It's the second-to-last bullet under yellowtail snapper, and the second sentence in there should read "FWC" instead of "FWRI". Are you guys all caught up down there?

DR. CHEUVRONT: There is, on the first item, under the timing and task, it's just a wording clarification. Amendment 46 was going to be the recreational permit stamp and reporting, and I believe that was Actions 3 and 4, and then Actions 1 and 2, which are fishing-gear-related things, were going to be done as a framework amendment.

DR. DUVAL: Actions 1 and 2 were the stamp and the recreational reporting, and Actions 3 and 4 were the gear and best practices.

DR. CHEUVRONT: Okay.

DR. DUVAL: Then the only correction, Myra, that we wanted to make to the committee report, if you scroll back up to the yellowtail snapper stuff, if you change “FWRI” to “FWC”. Then we’re good. Then I would need someone to make this timing and task motion.

MS. MCCAWLEY: **I move that we approve the timing and task motion.**

DR. DUVAL: It’s seconded by Ben. Any discussion? **Is there any opposition? Seeing none, that motion stands approved.** Is there any other business to come before the Snapper Grouper Committee?

LCDR BENNETT: Myra, did you change -- I think it was Motion 17, but the language -- In terms of the way the language was kind of funky, and it allowed the sale of catch in the EEZ, and did you change that language in the document?

MS. BROUWER: I haven’t changed it yet, but I did capture that as guidance, because it is incorrect, and so I do have it in my notes to go ahead and change it. Thank you.

LCDR BENNETT: Thank you.

DR. DUVAL: Any other business? Seeing none, Mr. Chairman, that concludes my last Snapper Grouper Committee Report.

MR. PHILLIPS: Thank you, Michelle. (Applause) All right. We’ve got a good bit of work to do, and we’re scheduled to leave at 1:00, and so we were going to work, obviously, through our lunch, and my suggestion is that we take a quick, ten-minute break and then get ready and just come back and power through and finish up.

MR. HAYMANS: Who is up next, Charlie?

MR. PHILLIPS: It will be Ben with Mackerel.

(Whereupon, a recess was taken.)

MR. PHILLIPS: All right. Let’s gather around the table, so we can do our Mackerel Report.

MR. HARTIG: The Mackerel Committee met yesterday afternoon, and the committee, after we approved the minutes and the agenda, we received a report from SERO on the status of commercial catches versus the quota for species under ACLs. The next order of business was a discussion of king mackerel tournament sales versus commercial ACLs, and, under that discussion, we had direction to staff to look into how MRIP accounts for tournaments when calculating landings and effort estimates.

The next order of business was an update on the state implementation plans for ASMFC's Interstate Plan for Atlantic Cobia, and, under that, we had a presentation by Bob Beal. The state implementation plans are scheduled to become effective in April of 2018. There was additional clarification provided on the recreational payback provision in the draft FMP shared with council members in September of 2017, and it was that the final ASMFC Interstate FMP does not include a payback requirement for overages in the recreational fishery. If a state exceeds their three-year harvest target, that state would be required to adjust its management measures to prevent future overages, but the state's share will not be reduced.

After that, we had Coastal Migratory Pelagics Amendment 31, which was Atlantic cobia management. We had lots of discussion under this. **The first motion was to accept the IPT's recommended wording change for the purpose and need, and, on behalf of the committee, I so move.** Is there any discussion?

MR. BELL: I was just going to point out that South Carolina is fine with moving forward with this process. Our issues were associated with timing, and that was our big concern, in terms of 31.

MR. HARTIG: All right. Thank you. That was actually under Motion Number 2.

MR. BELL: I'm sorry.

MR. HARTIG: That's fine, but just a point of order. Any further discussion under the IPT's recommended wording? **Is there any objection to that? Seeing none, that motion is approved.**

That brings us to Motion 2, which was to approve Coastal Migratory Pelagics Amendment 31 for formal secretarial review and deem the codified text as necessary and appropriate. Give staff editorial license to make any necessary editorial changes to the document/codified text and give the Council Chair authority to approve the revisions and re-deem the codified text, and, on behalf of the committee, I so move. I think we're going to have some discussion.

MS. SMIT-BRUNELLO: I wanted to bring up a real serious concern that I have on the legal sufficiency of the current document, and I know Shepherd talked to you yesterday. Was it yesterday? It seems like several days ago, but I think it was yesterday about problems that he saw with the document as well.

When I looked through the document, and I looked back and looked at red drum, and I looked at all kinds of things, and I just see this gaping hole, which is what's going to happen in federal waters when, for example, Amendment 31 is approved and Atlantic cobia is taken out of the FMP? Right now, the amendment says it's expected that, if you chose Preferred Alternative 2, the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission would extend regulations into federal waters and Atlantic group cobia would be managed under the Interstate FMP, but that's what it says is expected. There is nothing in the record right now that says what is going to happen.

When I look back at other fisheries that you have taken out of various FMPs, for example blue runner and octocoral, and these are mentioned in the document too, those were predominantly harvested and landed in Florida. Florida had adequate management, and that was documented in the amendment, and I think, in at least one case, and maybe more, the commission came in and

extended management. They said they were going to, and that was in your record before you took final action.

You had some species, puddingwife, one of my favorite-named species, but puddingwife and a few others were taken out in another amendment, and they were minor species, in terms of federal harvest, and there was information in the amendment about how states adequately manage those already.

Then I looked at red drum, and, in red drum, there are letters that are going back and forth and affirmations of what's going to happen in federal waters, and the letters back and forth are you managed that at one point with the Mid-Atlantic Council, and there was a letter to the Secretary to repeal the FMP, but then provide that the current harvest provision would remain in place under the Atlantic Coastal Act.

The commission then sent a letter, and they developed an amendment to their red drum FMP, if I recall, that would essentially manage in federal waters once the red drum was removed from the Magnuson Act, and they sent a letter to the NOAA Assistant Administrator that said that they would do that, manage in federal waters, but put in a prohibition, the same thing that you all had under the Magnuson Act, to ensure continuous protection of red drum in the EEZ.

The reason I am bringing up those examples is because I think we have a big record problem here, in that we don't know what's going to happen. We think we may know what's going to happen, but there is nothing that you know for certain that will happen, and so my advice to you is to not take final action at this meeting, but write a letter to the commission, and they meet in May, I believe, and ask them what is their intention for managing Atlantic cobia in federal waters, much as you did with red drum, so that you can meet these requirements of the Magnuson Act.

For example, when you look to remove a species, you're supposed to know, and not just think what might occur, but the extent to which the fishery will be managed, adequately managed, by another entity, whether it's the state or the commission or whatever else, and so my problem, my main problem, or issue here is that there is a real record problem. It's on legal sufficiency.

I advise you to not take final action today, but then write the commission, and when I asked Bob Beal, off the record, what is the commission going to do, he said, well, the commission is waiting for the council, and I think you all have been waiting for the commission, and so it's kind of a chicken-and-egg thing, and it's this point where we need to create the omelet and ask the commission what they're going to do, so that you know, before this is sent to the Secretary for implementation, what's going to happen in federal waters.

MR. HARTIG: Thank you, Monica. I appreciate you doing that.

MR. BREWER: I am not on that committee, but I heard what Shep had to say, and I share those concerns. The State of Florida is concerned, because, again, we don't know for sure what's going to happen, and, since we don't know what's going to happen or what the findings are going to be with regard to the Atlantic versus the Gulf stocks, I truly felt that it was premature to send this up for secretarial review, and so I would like to -- I don't know whether I want to make a substitute motion.

MR. HARTIG: You can.

MR. BREWER: Okay, and I'm not sure how to wordsmith this just exactly, but -- Yes, sir.

DR. CRABTREE: What I would suggest, if you want to make a substitute motion, is that you ask staff to complete the revisions on Amendment 31 and address the concerns raised by the NOAA Office of General Counsel and bring Amendment 31 back to the council at the June meeting for final action.

MR. BREWER: **What he said.**

DR. DUVAL: I am not seconding it.

MR. HARTIG: You have got a second by Jessica.

DR. DUVAL: I had a question for Monica, and then I have some comments. When red drum was transferred, when did the council take final action versus when the final transfer occurred? In other words, when did the council submit its amendment to remove red drum from federal management? What was the length of time that transpired between when that approval was given to move forward for secretarial review versus when that transfer was complete?

MS. SMIT-BRUNELLO: It was a couple of years, but, before the council submitted -- The council took final action, and I'm not sure exactly when it was submitted, but I believe there was a couple-year lag time, but the council had before it all the information of what was going to occur in federal waters, such that, when the rulemaking was done, it was like one proposed rule that covered that we're taking it away under Magnuson and we're putting it in the requirements under the Atlantic Coastal Act.

One of the reasons, I believe, that there was some lag time was because there were a lot of things that the council was doing at that time, and there was a prohibition on the harvest of red drum under the Magnuson plan, and that was going to be removed and inserted instead a prohibition on the harvest of red drum under the Atlantic Coastal Act.

Unlike the Atlantic cobia situation, you couldn't harvest red drum before, when it was managed under the Magnuson, and you couldn't harvest it in federal waters after, when it was managed under the Atlantic Coastal Act, and so I don't see the delay problems here, because you've got a completely different situation, in terms of people wanting to harvest in federal waters and all of that.

DR. DUVAL: I don't think I can support this substitute motion. I feel like the stakeholders deserve some certainty. The stakeholders from throughout the majority of the region deserve some certainty with regard to the future of management of this species and where it's going, and I appreciate that there are boundary issues. There is going to be a boundary discussion regardless of whether there was Atlantic States involvement in management of this species, and I think my concern is that, with a delay until June, that there is just going to be yet another reason to find yet another delay to move management of this species over to the Atlantic States Commission.

The other concern I have, and this is based on the conversation we had yesterday, is that I think folks are conflating a boundary issue with Atlantic States management, and I think there is some confusion about the role of ASMFC, and so there is no role of ASMFC in making any kind of stock boundary decision. That is completely a Gulf and South Atlantic Council decision, and the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission will respond to whatever decision is made by the councils in that regard.

They are not going to be involved in it, and I know that our Gulf Council Chair, and our Gulf Council liaison, was concerned about having the possibility of a negotiation between the Gulf Council and the ASMFC, and that is not -- That negotiation occurs between the Gulf Council and the South Atlantic Council in response to the stock ID advice, and I will just note that -- I mean, the Gulf Council has a fishery management plan for red drum, and there is no negotiation between the Gulf Council and the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission, which manages red drum on the Atlantic Coast.

I appreciate the legal concerns, and I would say that, when we turned over management of some species to the states and removed them from our management unit, like sheepshead, we didn't -- North Carolina didn't have management in place for sheepshead. We had to go through a rulemaking process to actually develop that, and so it seems like there is a little bit of inconsistency in terms of what we view as sufficient management when we're removing things from the fishery management unit, and so I will just leave it at that. I appreciate those legal concerns, but I think I'm not going to be able to support the substitute. Thank you.

MS. MCCAWLEY: I have a question. Remind me when the stock ID workshop is again, because, if it occurs before the June council meeting, can we not have preliminary information also at the June council meeting about the results of that stock ID workshop?

MR. CARMICHAEL: The stock ID workshop is the second week of April, and then the peer review is the week right before the June council meeting, and so we will have -- We will know what went to the peer review, and we will know what they discussed, but then the process doesn't wrap up until later, because then there's an SSC group review of it and then the next steps, but we'll have a good sense in June.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thank you.

MR. BELL: Just a couple more things. From our perspective, the majority of our fishery in South Carolina is still in federal waters. The majority of our fishery is actually focused in the southern part of our state, primarily on artificial reefs off of the Beaufort County area, and, in that area, we know, through documentation, there are a number of Georgia-registered boats, non-trailerred, that fish those reefs.

The thing that I can't explain to my folks right now is -- The way this is kind of proceeding is that, if South Carolina were to extend its current management approach into federal waters, it would be more conservative than let's say the current Georgia approach, but we would not be able to hold Georgia fishermen on our artificial reefs to the same conservation level that we would be holding our own fishermen to.

That presents some issues for us, and that's just one of the things that we were kind of struggling with, in terms of how do we do that, but, again, our initial concern was a matter of timing of this, when we were discussing implementation by late 2018 or early 2019. For us to make the necessary changes to have something in place to serve as a safety net to catch cobia, related to the regulatory process, we have to work through our general assembly process, and we're trying to do that this year.

If we're not successful this year, then next year, and then the soonest we would probably be able to have something in place would be July of 2019, and that's why, again, I go back to the timing being an issue for us, but we don't want to be in a position where there is nothing -- We would actually lose our size limit everywhere, because we depend upon that federal size limit in statute, and we would lose our bag limit everywhere other than this little southern cobia management zone in state waters, and so that's why timing, for us, is extremely critical, but there is some details that we still haven't tried to figure out how we're going to manage that, and that's in federal waters, because the majority of our fishery is in federal waters still.

MR. HAYMANS: I would prefer not to support the substitute, but I would like to ask Roy a similar question to what I asked at the commission, and that is that, with the states that have passed and implemented their new plans, do you feel pretty certain that there should not be a closure in federal waters this year, based on the plans that are out there?

DR. CRABTREE: Right now, what I expect will happen is that, once -- I think Virginia's season will probably be the latest-running season, and it could be North Carolina, but, once that latest-running season closes and the states are closed, we would probably close federal waters at that point, figuring that the ACL has likely mostly been caught, but I don't anticipate it closing until the state seasons have run their course.

DR. DUVAL: To that point, I just wanted to let folks know that our season proposals are May 1 through the end of the year.

DR. CRABTREE: In that case then, my expectation is that federal waters will remain open.

MR. HARTIG: Okay, and so we've had some discussion on this, and I have a point of clarification. It seems to me that the ASMFC could move their regulations into the federal waters or the individual states could be dependent on moving their individual regulations into the federal waters, and are those actually two functional ways that that could occur?

MS. SMIT-BRUNELLO: Yes.

MR. HARTIG: Thank you. All right. We have a substitute motion, and the substitute motion is to request staff to make the requested revisions to Amendment 31 and address NOAA General Counsel's concerns and bring the document back to the council in June of 2018 for final action. All those in favor of the substitute motion, raise their hands.

DR. DUVAL: Could I have a roll call vote, please?

MR. HARTIG: We have had a request for a roll call.

MR. WAUGH: Dr. Duval.

DR. DUVAL: No.

MR. WAUGH: Ms. Beckwith.

MS. BECKWITH: Negative.

MR. WAUGH: Mr. Bell.

MR. BELL: Yes.

MR. WAUGH: Mr. Bowen.

MR. BOWEN: Yes.

MR. WAUGH: Mr. Brewer.

MR. BREWER: Yes.

MR. WAUGH: Mr. Brown.

MR. BROWN: Yes.

MR. WAUGH: Mr. Conklin.

MR. CONKLIN: Yes.

MR. WAUGH: Mr. Griner.

MR. GRINER: No.

MR. WAUGH: Dr. Crabtree.

DR. CRABTREE: Yes.

MR. WAUGH: Mr. Haymans.

MR. HAYMANS: No.

MR. WAUGH: Ms. McCawley.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Yes.

MR. WAUGH: Mr. Phillips.

MR. PHILLIPS: Yes.

MR. WAUGH: Mr. Hartig.

MR. HARTIG: No.

MR. WAUGH: **The motion carries eight to five. It now becomes the main motion.**

MR. HARTIG: All right. It's the main motion. Do you want a roll call vote on that as well, or no? Okay. **Those in favor of the main motion, raise their hand, eight in favor; all those opposed, five. Eight in favor and five opposed. The motion carries.**

DR. CRABTREE: I would also ask, Charlie and Gregg, that the council send a letter to Bob Beal at ASMFC, letting them know what our preferred alternative is and that we are planning to take final action in June and then asking what the commission's plans are for regulations in the EEZ, to address some of the issues that Monica raised.

MR. HARTIG: I will say one more thing. I mean, I voted no, mainly because I see this snowballing, and Michelle did allude to it. We will have a peer-reviewed result from the stock ID workshop, and that is one thing, but then the assessment is the other, and then the SSC review of the assessment is the other, and then the projections are another, and then, for me -- I mean, I heard your intent, Roy, was to do it in June, and that's fine, if we can do that in June, but I do not want to see this go down the path where we wait until the projections are finalized before we make a decision on this amendment, and so that's just my -- Go ahead, Roy.

DR. CRABTREE: I understand all of that, and I don't want to see this delayed either, but my concern is, if we took final action on an amendment that our attorneys are telling us they don't believe is legally sufficient, then we're going to get in far worse shape and problems that way than if we try to resolve these issues. It's kind of complicated, and it's not something that we do all the time, and so we just need to make sure that we do it right, but I want to get this done as much as anybody, and we're going to work hard between now and June to try to do that.

MR. HARTIG: Thank you. All right. That takes us to, I believe, Coastal Migratory Framework Amendment 6, Atlantic king mackerel trip limits. After extensive discussion, we had a motion under that Framework Amendment 6. **The motion is to select Action 1, Alternative 3 as the preferred, and, on behalf of the committee, I so move.** Is there any more discussion? **Any objection? Seeing none, that motion is approved.**

We have a timing and task motion. I don't know what in the world it's going to look like now. It will be different than the one that's in your report. **The motion is, and I will read it and see if it fits everything that has transpired. Determine how the Marine Recreational Information Program deals with tournament landings when making landing and effort estimates; prepare Coastal Migratory Pelagic Amendment 31 for the April 2018 Gulf** -- Is that the one?

MS. WIEGAND: The Gulf Council is planning on meeting and discussing this amendment at their April meeting, and so we will want a document prepared for them to discuss. If it's not the final one that you guys approve, they will have to meet again, but it would be appropriate for them to go ahead and discuss it at this point.

MR. HARTIG: Okay, and so we will prepare Amendment 31, not final for 31, for the April 2018 Gulf Council meeting. Number 3 was make the requested revisions to Coastal Migratory Amendment 31 and address NOAA GC concerns and bring the document back to the council in June for final action. Then send a letter to ASMFC asking how they intend to deal with regulations in federal waters under Coastal Migratory Pelagics Amendment 31, Action 1, Preferred Alternative 2, removal of Atlantic cobia from the Coastal Migratory FMP. Develop draft Coastal Migratory Pelagic Framework Amendment 6 with approved actions and alternatives to be approved for public hearings at the June 2018 meeting.

MS. BECKWITH: I was just wondering, and you may have said it, and I may not have heard it, but is there any way that we could get the letter out to ASMFC and the additional information in so the Gulf Council can take final action on this before it comes to us, if our preferreds are already stated? Can we get the additional information in?

MS. WIEGAND: I can make sure that getting that letter out is a top priority, but I'm not sure what their briefing book deadline is for their meeting in April, which is -- The committee meets on April 17.

MR. WAUGH: The Gulf Council meeting is the week of April 16, and ASMFC meets the week of April 30, and so I don't know that we can get a letter of response back from the commission prior to their April meeting. We will certainly get the letter to them next week.

MS. SMIT-BRUNELLO: Anna, I think the Gulf Council meets the week after the South Atlantic Council, and is that correct, in June, and so they could see it immediately after you all -- Assuming you're going to approve it and all of that, and the record is straightened out, they could see it the next week.

MR. HARTIG: Chris is the liaison for the Gulf. He will carry the water for us. All right. Would someone like to make that timing and task motion?

MR. CONKLIN: **So moved.**

MR. HARTIG: Motion by Chris, and second by Charlie. Any more discussion? **Is there any objection? Seeing none, that motion is approved.**

Is there any other business to come before the Mackerel Committee? Seeing none, that concludes my committee report.

MR. PHILLIPS: Thank you, Ben. Well done. We are going to go, hopefully, to an easier report with Ms. Jessica with Spiny Lobster.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The Spiny Lobster Committee met earlier this week, on March 5. The first thing that they did was talk about the status of the spiny lobster catch versus the ACL and about how National Marine Fisheries Service had recently sent a letter to both councils stating that the ACT had been exceeded, but, in that letter, they stated that, given that Regulatory Amendment 4, which is going to increase the ACT, is currently in rulemaking, that the review panel, which is the accountability measure, is unnecessary at this time.

We also got an update on the status of Regulatory Amendment 4, and then we started talking about Spiny Lobster Amendment 13, and this is the amendment to update federal regulations to align with the State of Florida's spiny lobster regulations. The following motions were made.

The first motion was to approve the IPT's recommendations for the purpose and need statement, and, on behalf of the committee, I so move. Any discussion? Any objection to that motion? Seeing none, that motion stands approved.

Do we need to -- Since we're going to modify the purpose and need again, do I need another motion to approve the updated purpose and need?

MS. WIEGAND: Yes, I think you would need another motion, or at least guidance to staff to make sure that the language of the purpose and need matches the language of Action 5.

MS. MCCAWLEY: There is a draft motion on the board, but what has happened here is remember we're trying to merge the procedure and the protocol for how these regulations are modified in the future between the State of Florida and National Marine Fisheries Service, and we're trying to make that one document, and so there would be some additional deletions that are needed in the purpose and need statement.

DR. DUVAL: **I move that we approve the purpose and need, as modified.**

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thank you. Is there a second to that? It's seconded by Ben. Under discussion, is there any discussion on that? **Any objection? Seeing none, that motion stands approved.**

The next motion was to approve the IPT's recommended changes to Action 1, and, on behalf of the committee, I so move. Any discussion? Any objection? Seeing none, that motion stands approved.

There was direction to staff to include a discussion of other spiny lobster permits that are required and a discussion on how the updated regulations in this action and alternative would aid law enforcement efforts. **There was also a motion to accept the IPT's recommended wording for Action 2, Alternatives 1 through 3, and, on behalf of the committee, I so move. Is there any discussion? Is there any objection? Seeing none, that motion stands approved.**

The next motion was to accept the IPT's recommended wording for Action 3, Alternatives 1 through 2, and, on behalf of the committee, I so move. Is there any discussion? Any objection? Seeing none, that motion stands approved.

The next motion was to accept the IPT's recommended wording for Action 4, Alternatives 1 through 2, and, on behalf of the committee, I so move. Is there any discussion? Is there any objection? Seeing none, that motion stands approved.

There was direction to discuss separating the definition of artificial habitat and harvest restrictions into two separate actions, and that will be an IPT discussion. **Motion 6 was to accept the IPT's recommended wording change for Alternatives 1 through 2, and, on behalf of the committee, I so move. Is there any discussion? Any objection? Seeing none, that motion stands approved.**

The committee also made a motion to not require review of regulations and analyses by the SSC and advisory panels through the enhanced cooperative management procedure, and, on behalf of the committee, I so move. Is there any discussion? Is there any objection? Seeing none, that motion stands approved.

We also have a timing and task motion. Let me read those points. We have a numbering problem there, and there is actually four items. **The timing and task is to develop draft Spiny Lobster Amendment 13 with approved actions and alternatives to be approved for public hearings at the June 2018 meeting; work with FWC to identify how artificial habitat regulations are enforced in Florida state waters; combine the enhanced cooperative management procedure and protocol into one cohesive document; work with NOAA GC and FWC to ensure the enhanced cooperative management procedure meets NEPA and APA guidelines and reflects the federal rulemaking timeline.** I am looking for someone to make that timing and task motion.

MR. HARTIG: **So moved.**

MS. MCCAWLEY: It's moved by Ben and seconded by Charlie. Is there any discussion? **Is there any objection? Seeing none, the timing and task motion is approved.** That concludes my committee report.

MR. PHILLIPS: Thank you. Next up is Mr. Chester with his AP.

MR. BREWER: Okay. Watch me work. This will be the report of the AP Selection Committee. The committee met in closed session on Monday morning, and it seems like a long time ago. The committee approved minutes from the September 2017 meeting, the committee agenda, and addressed the following items. We have I think it's sixteen motions to bring before the Full Council. The committee received a review of the structure and function of the SMP Workgroup and approved the following motions as recommendations to the council.

Motion Number 1 is appoint Kerry Marhefka, Tom Roller, Dr. Sandra Brook, Dr. David Gilliam, Chris Taylor, Dr. Lora Clarke, and Dr. Pat Harris to the System Management Plan Workgroup. On behalf of the committee, I so move. Is there any discussion? Seeing none, is there any opposition to the motion? Seeing none, the motion stands approved.

The next motion was to appoint Dr. Brian Walker and Jason White to the SMP Workgroup. On behalf of the committee, I so move. Any discussion? Seeing none, any opposition? Seeing none, the motion stands approved.

Motion Number 3 is to send a letter to staff at NOS requesting Dr. Chris Taylor be appointed as the NOS representative on the SMP Workgroup. On behalf of the committee, I so move. Is there any discussion? Seeing none, is there any opposition to the motion? Seeing none, the motion stands approved.

The committee received applications for the Dolphin Wahoo, Habitat, Law Enforcement, Mackerel Cobia, SEDAR Pool, and Snapper Grouper Advisory Panels and approved the following motions as recommendations to the council.

Motion Number 4 is to reappoint Dr. Steve Ross, Thomas Jones, and Bill Parker to the Habitat AP. On behalf of the committee, I so move. Any discussion? Any opposition? Seeing none, the motion stands approved.

Motion Number 5 is to reappoint Dr. James Geiger to the Habitat AP. On behalf of the committee, I so move. Is there any discussion? Any opposition? Seeing none, the motion stands approved.

Motion Number 6 is to appoint Michael Pittman to the Habitat AP. On behalf of the committee, I so move. Any discussion? Any opposition? Seeing none, the motion stands approved.

Motion Number 7 is to appoint Kevin Roberson to the Law Enforcement AP. On behalf of the committee, I so move. Is there any discussion? Any objection? Seeing none, the motion stands approved.

Motion Number 8 is to reappoint Ira Laks, Steven Swan, Steve English, and Robert Olsen to the Mackerel Cobia AP. On behalf of the committee, I so move. Is there any discussion? Is there any objection? Seeing none, the motion stands approved.

Motion Number 9 is to appoint Keith Bowen to the Mackerel Cobia AP. On behalf of the committee, I so move. Is there any discussion? Is there any opposition? Seeing none, the motion stands approved.

Motion Number 10 is to appoint Collins Doughtie to the Cobia Sub-Panel of the Mackerel Cobia AP. On behalf of the committee, I so move. Is there any discussion? Any opposition? Seeing none, the motion stands approved.

Motion Number 11 is to appoint Dr. Stephen Turner and Christopher O'Brien to the SEDAR Pool AP. On behalf of the committee, I so move. Is there any discussion? Is there any objection? Seeing none, the motion stands approved.

Motion Number 12 is to reappoint Bob Lorenz to the Snapper Grouper AP. On behalf of the committee, I so move. Any discussion? Any opposition? Seeing none, the motion stands approved.

Motion Number 13 is to re-advertise the open South Carolina seat on the Snapper Grouper AP. On behalf of the committee, I so move. Is there any discussion? Is there any opposition? Seeing none, the motion stands approved.

Motion Number 14 is to appoint Ron Rozier to the Snapper Grouper AP. On behalf of the committee, I so move. Is there any discussion? Any opposition? Seeing none, the motion stands approved.

Motion Number 14 is to appoint James Paskiewicz to the Snapper Grouper AP. On behalf of the committee, I so move. Is there any discussion? Any opposition? Seeing none, the motion stands approved.

We had one timing and task motion, and that was Motion Number 16, which is to re-advertise an open seat on the Mackerel Cobia AP. On behalf of the committee, I so move. Is there any discussion? Any opposition? The motion stands approved. Mr. Chairman, were you timing me?

MR. PHILLIPS: No, but you do good work.

MR. BREWER: Thank you.

MR. HARTIG: Point of order. Do you need someone to make that timing and task motion?

MR. BREWER: Somebody needs to make it?

MR. HARTIG: Mr. Chairman, I will make the timing and task motion as stated.

MR. BREWER: Is there a second? Seconded by Chris. Is there any discussion on the motion? **Any opposition? Seeing none, the motion stands approved.**

MR. PHILLIPS: Well, you were doing good work.

MR. BREWER: I know, but he messed me up.

MR. PHILLIPS: All right. Next up is the SEDAR Committee, and so I'm going to do that. There are no motions, but I will go through the report real quick. The committee met on March 7, and the committee approved the minutes from the December 2017 meeting and the agenda for this meeting.

Under Assessment Priority Updates, council staff provided an update of SEDAR projects that are underway. Assessments of black sea bass and vermilion snapper will be reviewed by the SSC in May. The council staff gave a presentation on the SEDAR process and the role of the SEDAR Committee.

Science Center SEDAR Improvements, under Other Business, Dr. Cisco Werner, Acting Director for the Science Center, gave a presentation on the approaches for increasing assessment productivity. This included implementing the research track and operational assessment framework and providing interim analyses of assessed stocks. The SSC will review an example interim analysis at its May meeting. The committee supports efforts to increase productivity.

SEDAR Steering Committee guidance, the committee provided the following guidance for the South Atlantic SEDAR Steering Committee representatives: request addressing red grouper through the first MRIP revision assessment; conduct the next king mackerel assessment as a standard assessment; request that the Science Center provide guidance on stocks to consider for a first benchmark assessment in 2023 and 2024, considering the priority stocks based on the prioritization tool and wreckfish. No motions were made, and that is the report of the SEDAR Committee, and now we will go to the ABC Committee. Did we have questions? I am sorry.

MS. BECKWITH: I might have missed it under Other Business in SEDAR, but I just wanted to note that, due to travel constraints, I'm not going to be able to attend the cobia stock ID workshop

in April. I have asked Tim if he would be willing to go in my stead, and I just wanted to bring that out to the committee. I had let Julia and John know previously.

MR. PHILLIPS: You all just want to swap places?

MS. BECKWITH: That's correct.

MR. PHILLIPS: I don't have a problem with that.

DR. DUVAL: The ABC Control Rule Committee of the Whole met on March 8, and we approved the minutes from the December 2017 meeting and the agenda, and John guided us, very masterfully, through our ABC control rule amendment discussion of all the actions and the alternatives.

Our first motion was to approve the purpose and need statements and allow the IPT to add language clarifying the council's role in specifying risk tolerance, and, on behalf of the committee, I so move. Is there any discussion? Is there any opposition? Seeing none, that motion stands approved.

Our next motion was to amend the Snapper Grouper, Dolphin Wahoo, Golden Crab, Sargassum, and Coral FMPs through the Comprehensive ABC Control Rule Amendment, and, on behalf of the committee, I so move. Is there any discussion? Any opposition? Seeing none, that motion stands approved.

Next, we had a discussion about recreational accountability measures, and Dr. Brian Chevront led us through that, and we provided some guidance with regard to additional items that we wanted to see in there pertaining to consideration of *de minimis*, flexibility to respond to overages through management measures, and we had some advice from the Regional Office with regard to advance notice of closure dates for all species and the administrative burden that would create. Then we had some questions about recalculating ACL estimates for all recreational species in numbers of fish. Then we get to a timing and task motion. I would be looking for a motion from the committee to adopt the timing and tasks, as indicated on the screen.

MR. CONKLIN: **So moved.**

DR. DUVAL: Motion by Mr. Conklin, and is there a second? It's seconded by Charlie. Any discussion? **Any opposition? Seeing none, that motion stands approved.** Mr. Chairman, that concludes the ABC Control Rule Committee Report.

MR. PHILLIPS: Thank you very much, Michelle. Chester, that's how it's done. Next is SOPPs and Chris.

MR. CONKLIN: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

MR. PHILLIPS: Citizen Science. Sorry about that. I'm just seeing if you all are paying attention.

MR. BROWN: The committee approved the March 2018 Citizen Science Committee meeting agenda and the minutes from the December 2017 meeting. Staff presented a summary of the

development of the work of the Action Teams as it relates to the South Atlantic Citizen Science Program Blueprint recommendations, and the recommendations were an overview of the development and membership of the Action Teams, the draft program recommendations from the five Citizen Science Action Teams and an overview of the 2018 tasks to be completed by the Action Teams.

The committee also provided guidance on the recommendations from the Action Teams. Specifically, they supported the communications approaches presented and recognized the importance of securing long-term operational funds to support the program and identifying potential cost savings for using citizen science approaches to address data collection and research needs and the importance of developing comprehensive training plans for projects that are conducted under the program. No motions were made during the discussion, and no further business was brought before the committee. Mr. Chair, this concludes my committee report.

MR. PHILLIPS: Very good, Mark. Now Habitat.

MR. HAYMANS: Mr. Chairman, the Joint Habitat Protection and Ecosystem-Based Management Committee, Shrimp Committee, and Golden Crab Committee met on Jekyll Island on March 5. We tackled habitat and ecosystem issues first and reviewed the December 2017 minutes and the agenda. There was a discussion from Roger regarding the Fishery Ecosystem Plan II implementation plan and the two-year roadmap and the dashboard. We also discussed the habitat ecosystem model development and tools, and there was a series of motions made.

The first motion is to approve the FEP II implementation plan. On behalf of the committee, I so move. Is there any discussion? Is there any opposition? Seeing none, that motion is approved.

Motion Number 2 is to approve the FEP II two-year roadmap. On behalf of the committee, I so move. Is there any additional discussion? Any opposition? Seeing none, that motion is approved.

Motion 3 was to approve outstanding FEP II sections of South Atlantic Food Webs and Connectivity and South Atlantic Climate Variability and Fisheries, Shallow-Water Coral, and Artificial Reefs for incorporation into the FEP II dashboard. On behalf of the committee, I so move. Any discussion? Any opposition? Seeing none, that motion is approved.

There was some additional work, or at least comments, left to be incorporated on the Live Bottom Habitat Section, and I think Roger has incorporated those, and so I would entertain a motion to approve the FEP II Live Bottom Habitat Section.

MR. BROWN: I will make that motion.

MR. HAYMANS: Thank you. Is there a second? Thank you, Chris. Any additional discussion? **Any opposition? Seeing none, that motion is approved.**

Now the giant leap. **With all of this incorporated, I think we are now ready to entertain a motion to approve the Fishery Ecosystem Plan II and FEP II dashboard.**

DR. DUVAL: **So moved.**

MR. HAYMANS: Thank you, Dr. Duval. Is there a second? Chester, thank you so much. Any additional discussion? Roger, would you like to say anything before this final vote? **Any opposition? Seeing none, the Fishery Ecosystem Plan II and FEP II dashboard are approved.** Thank you, all, for enduring that process for about the last two-and-a-half or three years.

Moving on, the Habitat Protection and Ecosystem Based Management Committee, Shrimp Committee and Golden Crab Committee met jointly to address possible adjustments to the Golden Crab Allowable Fishing Areas and Rock Shrimp Fishery Access Areas. The Shrimp and Golden Crab Committees approved their minutes from June 2015.

There was a discussion about these allowable fishing areas. Council staff presented a draft options paper on the possible adjustments to Golden Crab Allowable Fishing Areas and Rock Shrimp Fishery Access Areas based on previous minutes from the Golden Crab and Deep-water Shrimp APs.

The golden crab fishermen requested additional access areas in the Northern Zone, where there have been some reports of fishing in the past. The rock shrimp fishermen requested the eastern edge of the Oculina Bank Northern Extension be revised to allow access to historical fishing areas. The council indicated there was interest in developing an amendment to address the golden crab access area and the boundary for the Oculina Bank Northern Extension established in Coral Amendment 8. The joint committee also discussed the current managed area transit provisions for shrimp vessels and requested a document that would describe different provisions for the South Atlantic region of the cold-water shrimp closure, MPA, OHAPC, Mid-Atlantic and New England transit provisions for deepwater coral, and Gulf of Mexico shrimp transit provisions.

Motion Number 4 then was to begin an amendment for Shrimp Amendment 11 and Coral Amendment 10. On behalf of the committee, I so move. Any additional discussion?

MR. PHILLIPS: When you get to timing and task, I would like to add direction to staff to add an action for the golden crab allowable area, Northern Area, for possible VMS, if they're going to fish up there, and so I would like to add that to timing and task, and I figured that I would just put that in now.

MR. HAYMANS: Thank you. I'm looking at Roger. Have you got that?

MR. PHILLIPS: In the Northern Area, or maybe an option for all areas, but some options for VMS for the golden crab.

MR. HAYMANS: I will look back at Roger again. Have you captured that for timing and task? Okay. That was discussion. Any additional discussion on the motion? **Any opposition? Seeing none, that motion is approved.**

Although that was the conclusion of the business during the committee, there was other business that came up after, in that there was an issue related to a comment letter. A draft letter, which you

will find attached at the end of this committee report, proposing the council's comments on the 2019 to 2024 National OCS Oil and Gas Leasing Draft Proposed Program and Programmatic EIS.

Comments and supporting documentation are to be submitted online by March 9, 2018, and, if you're paying attention, that's today. The draft letter relays the council's official position, as shown in previous correspondence, and so we sent letters in April of 2015 to BOEM and in July of 2016 to Eileen Sobeck and in April of 2017 to Secretary Zinke. The draft letter and previous letters relay the concerns about sound impacts, as reflected in the council's Policy on Energy Exploration and Development Activities. The Northeast and the Mid-Atlantic have also made comment.

If you scroll down to the letter in question, there is a couple of comments, and I will draw your attention to the second paragraph. The council, considering the multi-million-dollar recreational and commercial fisheries in our region that would be affected by seismic testing, continues to recommend that seismic surveys not be conducted in areas that will impact EFP and especially in areas designated as EFH Habitat Areas of Particular Concern.

In several places, it's that, and then, finally, in conclusion, the council is concerned about the impact these activities would have on our managed resources and fisheries and the coastal communities generating billions of dollars of revenue in our region. That is the form of a letter that has been sent on several occasions, and I am assuming that, if this motion is proposed and passed, that, with a key stroke, a similar letter will be sent again today.

MR. PHILLIPS: When Gregg gave me the letter, I looked at it, and I read it, and it references the present policy statement is clear that seismic testing will directly impact benthic ecosystems and essential fish habitat and managed species, et cetera. I haven't seen that clear evidence. There is clear concern, but I haven't seen that clear evidence, and I don't know that we have experts on seismic testing, and so that was my concern with the letter as written.

I totally agree, and I believe the council's concern for the commercial and the recreational fishing, and we have concern on drilling. We have concern on what seismic might do, but I don't know that we have clear evidence of what it will do, and that was my concern, and I wanted those parts changed in the letter, and so it's up to the committee on what they want me to sign, but that was my issue. Thank you.

DR. DUVAL: This is the same exact letter that I signed and sent in last April, and so I think that the experts that are sitting on our Habitat and Environmental Protection AP -- I mean, Charlie, I would be happy to send you the peer-reviewed journal articles that the State of North Carolina has referenced in our comments on seismic testing and offshore energy exploration and the -- I think a lot of the concern is around there are so many projects being proposed for seismic testing, and so many of them over such a large area, and the repeated exposure impacts.

Certainly one blast is not going to do permanent damage, in terms of dispersal of fish, but it can cause physiological impacts, and there is new evidence that it impacts zooplankton, and so I think -- Again, I'm happy to send you those articles, and it's really, I think, the repeated exposure, and so I think, if you're looking to potentially soften that sentence, I might suggest the present policy statement is clear that seismic testing has a high likelihood of directly impacting benthic ecosystems and essential fish habitat, and so that might address one of your concerns.

MR. BELL: Just to make sure that -- When we were going through this a while back, I actually talked to the guys that were experts in the acoustics aspect, and they were very open, in terms of providing information on how many dBs you have at a certain depth, and then, when you just start thinking about it, like Michelle was saying, it wasn't necessarily just one impact, but it could be multiple, and so the concern, I think, was based on their own input to us, and then there are certain things in the literature, but then there's certain things that aren't, but that is -- Like we weren't trying to become experts in acoustics or anything, but we did talk to them, or I know that I personally talked to the people that were experts in it.

MS. BECKWITH: While I am comfortable with Michelle's edit to that sentence, I do feel that this is a topic for us to take a position on, and this letter does raise it to the concerns that I personally have on seismic testing and just the large amount of requests for permits that we're seeing in the region.

MR. HAYMANS: Any additional discussion? Is there general agreement to soften that one sentence a bit? A see a couple of heads nod. Okay. Mr. Chairman, are you okay?

MR. PHILLIPS: I can live there.

MR. HAYMANS: Okay. I would entertain a motion to accept the letter as you see it there on page 2 of my report.

MS. BECKWITH: **So moved.**

MR. HAYMANS: **That motion then, Anna, is for the council to submit a comment letter to BOEM on the 2019 to 2024 National OCS draft proposed program and programmatic EIS.** Is there a second? Second by Chester. Thank you. Any additional discussion? **Any opposition? Seeing none, that motion is approved.**

Finally, there is a list of timing and task options that you see in front of you that will be updated with Charlie's comments. We have the timing and task motion there, and I'm not going to read through them all, but do I have a motion to accept the timing and task?

MS. BECKWITH: **So moved.**

MR. HAYMANS: Motion by Anna. Is there a second? Second by Charlie. Any discussion? **Any opposition? Seeing none, that motion carries.** Mr. Chairman, when I conclude my minutes, you can now move to SOPPs. We're done.

MR. PHILLIPS: Finally, we get to SOPPs. Chris.

MR. CONKLIN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The SOPPs Committee was called to order at 11:10 a.m. on March 8, 2018. The committee approved the minutes. Gregg gave an update of the SOPPs, and then he explained to us that they were still under review with NOAA GC. We reviewed the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council Handbook and suggested changes and approved them. They are in the report.

I was able to reach out to the ED of the Gulf Council, Doug Gregory, and he did clarify that, on page 10, Section IV. B, #4 -- He told me that a highly-compensated employee was either the ED or a Deputy, and so I wanted to add that.

Then we went over some more changes, and the Personnel Committee will meet in closed session on April 10 and 11 of this year to develop additional recommendations to the Handbook and the SOPPs, to be brought before the SOPPs Committee in June. There were no motions during the meeting, but we do have a timing and task motion for staff, and so I will look to someone to make that timing and task motion, which is on page 2 of the committee report.

The motion says to adopt the following timing and tasks: work with NOAA General Counsel to clarify how state representatives can participate on IPTs, as outlined in the Handbook; revise the Handbook based on the approved changes, add any additional recommendations after reviewing the Gulf Council's Handbook, add any additional suggestions from staff, and provide to the Personnel Committee prior to their meeting; incorporate any changes received on the SOPPs and have them ready for the committee in June 2018. If there is nothing else, can I get someone to make that motion?

MR. BREWER: **So moved.**

MR. CONKLIN: Chester makes the motion. Can I get a second? Michelle seconds. Is there any discussion? **Is there any opposition? Seeing none, the motion stands approved.**

There was no other business to come before the committee, and so, Mr. Chairman, that concludes my report. Thank you.

MR. PHILLIPS: Thank you, Chris. Next up, we have the Executive Finance Committee, which met on March 8. The committee approved the minutes from the December 2017 meeting and the agenda. I am not going to read four pages, but I am going to let you all scan through that.

We went through Magnuson-Stevens Act reauthorization, and we went through the final CY2017 expenditures and draft 2018 budget, and then we followed up with council follow-up and priorities. Brian did that. Then we came down and we went through our regulatory reform, and we have our list that we're collecting. Then we had the Atlantic Coast-Wide Group discussion. Gregg reviewed the results from that. Then we talked about council training and webinars. Gregg went through other business, and we're down to our timing and task. We will entertain a motion to adopt the timing and task.

MR. HARTIG: **Move to adopt the timing and task, as stated.**

MR. PHILLIPS: Do we have a second? Second by Doug. We have a motion to adopt the timing and task, as stated. Is there any discussion? **Is there any opposition? Seeing none, that motion is passed.**

Was there any other business to come before the Executive Committee? Seeing none, then we will get into the liaison reports, and so I guess I will start down there with Trish.

LCDR BENNETT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. This is kind of catawampus, because I am working across two districts, in terms of what they provided me. During this period, major cutter and patrol boat stations conducted fisheries patrols in the South Atlantic, in an effort to curtail illegal fishing through District 7 and North Carolina's AOR.

Throughout this period, units conducted 186 boardings and issued three Notices of Violation. Units stationed in North Carolina and South Carolina conducted Operation Grouper Grabber, beginning 1 January, to monitor the opening of the majority of the species in the snapper grouper complex. North Carolina units also conducted and continued to conduct boardings of vessels targeting bluefin tuna off the Outer Banks.

I know that NOAA issued several summary settlements for noncompliance with not reporting within twenty-four hours of bluefin tuna, and, also, one charter vessel had a party/charter permit, but did not have the commercial endorsement, and he had sold a bluefin, and so they issued a summary settlement for that.

Station Islamorada issued a violation for fishing harvesting or possessing marine life in the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary, and they did that twice, and then the Cormorant issued a violation for a vessel setting black sea bass pots in a prohibited area, and this happened, I think, a couple of weeks ago. The question was asked of what happened to the fish, and they allowed the fish -- I think Kevin can speak to this a little bit more, but they allowed the fish to be landed to go into commerce, but, ultimately, there will be a fine towards the master of the vessel for the value of the fish. At least the fish aren't thrown overboard and wasted, et cetera.

In terms of marine protected species support summary, Sector Key West and the small boat stations in the area focused on the enforcement of the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary with Florida Fish and Wildlife and the NOAA Office of Law Enforcement. In terms of what happened up in the Mid-Atlantic, I got to deal with a dead right whale, and it's not great.

That being said, it was spotted I want to say on the 22nd of January by a charter guy. He posted the video on Facebook. Someone saw it on Facebook three days later, and, although -- This is sixty miles off of Virginia Beach, but just report it. Just call the number. It's not hard. It's 1-877-SOS-WHAL. If you spot a dead animal, a whale or whatnot, let us know, so we can get out there and get eyes on it.

It did take us a little while, like about two days, to try to find the thing, and, as a taxpayer, you guys probably don't appreciate the amount of resources that typically go into trying to find a dead right whale, and so, anyway, it was eventually towed to Virginia Beach, where a necropsy was done, and it was buried, and entanglement was deemed the source of death for the whale.

We also had a commercial vessel that was targeting summer flounder, and it sank off the coast of Maryland a couple of weeks ago, and so this me getting on my safety soapbox. It's not required for you to say or provide your voyage plan, but I highly recommend you provide it to somebody, so we know how many people are onboard, because it took us a good eighteen hours to try to figure out how many people we were looking for with this sunk fishing vessel, although, ultimately, we didn't find anyone, but I know, if any of you are on the water, you would probably be wise to tell someone how many people you're with, so we know what we're looking for. With that, that's my report, if there's any questions.

MS. BECKWITH: Do you know what the right whale was entangled by?

LCDR BENNETT: In terms of the specific gear, it was lines, and it was sent up for forensics, for NOAA to determine if they could actually determine what kind of gear it was. I am not going to say what my opinion is, but I know that there is an issue between Canada and the U.S., in terms of I think their snowy crab fishery. They don't necessarily have the same gear restrictions or take reduction plan requirements that U.S. vessels do, but it was -- It looked like trap pot lines.

MR. PHILLIPS: Thank you. A lot of our liaisons have moved on, and so, Jack, do you have anything?

DR. MCGOVERN: Not really, Mr. Chairman. I don't have very much. I think, most of what I would cover, we have already talked about at this meeting, but I just wanted to thank you, Mr. Chairman, and Doug for the hospitality on Monday night. That was a lot of fun, and I also want to take the opportunity, on behalf of SERO and Monica and Roy and I, to thank Michelle for her years of service, not only for federal management, but also for state management. I would also like to repeat the message you have on your sock, but I can't, but I want to just tell you that you really made a difference.

MR. PHILLIPS: Thanks, Jack, and I don't think there is anybody left for the Science Center. I guess we will ease up to North Carolina.

DR. DUVAL: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and so thank you to Jack and the folks at the Regional Office for those kudos, and I will see if I can ship a load of socks down to you all, and so it sounds like you might need them. I am going to be quick, because we're over time, but, really, the biggest announcement we have is that we have a new Fisheries Director. His name is Steve Murphey, and he started on January 2nd or 3rd, and so we broke him in at his first ASMFC meeting in February.

He is still kind of coming up to speed on the fish stuff, but he's a thirty-year veteran of our agency. The bulk of his time was spent in the Shellfish Sanitation and Recreational Water Quality Section, and he also was, most recently, our Section Chief of our Habitat and Enhancement Section, and so that's the section that deals with shellfish leasing and aquaculture and our habitat program and that sort of thing.

Steve is going to be at the state director's meeting in Charleston a couple of weeks from now, and so he'll be seeing a couple of the folks around the table. No, I do not know who my replacement is going to be, and so I don't think that job has been posted yet, but certainly we will let you all know. Are we going to discuss the letter that we sent under Other Business, once we get through the other liaison reports? It will be just a really quick discussion, and so I don't know what you want to do.

MR. PHILLIPS: Yes, I was planning on coming back to you after I did the liaison reports. Mel, you look like you're thinking about your report.

MR. BELL: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I was just going to say that we're glad to hear that Steve is now the director up there. We trained him. He was the second person I hired when I was the

Artificial Reef Coordinator long, long, long ago, and so he's South Carolina trained. We have a history up there of that.

Really quickly, one thing I wanted to make sure that I mentioned was we had an interesting winter this year. We had a very extreme cold-water event, which gave us concern about the survival of our overwintering white shrimp, and we dealt with that at the state level quickly, and we really appreciate Jack McGovern's help and his staff down there in getting federal waters closed fairly rapidly, and, this particular event, we're still sorting through it.

I know we'll be communicating with Georgia as well on this, in terms of a reopening strategy, but our March sampling should hopefully give us an indication of how things are going to go with white shrimp this year, but, given similar years that kind of compare to this, we'll just see, and so it's still a little early, but we will work with Georgia and try to coordinate a reopening strategy for federal waters. If we can do it simultaneously, that would be great.

I mentioned earlier that we were involved in a validation process with MRIP dealing with our for-hire reporting system that we have, and we are still very encouraged by that, and we want to kind of move forward with that, and I won't go into the details, but I think we can get there.

The only other thing of interest to folks is the Palmetto, which everybody associated with MARMAP loves, didn't have to go into a yard period this year, because of a lot of the work and investment we had made previously, and so we just did kind of local yard work in port, and she is going to be ready to go as soon as the schedule starts, and so we're hoping for a good year there, and that's all I really have to report. Thanks.

MR. PHILLIPS: Thank you, Mel. We will go down the coast, and we will hit Georgia.

MR. HAYMANS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would echo Mel's comments to Jack and his colleagues for working so quickly to get the federal waters closed, at the request of both South Carolina and Georgia. Our CPUE, over the last year, 2017 was up by 65 percent over the ten-year average, but our overall harvest was down by 17 percent, and so we've got less boats trawling less, but catching more shrimp.

To the issue of closure, this past January, it was 80.7 percent below our ten-year average and 87 percent below our long-term average, and that was followed up in February, and it was 60 percent below ten-year and 70 percent below the long-term, and so it seems that the cold snap did have a pretty heavy hit on them, and we are working with South Carolina about when we want to request reopening.

Our cobia regulations, thirty-six inches, one fish per person, six per vessel, March through October, went into effect nine days ago, and we do have a landed description that includes the jurisdiction from which they were caught, and so Georgia will be enforcing those regulations as of March 1, and, finally, after years and years of pushing, we were finally able to get an actual dealer license in Georgia.

The Ag Department has had one for a long time, but it has no reporting requirements, and we finally got our dealer license in place this past July, and it actually gets implemented this month, along with species endorsements that will go onto our individual fishing licenses. Georgia is small,

and we're slow, but we are catching up to the rest of the world in the way that we license our commercial fishermen, and hopefully this will give us a bit of an opportunity to, one, know exactly who our dealers are, but also match our harvesters and our dealers and see where the product is coming from and going to. With that, I will conclude. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

MR. PHILLIPS: Thank you. Now, down south, where the weather suits our clothes.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. There have been a number of changes at the FWC since I saw you guys last, and so we have a new Executive Director and a new Assistant Executive Director. Nick Wiley left the agency, and he now is the Science Director for Ducks Unlimited, and he was replaced with Eric Sutton, and so he was our former Assistant Executive Director, and now he is Executive Director. Our new Assistant Executive Director is Thomas Eason, who was my counterpart, the Director, over at the Habitat and Species Conservation Division.

Eric Sutton was actually going to join us this week for our meeting here. However, he is in the process of being confirmed by the Senate this week, and so hopefully he'll be at our June meeting, just to observe the council process and understand how that works. Neither Eric nor Thomas have a marine background, and so they're very interested in the council process and learning more on the marine side. Also, since I saw you last, five of our seven commissioners have been replaced. They are also in the process of getting confirmed, and so we have a number of new faces on the commission.

I want to bring up a couple of other points. As you heard during the roundtable discussion the other night, the Secretary of Commerce did declare a federal fisheries disaster for the State of Florida. That was declared, I believe, the second Friday in February, and, that same day, Congress appropriated \$200 million. That was for a number of disasters and not just for Florida's fishery, but it was Irma, Harvey, Maria, and the salmon fisheries, as Roy was mentioning the other day, and so now it's up to NOAA Fisheries to determine how that \$200 million is going to be split among those disasters.

The last thing that I want to mention is I have been trying to keep you guys updated on what FWC is doing with goliath grouper, and so goliath grouper will be coming back for what we call a review and discussion at our April commission meeting. That is April 25 and 26 in Fort Lauderdale.

That meeting should be able to be viewed as a webinar, and I will let you guys know, and so review and discussion is a step before a draft rule, but what the commission will be doing is looking at all of the public workshops that we've done, and so, in the fall of 2017, we did sixteen public workshops around the state, and we also were soliciting public comments, and this is about a harvest, whether folks wanted to see a harvest or not. We solicited comments online, and, at this point, we have received over 5,000 comments on whether or not people would like to see a harvest of goliath grouper in state waters, and so that will be considered by our commission at our upcoming commission meeting. That concludes my report, unless folks have any questions.

MR. PHILLIPS: Any questions?

DR. DUVAL: Just one quick one. From the 5,000 comments that you have received, do you have sort of a proportion of split of those in favor versus those against?

MS. MCCAWLEY: 50/50.

MR. PHILLIPS: I might want to webinar in to that one. All right. I think that takes care of our liaison reports.

Mr. DiLernia's liaison report was given previously and inserted at the end of the liaison reports.

MR. DILERNIA: Thank you for the opportunity to present my report today, and that will get me back into the pool and exercising, per my surgery, a day ahead of time, and so I really appreciate you accommodating my request to give my report today. The Mid-Atlantic Council met in February in Raleigh, North Carolina, February 13th to 15th. I must tell you that I've been spending -- Between our second home in Tampa and all the council meetings, I have been spending more time south of the Mason-Dixon Line than I have been north lately, and so it's a pleasure to be here today.

At the February council meeting, the council looked at its recreational management measures for black sea bass, and it's actually closely connected to what you were speaking about earlier today regarding cobia. The Mid-Atlantic Council has joint management with the scup, summer flounder, and black sea bass with the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission. As it was stated earlier today, what happened -- What we do is we let the commission and the states set some specific regulations, and if they are equivalent to the conservation measures that would be in the federal measures, then each state is allowed to implement its own set of regulations. That was reviewed, and it was approved by the council.

The council also looked at and examined establishing a Wave 1 fishery for black sea bass. 2013 was the last year that a black sea bass fishery occurred in federal waters during Wave 1. Since then, that fishery, the Wave 1 fishery in federal waters, has been closed, because some of the member states were reluctant to take reductions in their summer seasons in order to account for the harvest that would occur during Wave 1.

The council has returned to examining the possibility of having a Wave 1 fishery, and, as I mentioned the first day I was here, we're also looking at a letter of authorization fishery, whereby which a recreational vessel, and this is for recreational fishermen only, a recreational fisherman, whether they be a private boat or a for-hire boat, would apply to the agency for a letter of authorization to fish during Wave 1, and, provided that they agree to all of the requirements associated with the letter of authorization, they would be given that letter.

Again, this has not been passed, and it's under discussion by the council, but some of the requirements that would occur with the letter of authorization would be a call-in and a call-out, and there has been some discussion regarding suspending the minimum size limit in exchange for a zero discard policy to reduce discards, and there would be a strict quota that would be set for Wave 1, and there would be monitoring of the quota by reporting. All the vessels would be required to report.

Once the quota was reached, that fishery would be closed, even if it meant closing it before the expiration of Wave 1, which would be February 28, and so, again, that's under discussion, and that

is -- The letter of authorization, right now, we're looking at possibly trying to have it in place for the 2020 fishery.

The council also looked at some commercial accountability measures for scup and black sea bass and summer flounder, and, after considering a range of options, the council selected a preferred alternative which would not require a payback if the current stock biomass is above a target biomass, and it would implement more aggressive paybacks when the stock conditions warranted additional protection and management response.

We examined our risk policy framework and management strategy. That was examined, and we looked at our council habitat -- There were some habitat issues that came under review, and we received a report on North Atlantic right whales. North Atlantic right whales are experiencing, and continue to experience, mortality well beyond what is acceptable, and we actually looked at a very interesting aspect. It seems like much of the mortality in North Atlantic right whales occurs as a result of entanglement in buoy lines, trap lines, that would be associated with fish traps or lobster traps.

There was actually some discussion, and we received a brief review on line-less trap fishing, in which the traps are deployed and there is no line going from the trap to the surface, but rather the traps are released electronically and come back up to the surface, to eliminate the lines, to eliminate the chance of entanglement. It's an experimental process, but we did receive a briefing on that.

We also received a briefing on climate change in fisheries, and there is continued evidence that species are expanding their range or species are shifting in their response to climate change. I have made that comment here at this council before, that many of the southern species are coming into Mid-Atlantic waters, and many of the Mid-Atlantic species are moving up into southern New England, and even now into the Gulf of Maine, and this is going to present us with some unique management dilemmas as we go forward, and we received another report on climate change and how these species are shifting.

Finally, we give an award each year named after one of our former Chairmen, Rick Savage, and the award is given to someone who has done exemplary service and work in the field of fisheries management, and, this year, the award went to Howard King, who is a retired council member. Some of you may have known Howard when he was the director, or he was the fisheries representative from the State of Maryland to the Mid-Atlantic Council, and he also served nine years as a member of the Mid-Atlantic Council after retiring from the State of Maryland, and he also worked as a liaison to the New England Council.

That's what I have to report about the Mid-Atlantic Council meeting. The next meeting will be in Montauk, New York, on April 10, 11, and 12. That is my report for the meeting, but I do have though a request that I have been asked to deliver to this council, and it's a request from our leadership, the leadership of the Mid-Atlantic Council, and it's a letter that is going to your Executive Director from our Executive Director, Chris Moore. I will briefly read the letter to you, quickly. It's only a couple of paragraphs, and perhaps -- I am sure there will be questions, and, between myself and your Executive Director, we might be able to answer some of your questions.

The letter is, again, from Chris Moore to Gregg, and it says: I am writing to request that the South Atlantic Council consider the possibility of managing frigate mackerel and bullet mackerel as

ecosystem components in the Dolphin Wahoo Fishery Management Plan. Now, why are we issuing that request?

Well, the Mid-Atlantic Council sought to manage these species as ecosystem components with a commercial possession limit through the unmanaged forage omnibus amendment, in recognition of these species' role in the ecosystem as prey for a variety of predators. However, NMFS disapproved inclusion of these two species in the amendment, citing an insufficient connection of these two species to the Mid-Atlantic Council's FMPs. Well, here is where you folks get involved. Frigate and bullet mackerel are important prey for blue marlin, yellowfin tuna, blackfin tuna, and wahoo. Commercial harvest of these species in the Northeast has been low, averaging 1,500 pounds annually in the years 2012 to 2017.

Again, what did we do in the Mid-Atlantic Council? In the Mid-Atlantic Council, what we tried to do, what we have done, for many of the forage species is we have frozen the footprint. We have said, if there's been a commercial take of species that are forage-based for many of the predators in the Mid-Atlantic region, we will allow that, but we're freezing the footprint, and we did not want to have or leave the opportunity for an expansion of a commercial fishery on these species that are prey and that, again, support many of our fisheries in the Mid-Atlantic, particularly many of our recreational fisheries, and so that is what we did. We froze the footprint.

Unfortunately, or for whatever reason, frigate and bullet mackerel, the agency did not consider a value as much to Mid-Atlantic species as they were to other species, and so they did disallow those two species in our plan, and so they are currently unprotected. They are unmanaged, and so we're saying, because they have been identified as an important prey species for wahoo, we thought that perhaps your council may want to amend your dolphin wahoo plan to manage these as ecosystem components. That is our request, and it's going to mean work for you if you choose to do it, and I don't expect any decisions at this council meeting, at this time. I'm sure you want to discuss it, but we do have this request, and so it's respectfully submitted. I will be happy to take any questions, Mr. Chairman.

MR. PHILLIPS: Thank you, Tony.

MR. WAUGH: We did talk with the Mid-Atlantic folks at the CCC meeting as well, and Ken Hinman, who works with Wild Oceans right now, and Ken used to be on our Dolphin Wahoo AP, years ago, but our suggestion would be -- We have existing work ongoing that Roger is involved in with doing food web mapping in our area, and I have asked that the data be provided to Roger, so that, in that work, they could do something that might be directly useful to us.

In addition, Jeff Buckel from North Carolina State University, who is also on our SSC, and Steve Poland, from North Carolina DMF, have done work, research, on the HMS diets of these species, and we could get them to come in at our December meeting and give us presentations, and so our suggestion would be let's have Roger work with that group and see what we can map of these species importance for dolphin and wahoo and get that presentation, and then we could also bring some background on what the Mid-Atlantic and other councils have done. Then you all could talk about it and give us direction in December as to how to proceed.

DR. DUVAL: Actually, both Steve and Jeff were on a webinar that the Mid-Atlantic Council hosted that was exactly about these species and their importance and the diets of highly migratory

species, and just to note that Steve Poland is our cobia species lead, and so he is on the ASMFC Technical Committee as well.

MR. PHILLIPS: Thank you.

MR. BREWER: Gregg, I think that would be a great idea, because, quite frankly, I don't know what a frigate mackerel or a bullet mackerel are. It seems like, every time I come to one of these meetings, I find out about a different fish that I didn't know existed, but, obviously, we're very interested in the prey fish for some of the fisheries that we manage, and so I think it would be important to do that. Thank you.

MR. PHILLIPS: Anybody else? All right. Thank you, Tony.

DR. DILERNIA: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

MR. PHILLIPS: With that, we can move on.

****End of Mr. DiLernia's inserted liaison report.****

MR. PHILLIPS: That brings us to Other Business. First of all, I want to let Michelle talk about the aquaculture letter that North Carolina sent us.

DR. DUVAL: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I believe this is Attachment 8 under the Council Session, under Tab 12, and so you will see there is a letter sent from our agency to Gregg referencing a bill that was passed at the end of the 2017 session, and the bill is actually appended to this letter, but there was a directive in there that the Division of Marine Fisheries, within our department, requests that both the Mid-Atlantic and South Atlantic Fishery Management Councils develop a fishery management plan for regulating offshore aquaculture in federal waters offshore from the North Carolina coast as well as to petition the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration to initiate rulemaking proceedings to implement a comprehensive regulatory program for managing the development of an environmentally-sound and economically-sustainable aquaculture fishery in federal waters offshore from the North Carolina coast.

This letter is really doing our due diligence, in terms of following up on the directive that we got in the legislation from last year, and, if you had taken a look at it, there is a number of different provisions in there regarding marine aquaculture, and so this would apply to both finfish as well as shellfish, and I think we had voiced a few concerns during the development of this particular bill, given existing statutes that we already have on the books that pertain to how shellfish leases are managed.

I don't really have a whole lot more to say about it other than that. I know that we had discussed aquaculture at our December meeting, and, while we noted that this was certainly an important activity, that, given all the other activities on the council's plate right now, we didn't really see how we could fit the development of an aquaculture fishery management plan into our priorities, and that was really in reference to the Fishery Ecosystem Plan, and we were reviewing the priority actions coming out of that plan and the blueprint.

I think it probably merits a more extensive discussion at some point, given what Gregg reported out from the CCC and the increased focus of the administration on aquaculture. I know that ASMFC had been coordinating a grant program soliciting -- They sent out an RFP, I think at the end of last year, and the deadline was sometime in February for disbursement of sort of smallish aquaculture-related grants to promote aquaculture within the states.

I am not really sure where that stands right now, in terms of getting those grants out the door. I think they received close to seventy applications, and so I think this issue is going to become more important. I think it's going to be probably brought before the councils again to try to work on something, and I think the conversations that I have had with folks have been -- I think that the council is going to want to know a little bit more about -- I am just speaking for the South Atlantic Council, but the same letter was sent to the Mid-Atlantic Council, and I don't know if the Mid-Atlantic has actually had a -- I don't think they've had the opportunity to respond, because it was sent after their February meeting, but I think the councils are going to want to know where this fits in with the agency's priorities and what type of comprehensive approach the agency is planning on taking with regard to aquaculture.

Obviously, the Gulf has an Aquaculture FMP right now, and my understanding is that still might be under litigation. There was litigation filed, and I think my advice is we learn from that process down the road, but I just wanted to make sure to highlight this and that we're doing our due diligence, and so thank you, Mr. Chairman.

MR. PHILLIPS: Thank you, Michelle.

MR. BELL: Just to that, I can speak from personal experience in state waters that it's better to have a plan in place before growth or interest in it starts developing, because then you're playing catch-up, and we're finding ourselves, related to shellfish mariculture in state waters, having to develop a plan and try to -- We're kind of like laying track in front of the train, and, if you can kind of be ahead, you want to be ahead and not behind.

DR. DUVAL: Just one more thing. I mean, we have had an aquaculture program in North Carolina for a long time, and everything within our wheelhouse at the division is related to shellfish aquaculture. There are varying pieces and parts that other agencies have when it comes to finfish aquaculture, and so some pieces our Wildlife Resources Commission has and some pieces we have and some pieces the Department of Agriculture has, and there are some legislatively-sponsored studies that are going on within North Carolina right now that are specific to the shellfish aquaculture program, but that is a beast that we're familiar with, as cumbersome as it is, and some of our concerns about this were inconsistencies with existing statutes that we had on the books, in terms of shellfish aquaculture. Thanks.

MR. PHILLIPS: Thanks.

MS. SMIT-BRUNELLO: I know you all know about the Gulf Council's aquaculture suit, and so there were twelve organizations, comprising five environmental organizations, three commercial fishing organizations, and four charter fishing organizations, that filed suit against the Fisheries Service on the final rule that implemented the Gulf aquaculture FMP, and I think their primary argument is that the Magnuson Act doesn't provide the authority for NMFS to regulate offshore aquaculture and that it violates a number of other laws. This week, there was oral argument heard.

The court heard oral argument on Wednesday, and so I would assume that it would benefit you all to get the judge's decision in that case, and that might provide you with more information, if you were interested in entertaining an aquaculture FMP.

MR. PHILLIPS: Thanks, Monica.

MR. WAUGH: At the CCC meeting, this occupied a lot of discussion. The agency made it clear that this is a very high priority of theirs, and they see it as an integral part of the overall seafood harvesting sector, and so they want to use this expansion of aquaculture to help with the balance of trade. This train is coming, and you can see, from our list of activities, it would be a number of years before we would get to this.

I have already had some preliminary discussions with folks up at Headquarters about the possibility of some funding for a two to three-year staff hire position to work with us to basically help write that aquaculture FMP, and so I am going to continue to pursue that, and we'll discuss this some more in June, because the CCC Legislative Committee is going to be developing some positions, and hopefully the CCC will approve those at the May meeting, and so I will be contacting you all for your input.

Remember too that Senator Wicker has a bill that, should that continue on its current track, would cut us out, basically entirely, except for being able to comment on any potential impacts to EFH, and so we'll have a lot more for you at the June meeting.

MR. PHILLIPS: Thanks, Gregg, and I guess a couple of ways of going forward is we could direct staff to just give us some background information, including the Gulf plan, and just -- Not spend a lot of time on it, but at least give us some background information, so that, when we come back in June -- We will also get another update at the CCC meeting in May, and maybe we'll have an idea on where these bills are going or where they're not, and at least we can talk about it from a little bit more informed state, and so would we need a motion for that, or could we do direction to staff, at the pleasure of the council? What do you all think? I am hearing and seeing some nods, and so we'll have direction to staff to do that. Anything else? Did you have something, Ben?

MR. HARTIG: Thank you, Charlie. After the wreckfish discussion about where the next assessment would fall, and Chris had expressed some concerns to me, and I had concerns as well, and so I think what we need to do, and I will make this in the form of a motion. **Motion that the appropriate body develop a protocol for third-party assessments that allows the Southeast Fisheries Science Center to run the next assessment.** We have a motion. Chris, are you going to second it?

MR. CONKLIN: I am.

MR. PHILLIPS: It's seconded by Chris. Is there further discussion?

MR. HARTIG: We had the discussion with Erik, and Erik said, well, we don't have the code and we don't have this and we don't have that, and so, obviously, if this is going to go into our assessment process in the future -- Now, it's not going to happen very often, but, when it does, we need to have a way to be able for our Center to do the next assessment.

I mean, there has to be -- When these are conducted, the codes and the data and everything else needs to have some way to transfer to the Southeast Fisheries Science Center, so they can run the next assessment. Now, if they choose to, they can do a benchmark, and they can use their model, and maybe that negates the development of this, but certainly, if they wanted to run an update with wreckfish, they wouldn't be able to without the necessary information from that third-party assessment.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Is this specific to wreckfish, because that's not what it says.

MR. HARTIG: It's not specific to wreckfish, because there may be other third-party assessments that come in for other species, and so, if we get a third-party assessment for any species, we need to have a way for the Southeast Fisheries Science Center to be able to run the next assessment on that species.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Does that include stock assessments from FWC?

MR. HARTIG: No.

MR. CONKLIN: It just became pretty apparent that someone else, industry, had funded this work, and it's been reviewed by our SSC, and it's been legitimized, and now we're coming time to review the stock, and the stakeholders have asked us to update it, and now we have to go back and do a benchmark because there is no plug-and-play type of capabilities with this, and so we're going to have to redo everything at a benchmark status just to get the update that we needed, and it's a waste of time and resources, for the most part.

DR. DUVAL: I was going to say that I think, in reference to the FWC assessments, you guys are already sort of incorporated through SEDAR, is my understanding.

MR. CARMICHAEL: I have been thinking a lot about the FWC assessments, as we heard about research track and operational and interim, and I would expect that, if we went to the Center and said here is an assessment done by FWC -- Here is yellowtail, and FWC wants to hand it over and have NMFS take it over, then it wouldn't surprise me to hear the same concerns, that that was not a model that was developed by the Center, and they might be hesitant to take it on and update it.

I think there is some gray area there. I think that the Florida folks, I expect, will be thinking a lot about that proposal laid out, about interim and operational, because there is six, or maybe seven, pretty important stocks that are assessed by FWC on their schedule, and, if you think about getting that into there, those guys don't have the resources at the Center, and so that's going to be one of those many, many details that are going to have to be worked out when we really look into this plan that the Center has to get more assessments. The big challenge, as we have known from fifteen years of SEDAR, is how do you get there, and we've always had plans to get more assessments.

MR. PHILLIPS: John, I am going to ask a question of you before I go to Monica. So, if we pass this, this will or will not or could potentially affect FWC assessments?

MR. CARMICHAEL: I think it potentially could, if you got into a situation where FWC wanted to have the Center begin to help more on some of their assessments. Then this could affect them,

because, like I said, I think the same concerns of wreckfish could possibly come up for the Florida assessments, because it wasn't the Center analysts who built that model and configured that model and all of that sort of thing, and so it could have some impact on Florida if they were to send some assessments over the fence to them.

MS. SMIT-BRUNELLO: This isn't exactly on point, but remember that the SSC worked to develop a protocol in which they would peer review third-party assessments, and that all came out of the wreckfish lawsuit and all of that, and so that's a little different, but keep in mind that that was done, too.

MR. HAYMANS: To me, the development of the protocol takes into account John's concerns, and the discussion will come out in that document.

MR. PHILLIPS: Yes, and I was a little surprised when Erik had that, I guess, policy point of view, because I had thought that the wreckfish assessment was done under guidelines from the Science Center, and I was really surprised when he said that they couldn't look at it, even if they gave them the model, and they weren't sure about the data coming in. I thought all of that was already -- The Science Center gave them the box, and they played inside of the box, and then they got an assessment, and so I was really surprised when Erik said that they couldn't use that or update it.

MS. SMIT-BRUNELLO: No, it was not done under the guise of the Science Center at all.

MR. PHILLIPS: It was not? Okay. I stand corrected then. We have a motion on the board. Any other discussion? **All in favor, hands.**

MS. MCCAWLEY: I hate to ask a stupid question, but who seconded this motion?

MR. HARTIG: Chris did.

MR. PHILLIPS: **I see eleven in favor; opposed, none. The motion passes.**

Is there anything else to come under Other Business? I guess we have the meetings.

MR. WAUGH: You all have the schedule, and there is a calendar in there with the meetings, and I am not going to go through that, in the interest of time.

MR. PHILLIPS: That being said, it's been a very productive and interesting meeting. Thank you very much for all of your work, and have a good trip home.

(Whereupon, the meeting adjourned on March 9, 2018.)

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Certified By: _____ Date: _____

Transcribed By:
Amanda Thomas
March 14, 2018

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