

SOUTH ATLANTIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

MACKEREL COBIA COMMITTEE

**Blockade Runner
Wrightsville Beach, North Carolina**

December 8, 2022

Transcript

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LT Patrick O'Shaughnessy
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Additional attendees and invited participants are attached.

The Mackerel Cobia Committee of the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council convened at the Blockade Runner, Wrightsville Beach, North Carolina, on Thursday, December 8, 2022, and was called to order by Chairman Tom Roller.

MR. ROLLER: For all of you here and listening, my name is Tom Roller, and I'm a North Carolina at-large member, and I've taken over the chair of the Cobia Mackerel Committee from Mr. Woodward, whose plate is quite full lately, and so I'm really excited to be here and chair this committee, particularly because, you know, king and Spanish mackerel are two of the most important commercial and recreational species that this council manages, and so, with that, I guess we can get started on the agenda.

The first -- We have our agenda, and does anybody have any changes or comments on the agenda? Seeing none, I can assume that agenda is approved. Next, we have the transcript from our September 2022 meeting, and would anybody like to make any changes to that transcript? Seeing none, I think that passes, by consensus, and now we will go into the Mackerel Cobia AP report. Excuse me. We have the updates.

MR. DEVICTOR: Good morning, everyone. We have two amendments in rulemaking right now, and so CMP Amendment 32, and so that's Gulf cobia catch levels and management, that final rule published, and we have an implementation date for that. CMP Amendment 34, this is one that is in the proposed rule, and we're working on the rulemaking for that, and so you'll be seeing a proposed rule pretty soon on that, and so that's your quick update for the two amendments in rulemaking.

MR. ROLLER: Okay, and so you're done? Good. All right. So now we go into the AP report, and there is Ira Laks, our CMP AP Chair.

MR. LAKS: The Mackerel Cobia Advisory Panel met on October 5 and 6 of 2022 in Charleston, South Carolina, and we're going to do this a little bit backwards here, and we're going to start out with Other Business, and, in Other Business, we talked about the commercial king mackerel management in the Southern Zone, and, as most of you know, it's a little complicated.

As fishermen, we've tried to get the fishing limits, trip limits, and seasons down to what best worked for our fishery, but, in doing that, we've made it a little complicated, due to the fact that a lot of the information of where the fishery is now came in piecemeal, and so what we are trying to suggest is to simplify things, and this is not something that we realize has to be done, but we feel that, for fishermen, and for all the agencies involved, it would be easier to manage the fishery, and so, right now, we have -- In the Southern Zone, we have two seasons. We have Season 1 that starts in the beginning of March and the Season 2 that starts in the beginning of October.

In Season 1, we actually have a step-down that, if we reach a certain amount of fish, it steps down, and then we have a rollover, where the fish can roll over, and then we have a trip limit change in Season 2, and so what I have talked to some fishermen about, and people on the AP about, is making it just one season, with a trip limit that goes up in October, just as it is now, and we're not looking to change any limits or seasons, but we're just trying to clear up a bunch of regulations that you all have to deal with in various ways, and so, instead of even worrying about rolling over the fish, because it's hard for fishermen to even track what the ACL is, because the rollover is never published, and so you don't even understand where you're at, and it would just be one ACL

for the year, with a step-up in what we can catch, from seventy-five to a hundred, on October 1. It's something to consider that would make things -- It would clear up a lot of regulations on the books. Are there any questions to that? Okay.

We also mentioned MREP, the Marine Resource Education Program, and we talked about it to AP members, and, for those who hadn't been through the program, we informed them how valuable it would be for them to go through it, to get a better understanding. Any questions on the MREP program?

MR. ROLLER: Laurilee.

MS. THOMPSON: I just want to compliment you and all the work that you did. Judy and I attended last month, and it was phenomenal, it really was, and it was certainly well worth our time, and we appreciate it very much.

MR. LAKS: Well, we appreciated you guys coming, and so we're looking forward to seeing you in February. Then we went into the climate change scenario, and there was a couple of members from the AP that were at the meeting in Washington in June, and that was Thomas Newman and myself, and I think the questions we asked were similar to what I heard you guys ask the other day, and so I'm not going to go into too much length about it, because you all pretty much heard the updated presentation on it.

Then we got an update on the citizen science projects, and I think there was a lot of encouragement, from everyone on the AP, that these projects need to go forward, and I know FISHstory is always a highlight, and everyone was interested in that, and everybody seemed very welcome to helping out in any way they could. Is there any questions on any of that?

Then we talked about commercial logbooks, and, for the commercial fishermen on the AP panel, it was something of, you know, like a unicorn, because we've heard about it for so long, and we're kind of waiting for actually someone to put a rope on one and get it tied down, so we can actually use it, and we are encouraged that there is progress, and there is pilots, and that it's starting, and we just hope the program can logistically get running and to a place where it can be used and better facilitate the data for everybody. Any questions?

We talked about the whale issue, and, needless to say, it was very controversial, and there was a lot of people on the AP that were quite upset with the situation, and you can see some of the comments that fishermen had and the distance that they were going to have to travel, especially in northern Florida and the Carolinas and Georgia, of getting to the fish, and it's large distances, and, at slow speeds, it's really going to impose hardships on them.

You know, I think there was concern that there really isn't that much impact with these animals, and that was the general consensus from the AP, and that they were looking to see what else can be done to alleviate that, and I know that you all had sent a letter, and so I'm not going to spend too much more time on that, but are there any questions?

MS. WIEGAND: I will just note that this motion from the AP -- All of that was included in the letter, as well as comments from the Snapper Grouper AP related to the vessel speed rule, and, if

you guys are interested in looking at that letter, it was included in your briefing materials, and it's Attachment 4 in the Full Council briefing book.

MR. LAKS: That's our general updates.

MR. ROLLER: Any questions? Okay. We're going to move on to the CMP Amendment 33 updates, and I believe we're going to start with Ira's comments.

MR. LAKS: I believe 33 is no longer going through, and I believe it was tabled, but some of the concerns that some of the members from our AP had was there wasn't an adequate amount of information shown on what the extra allocation from the Gulf could compete with market prices on the east coast, and we've worked pretty hard, in our fishery, to have the fish come in, where there's not a glut of fish to drive market prices down.

There was other concerns about having that apply equally when each sector needed it, and so the Gulf has a gillnet sector for king mackerel, which we don't have on the east coast, and, if they are allowed to have that in the future, they could be the only ones to access those fish, because they do it, and so you can -- It would be an allocation shift, but only one sector could really do it, just because of weather and time. They prosecute their fishery very fast, within a weekend, and, in a day or two more, they can catch another 250,000 pounds that most of the other fisheries right now wouldn't even have a chance to access those fish, the way that fishery is being handled right now. Is there any questions on 33?

MR. ROLLER: Any questions? Susan.

MS. BOGGS: I will just comment that this was a long-discussed issue at the last council meeting, and I can't remember how many motions were made that we can never agree on, and so that's why we ultimately just said that we would take no action at this time, because it was a pretty -- I'm not going to say contentious, but we certainly could not come to an agreement on anything.

MR. ROLLER: Thank you, Susan. Was there any other comments or questions? All right, and so, Christina, you're going to give an update on the amendment?

MS. WIEGAND: I mean, that basically summarizes the update. The Gulf Council decided to stop work, and they selected Alternative 1, as no action, and so the allocations will remain the same. Just as a reminder, this amendment didn't address catch levels, and catch levels for Gulf king mackerel were actually addressed in Framework 11, and so the catch levels have been updated, based on the new stock assessment, and there will just be no change in the sector allocations, now that work has stopped on CMP 33.

However, there were -- The goals and objectives of the CMP FMP were contained in Amendment 33, and, in talking with Gulf Council staff, as well as NOAA General Counsel, it seems like it would be a good idea to have this committee continue to discuss the CMP goals and objectives and any changes you would like to see. Again, these were last updated in Amendment 9, I believe, in the early 1990s, and so they're quite dated, and, as we sort of move forward with Spanish mackerel, and other issues in this fishery, it would be helpful to have updated goals and objectives, and so we're going to have you guys continue to discuss those goals and objectives, and we'll

simply include them in whatever full plan amendment comes down the line, likely Spanish mackerel.

To give you a little update on what the Gulf Council talked about at this meeting, related to the goals and objectives, they did concur with our motion from back in September to remove Objective 3, because it was redundant with the newly-added Objective 9, and you can see those two objectives on the screen, but I'm not going to go over them in detail, given that this was a discussion that we had in September. Then, again, you guys, in September, chose to amend the language of Objective 1 to specifically mention optimum yield, and so the Gulf Council approved that change at their October meeting.

Finally, the Gulf Council made some additional motion that we're looking for you guys to discuss. First, they looked to remove Objective 5 from the CMP FMP, and this is the objective that talks about distributing the total allowable catch, or ACL, for Atlantic Spanish mackerel, based on catches that occurred during the early to mid-1970s, which was prior to the development of the deepwater runaround gillnet fishery and when the resource was not overfished.

To give you guys some context of how allocations have worked for Spanish mackerel, they were set back in Amendment 2, and they were about 70/30 commercial/recreational, and then, by Amendment 8, the council, at the time, had some concerns about that allocation, and they felt that it wasn't taking into account landings in the mid-1970s that were affected by the runaround gillnet fishery, and they also felt that, because both the commercial and the recreational sector had the ability to fully harvest the available catch, that they most equitable thing to do was to set a 50/50 allocation.

Then, a few years after that, the recreational sector was not meeting their allocation, whereas the commercial sector was regularly bumping up against theirs, and so they did a 5 percent shift, which gets you to the allocations that you have today of 55 percent commercial and 45 percent recreational, and so that's sort of where this objective comes from, and the Gulf Council -- I'm sure that Susan could talk a little bit more, as well as Matt Freeman is on the line, if you would like additional information, but they felt that it was important to make sure that, moving forward, we were using the most up-to-date information to set allocations and that this objective no longer really fit with the CMP FMP.

Then, finally, they voted to remove Objective 7 from the CMP FMP, and this looks to provide appropriate management to address specific migratory groups of king mackerel, and they felt that it's not really supported by science anymore, and we have the migratory groups pretty well established and addressed within the CMP FMP, and so I will wrap it up there, but, first, I want to go to Ira and let Ira provide you guys the AP's discussion on the goals and objectives.

MR. LAKS: We had a really good conversation about this, as an AP, and the first thing was that everybody pretty much felt that the management of king mackerel was right on track, without what I have said previously about just trying to simplify some of the regulations, but everyone felt that king mackerel was where it needs to be, but there's a lot of concern about Spanish mackerel and how they are being managed.

You know, as an AP, we have asked, in the past, that we look at some of this stuff, and we waited patiently for the assessment, and we really didn't have a chance to work on anything, and now

we're here, and possibly waiting on another assessment, and we just feel like we need to start working on something, so that this can be addressed and not wait much longer, and we really need to get going and address some of these concerns that the fishermen have.

The felt there was, you know, more recreational fishery participation, that it's growing, and the commercial industry seems to think it's pretty much on par, or maybe decreasing a little bit, but the amount of recreational fishing has increased quite a bit. The for-hire fishery is believed to have expanded greatly over the past few years, and it really seems that from -- Up and down the coast, we heard, from panel members, that it's just getting to be very crowded in the for-hire industry.

There is also infrastructure problems that we're having, especially in for-hire and commercial, you know, and these storms don't help, up and down the coast. When we lose pieces of property, they tend not to come back, but even the gentrification of the waterfront is just -- The for-hire guys, and, I mean, personally, myself, I was kicked off the water and onto a trailer, and it's just becoming harder and harder to find a place to do your business, as a fisherman.

We voted to remove Objective 5, and, you know they thought there was just not a whole lot of waste in the fishery, in the Spanish mackerel fishery, but they think keeping the 500-pound trip limit is very important, because that will alleviate bycatch from other fisheries that would have to be thrown overboard, and so it's something that they feel has to stay in there, and, like I said, they believe the king mackerel fishery is good.

We did pass a couple of motions, and we passed a motion to have the council look at limited entry for the CMP for-hire permit, and, just so you know, that wasn't my idea, but the fishermen, like I said, from up and down the coast were concerned about it, and that motion passed eight to two with one abstaining. Are there any questions on that motion or anything that I had said before that? Jessica.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thanks, Ira, and so it seems like you guys are saying that, at least on the Atlantic side, that you all don't necessarily see issues with king mackerel, and you all are having discussions more about Spanish, and so, even though the Gulf Council, and the Gulf folks, are seeing all these issues with king mackerel, you guys don't see the same types of issues, and is that how you would interpret what people are saying?

MR. LAKS: Yes, but I will say there was some king mackerel fishermen that could not make the meeting, and the landings are showing that the fish just aren't coming like they are, and, for someone who participates in that fishery, there is a behavior change in the fishery, and I don't think anyone is quite comfortable in saying it's a problem, and we're just -- It's a small change in the way the last few years have gone. There are people who think it's the sharks, and people who think it's upwellings, and there's a lot of different things, but I think time will -- It's something we have to keep an eye on, in how the fishery goes in a few years. Any other questions? Again, we made a motion to remove Objective 5 from the CMP FMP.

MR. ROLLER: Jessica.

MS. MCCAWLEY: I would like to comment on that, and so a couple of things. I'm hoping, and I know this is coming later in the committee, that we're going to have a conversation about these

port meetings, and it just seems premature to do a full plan amendment to start updating these objectives before we have these port meetings, and so I would like to see, at the port meetings, that people discuss the objectives that are in the FMP for both Spanish and for king mackerel, and I just think it's premature to start doing this plan amendment.

I did talk to C.J. about kind of the order of operations of how the Gulf talked about this, and so, before they decided to stop work on this amendment, they had already edited these objectives, and so the Gulf is not saying, even though we want to stop work on this, go forward with all these objectives as a full amendment anyway, and I think that they're intending to come back to that through another mechanism, and I didn't get the impression that they're just going to modify the objectives, but I will see what Christina has to say about that.

MS. WIEGAND: I'm sorry, and perhaps I wasn't as clear as I should have been, and I don't think we were suggesting to start a whole new plan amendment just to address the goals and objectives, but it's let's continue to have the discussion, have the port meetings and have the public discuss, and then whatever plan amendment comes next, whatever that may be, a Spanish mackerel or a king mackerel amendment, or cobia even, we can stick the updated goals and objectives into that amendment when they're ready to be formally approved.

MR. ROLLER: Go ahead.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Just to clarify, and thanks, Christina, and that was super helpful, and so I just -- Let's say that we do something with a faster process that's still a full plan amendment, and I would still like for the port meetings to discuss this, and I don't want to finalize anything relative to the goals and objectives until after those port meetings are concluded.

MR. ROLLER: Any other questions or comments? Just a quick on-the-record comment. When it comes to CMP Amendment 33 from the Gulf, we're not -- We don't need a motion or anything like that, correct? Okay. Well, we're going to move on to our next agenda item, and that is the Spanish Mackerel SSC Report, and I will pass this over to Dr. Jeff Buckel, our SSC Chair.

DR. BUCKEL: Thank you, Tom. I am just going to give a little reminder of where things stand with the Spanish mackerel stock assessment, a little review, and so the SSC received the presentation in August, and we had several issues with the assessment, particularly with the catch, the MRIP recreational catch, in 2020, and we presented, the SSC presented, the issues that we had with the assessment, as well as the concern about the high 2020 recreational landings, to you in September.

NOAA Fisheries informed us, at that council meeting, that there were flagged estimates for 2020, and that MRIP was going to go back and recalculate the 2020 recreational landings, and then the Southeast Fisheries Science Center was going to rerun the assessment with those new 2020 recreational landings, and they did that, and that was presented to us in October. In some cases, the landings dropped, you know, by an order of magnitude, for certain modes and waves, but, in others, they went up, and so the overall result was that there was really no change in the recreational landings in 2020, and so you can guess what the -- The assessment basically returned the same results that we saw in August.

We had a lot of discussion about MRIP, and that's where I'm going to -- I will start with the discussion about MRIP and PSEs, and so, you know, specific to Spanish mackerel, but, also, just in general, and so those are the first couple of slides that I will talk about.

Christina, if you could scroll to the third slide, and I just want to -- If folks could focus on that third bullet, and, you know, I just want to put this in perspective of why, you know, we've spent time talking about these 2020 recreational landings, and so, if you look at the assessment, prior to 2020, the trends in the F over F_{MSY} appear to have been declining, and then the biomass, compared to the biomass reference point, was increasing, and so things were looking good, right, through 2019.

Then, when you put in the 2020 recreational landings, that trend changed, with that high estimate of harvest in 2020, and so I just wanted to put that into perspective, and this is why we're spending time, you know, really thinking about that 2020 estimate, and so, Christina, if you could back up three slides now. Thanks.

Again, we spent quite a bit of time discussing Spanish mackerel, this revised Spanish mackerel operational assessment, and we spent time talking about MRIP PSEs, and so folks are looking at MRIP data from 2020 and looking at certain modes, or waves, and seeing high PSEs, and we were talking about what level of PSE is acceptable, and do we have a criteria set up, and so we discussed establishing a general criteria for a threshold and a PSE to be acceptable, as the SSC does not have one, although we have discussed it before, and so a recommendation was to review -- At a future meeting, review the MRIP calibrations document, the National Academies of Science report that was recently done on the MRIP program, to review both of those at a future SSC meeting to address more global committee concerns, and so determine a CV threshold.

MRIP, as many of you know, they currently report values with a CV at 0.5 or less, and they flag anything that has a CV that's higher than 0.5 as being too low precision to use, and then estimates of 0.3 or higher with a warning.

We were talking about all these, you know, the high PSEs on certain parts of Spanish mackerel landings, but Chip came to the table, Chip Collier, and let us know that the annual Spanish -- When you look at the annual landing estimates, all the CVs are less than, or equal to, 0.3 since 1986, and so, even through 2000, you have these acceptable CVs, and so, although we were looking at -- You know, when you break things down, the PSEs were higher, at the annual level, they were adequate, and so the SSC talked about the precision in 2020.

They were surprised that it was similar to previous years, despite the perceived effects of the pandemic, and so that 2020 estimate -- There wasn't as many of the creel surveys, and so they had to impute data, and so the SSC is concerned that the PSEs are biased low for 2020, and then that trend continued in 2021.

Just, in general, for species other than Spanish mackerel, we need to look at other methods that remove data points, or which exceed a threshold of uncertainty, or collapsing across frames to reduce PSEs across strata, and that's something, again, that we'll -- Just, in general, we'll talk about at a future meeting, to set up some criteria for the MRIP estimates of landings, recreational landings.

Although, you know, the Southeast Center is going to move forward with using the 2020, and it has this acceptable PSE, we do request that specific MRIP data from suspect modes, waves, and areas that have these high PSEs, and so we talked about comparing estimates between recreational shore mode versus recreational private boat mode, and, right now, the shore mode had a higher landings than recreational private mode, and, again, I reported that at the September meeting, and that's still the case, and it doesn't -- It left many of us scratching our heads, as I reported in September, and, in particular, there's a high PSE for the shore/inland mode estimate of harvest in 2020, and that harvest value makes up a substantial fraction, about a third, of the 2020 total harvest, and so just a little deeper dive into that, to be sure that the 2020 estimate of recreational landings is accurate.

In addition to the concerns with the recreational catch data, the SSC still has the concerns that we reported in September, and those include the age composition data is lacking in certain fishery sectors, uncertainty in the max age plus groups, and uncertainty in natural mortality that was demonstrated by the likelihood profiles in the original operational assessment, the one that was reported to us in August. Prior to 2020 -- Then I've already mentioned this, and I led with this, just to remind you what things look like through 2019, prior to this 2020 high harvest.

This is where things stand, where we are, and so we were presented the assessment in August, and they presented a revised assessment, with the updated MRIP numbers, in October, and the next step is another revised operational assessment that will be generated by the Southeast Fisheries Science Center that addresses the concerns that we outlined in our August and October -- The recent October meeting.

If the MCBEs can be rerun, we recommend using the revised OA model for ABC setting in the spring of 2023. If changes in terminal year, or other substantial changes to the current operational assessment occur, that would likely require putting this back on the SEDAR schedule, and then we would have to specify TORs for the next OA, but the hope is that this revised assessment can occur in the spring of 2023 and be presented to the SSC in April. If it has to go back on the SEDAR schedule, and we need to get ABCs, and so we'll look to -- Alternative methods in setting ABCs and projections could be investigated, if necessary.

A subgroup is going to meet next week, and they have already created a scope of work, working with Judd Curtis, and they are going to meet next week to finalize terms of reference for this revised operational assessment, and so their task is to review natural mortality, MCBE distributions and likelihood profiles, growth models and steepness that were used in the prior OA, and here's some other details and specifics.

Consult likelihood profiles, estimates of natural mortality for congeners, and so other related species from regions worldwide, just a quick look at those, and they have natural mortalities that were higher than what was used in the recent operational assessment, and so the current base natural mortality is shown there, 0.35, with a range of 0.3 to 0.42, and the model was very sensitive to that natural mortality, and so that's an area of focus by this subgroup, to really try to provide good justification for changing the -- There appears to be good -- There is good justification for increasing the M, based on the likelihood profiles in these estimates from congeners, and so that's likely an area where this model would change.

Here's just a -- I mentioned a little bit of the timeline, but here's some more specifics. The subgroup members are shown there, on the first bullet, and, again, Judd Curtis is also helping out, and I will join in the meeting next Wednesday, and so they're going to meet on December 14 and finalize the terms of reference. They're working on those individually, and they each have a term of reference that they're focused on, and they're going to bring those to the meeting next week, so that we can be efficient, and then those terms of reference will be reviewed at the full SSC January 20 webinar, and then, once those TORs are finalized for this revised operational assessment, those will be requested from the Southeast Fisheries Science, and, as I mentioned, we'll hopefully have those to review at our April SSC meeting, where we can set ABCs, and that's it, and I would be happy to answer any questions.

MR. ROLLER: We're going to open the floor to questions. Do we have any questions for Dr. Buckel? Laurilee.

MS. THOMPSON: I just have a comment. In 2020, during the height of COVID, and people couldn't participate in indoor activities, in our area, we saw a huge uptick in recreational fishing activities.

DR. BUCKEL: Yes, and that was discussed. It's a good point, that we've been focused on are they biased high, but there were -- The conclusion coming out was that, if there weren't issues identified with that specific mode and wave that we had requested a deeper look at, that these would be -- That it is likely a real increase in the recreational harvest, for the reasons you just described. Thanks for pointing that out.

MR. ROLLER: Tim.

MR. GRINER: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I keep going back to this shore mode numbers, and, you know, how is that going to be rectified in this new -- If you're looking at this again in the spring, are you still looking at the same shore mode numbers? I mean, I just -- For the life of me, I cannot honestly believe that there is more Spanish mackerel caught from the shore than there were from private recreational boats. I mean, how are we going to overcome that?

DR. BUCKEL: That's a good question, and I think MRIP has looked, and they've dealt with the ones that are flagged, but what we're asking is for a look -- I don't know if that will be MRIP folks that will look at that or council staff, but to take a deeper dive into that, to see if it's maybe one -- You know, if it was just one creel survey that's driving that or if it is legit and it's got a good sample size to back it up.

MR. GRINER: Yes, and I guess -- You know, I just -- Maybe Andy could help, or somebody could help, but, you know, you look back at that fishing year, and they only caught 60 percent of their quota, and so there was a million pounds of Spanish mackerel left in the water, and a third of all the fish caught, supposedly, were from the shore, and so I don't have any confidence that a third of those 1.6 million pounds of fish were actually caught from the shore, and so, you know, what is the real number that was caught, and, you know, how do we address that going forward into this new update of the assessment? It seems like we're just continuing to build on the same wrong numbers, and so, you know, I don't know -- I don't know if anything is going to be revised at all.

DR. BUCKEL: We do know that there -- This won't address the catch, Tim, but we do know, from the sensitivities for the natural mortality, that the model was very sensitive to natural mortality. The likelihood profiles suggested that natural mortality is higher than what was used, and, again, the brief literature survey, and there's a deeper dive occurring right now by the subgroup, and it suggests that the M for congeners, of Spanish mackerel in other areas of the world, are higher, and so, with a higher M, that's going to make the stock more productive, and you can see that, in their sensitivity, it's a major change in the biomass, which then leads to lower -- The fishing mortalities are lower, because the model is projecting that there's a larger number of fish out there.

That's likely going to change, and we're not going to be in recent years, where, when you look at the next year, the stock status is those high harvests and that it leads to overfishing, and that's likely not going to happen, just by changing to a higher M, if that is found to be justified, but how that moves forward with projections, I don't -- That remains to be seen, in terms of what the projections will look like.

MR. GRINER: Thank you. That's very helpful.

MR. ROLLER: John Walter.

DR. WALTER: Thanks, and thanks, Chair, for the good overview presentation of the work. A number of things. One, on a lot of the things that have been asked to do about the assessment, it's going to probably take more time than can be done there, and looking at revising M, steepness, likelihood profiles and growth, are the standard things that usually get done at the beginning of an assessment, in the terms of reference, and now we're sort of asking to do that process all over again, and it seems like the major problem is indeed to these landings, which is the question that everyone originally had, and what we did address, and the Office of Science and Technology looked into those really high landings.

They came back with revised numbers that are using some of their protocols to deal with outlier datasets, and they did reduce them, at least in the -- I think the inland numbers were reduced by about 800,000, and so, while it didn't change the overall assessment, and that's largely because the last two years of data aren't necessarily going to -- The tail isn't going to really wag the dog that much, because you've got all these other years of data. Even if -- If we have to go redo all those other things, I don't think we can get it done in this time, and it's probably going to have to get back in the SEDAR queue.

Then, just in terms of commenting on those really high shore modes, those are likely coming from piers, I think, from at least running up and down the beach the past two days, and it does seem like the piers -- And walking to Johnny Mercers Pier, and it seemed like 2022 was a pretty good year for Spanish mackerel, and I think their pier record was caught, at like eight pounds for Spanish mackerel, and so I think it's the piers, it seems like, and people who might know the fishery better might be able to confirm that, but, anyway, the data has been looked at by the Office of Science and Technology, who collects that.

They did revise the numbers, and we provided a revised assessment on the basis of what this group said was the major concern, and we think that it's likely going to need to get back into the SEDAR queue, to really address all of the other issues that are really the standard issues that are always

known uncertainties, like M, steepness, growth, and so those aren't unique to Spanish mackerel, and those are the same uncertainties that apply to every one of our stocks, and so thank you.

DR. BUCKEL: Thanks, John. That's helpful, and, you know, those are mentioned, the steepness and growth, but my guess is that the subgroup is not -- There wasn't the evidence, or any information, to justify making a change in those, and so my guess is it may just be natural mortality that comes out of the subgroup, and would that be doable, if it was just a change in natural mortality?

DR. WALTER: I am just a little afraid that we could do that reconsideration for natural mortality for every single one of our stocks, after the fact, and we could find evidence that M could be different, but it goes through a SEDAR process, and usually those basic life history things need to get agreed upon early and not reevaluated after the fact. Otherwise, we would never get management advice through, and that's one of the concerns, about there is a process, and we have to follow the process, and, if it turns out that the biology is really that uncertain, then we've got to put it back in the process, and it needs to be considered along with the rest of the SEDAR schedule.

DR. BUCKEL: I think one reason the SSC felt that maybe it would be -- This process that we've outlined here would be possible is that the -- In the update, the OA, that was presented to us in August, likelihood profiling was used to look at selectivities, M, steepness, and the likelihood profiles suggested changes in selectivities, and those changes were made within the updated OA, and the likelihood profiles on the Ms also suggested that it should be higher, but there was no change made, and the justification, the reason, was given that, you know, our hands are tied, because it's an update.

That's where we said, well, if you can change -- If you're okay to use likelihood profiles to make a change to selectivity, then we want you to have the flexibility to -- Your hands shouldn't be tied for M either, and I think that's where we thought that it could -- Without going back through the SEDAR data workshop, that, if the selectivities are changed, based on likelihood profiles in the update, then the natural mortality could be changed, with that same justification.

MR. ROLLER: Dewey.

MR. HEMILRIGHT: It seems like, to me, that, for the stock assessment, and the SEDAR process, that a lot of these questions that are being asked now of the SSC, and the SSC giving answers to, and reruns and different things, this stuff should have been flagged before, or during, the assessment spit out some results and before it went to the SSC, because it seems like we're going over and rehashing something now, and we're going to have to almost do another assessment and get back on the SEDAR process, when fishermen, and the commercial industry up and down the coast, are seeing a lot of Spanish mackerel in places they've never seen before, and we're hoping, and expecting, an increase in quota.

If, at the beginning of the process, things are fleshed-out, or looked at, or talked about, and we go through something, and this is what spits out, and then we've got to go waste more -- Not waste more time, and that's not the word, but we've got to go clean up, and the clean-up should have happened to begin with, before it went through the process of the SEDAR process.

Now, if it was something that couldn't have been cleaned up, and it went through the SEDAR process, then that's a different story, but it seems like some of this stuff could have got flagged beforehand, through data workshops, or we could have believed the shore mode, or smoothing effects, or different things, until we get to this point, because it's eaten up a lot of time, and fishermen are still sitting there looking like there's a lot of Spanish mackerel, and when are we going to look at a possible getting an increase in quota.

That doesn't help with your review of the SSC, but I just find it kind of interesting why we get this far in and all this stuff was not brought up at the beginning, or during, before it got to the SSC, but I do thank the SSC, in listening to the conversation, of folks not being afraid to speak up and delve into something that's important and when they see what they have in front of them. Thank you.

DR. BUCKEL: Thanks, Dewey, and just to -- You know, this was an update, and so then there is no -- There wasn't a SEDAR data workshop, and so that's something that I presented in September, that, when ten years have gone by, then maybe that's too long of a period of time to do an update, and it may need that data workshop, and so I think that's one of the issues here, is there wasn't -- For the update, it was just adding the new landings to the original assessment.

MR. ROLLER: Go ahead, Dewey.

MR. HEMILRIGHT: I apologize for not getting the update and the assessment part right, and so, therefore, maybe ten years is too long to wait, and so, even though it did go through a SEDAR process, and I was misunderstood on that. Thank you.

MR. ROLLER: Go ahead, Ira.

MR. LAKS: Just speaking for the AP, I think Dewey is right on what all the fishermen on the AP were saying, and it's very frustrating to hear all these data challenges that you all have, and then the fishermen seeing all the fish, and they were very concerned about what they're actually seeing day-to-day, and then you hear about a process where the data might not be 100 percent, or good enough to use, that contradicts what they're seeing, and it really is hard to stomach.

MR. ROLLER: Go ahead, Spud.

MR. WOODWARD: Thank you, Tom. Just I think maybe, also to help us have some context with this, and, John, or Jeff, correct me if I'm wrong, but I think, whenever the FES recalibrations were created, we saw a significant increase in the shore effort estimates across-the-board in the South Atlantic. I mean, I think, in our state, it tripled from what -- It made us all scratch our heads, and I think some of you remember that we had some very frustrating conversations about whether those effort estimates were reflective of reality, but the bottom line is they were deemed the best scientific information available, and so, therefore, they've been institutionalized, and now they're part of our how MRIP estimates are generated, but so am I correct in that, that we saw an appreciable increase in shore mode effort estimates, as a result of the FES calibrations, and that is certainly contributing to this, Tim, because, you know, if you have an intercept, and, obviously, the expansion factor goes up considerably, based on what those effort estimates are.

MR. ROLLER: Go ahead, Tim.

MR. GRINER: Spud, I'm glad you brought that up, about Georgia, because I remember thinking, to myself, when I saw those numbers, that -- You know, Georgia is not a big, long coastline, and, you know, if I remember right, and it may have even been red porgy, but you would have had to have anglers shoulder-to-shoulder the entire length of the coast of Georgia to match those numbers that the shore-based MRIP said were caught with red porgies, and so, I mean, you talk about lack of confidence, and, I mean, that's just actually impossible. It could not possibly be that anglers were shoulder-to-shoulder catching red porgies off the coast of Georgia from the beach.

MR. ROLLER: I have a question. Dr. Buckel, you mentioned, in the presentation, that alternative methods in setting ABCs and projections could be investigated, and could you elaborate a little bit on what that could look like?

DR. BUCKEL: So the SSC has a protocol for the data-limited species, where there is no stock assessment, and so following those, and so some of the data-limited procedures, and it could be as simple as looking at a period where we felt the landings were sustainable, you know, an eight or ten-year period, and then using the approach to come up with an ABC to move forward from that, or there's some more data-limited approaches, assessment approaches, that are a little bit more quantitative that could be investigated that don't take a lot of time.

MR. ROLLER: Go ahead, Spud.

MR. WOODWARD: A question for Jeff, and so, obviously, if there's missing age composition data, you can't get that back, and it's gone, and so what will be the lingering effect of that, going forward, in terms of the -- I guess the ability of the assessment to accurately characterize the status of the stock?

DR. BUCKEL: Yes, that's true, and we can't go back and get those age comps, and I'm not a stock assessment scientist and so, if someone at the table, like maybe John, wants to handle how that impacts the assessment, but my guess would be that it would affect precision, and potentially the bias on the -- Using those age comps, we would look at the decline in the numbers of fish with age, but I will let an assessment scientist address that one.

DR. WALTER: This is one of the fun things that we're dealing with with COVID, where we've got holes in that data, pretty much across-the-board for a lot of species, where we knew we were going to have them, and we didn't have port agents out there sampling, and so, ideally, what it is is just missing data, and it doesn't create any kind of a bias, and it adds to the uncertainty, and it's going to be species and stock-specific, to the extent that there might be other sources of parallel data, such that we might have missed data in one region and there is data in another, and the approaches to dealing with it are going to be stock-specific.

Likely, it's just going to add uncertainty, and a greater, wider distribution around the overfishing limit, on the basis of not having that data, and it's one of the reasons that we're tried to emphasize trying to get our survey back in the water, so that we've got that continuity of information, but I can't comment on exactly what that impact is, and I think we're going to try to do some simulations of what if you missed a whole year of data, and like pull data out of existing assessments, to see what that impact is, but I can't comment specifically on any stock.

MR. ROLLER: I don't have any hands in the queue. Does anybody have any questions or comments? Well, seeing none, I think we're going to move on to Ira's piece for this.

MR. LAKS: Okay, and so we discussed Spanish mackerel, and we had a really good conversation about it. I'm not going to go through every little thing we said, but, you know, in the Northern Zone, they're reaching their ACL faster and faster every year. Whether that's a product of more fish, or climate change, nobody is knowing, but it's a steady March, earlier and earlier every year, that they're meeting it.

That puts a hardship on them, at the 500 pounds for the rest of the year, and some of the fishermen are changing their methods and how they fish, and some of them are getting out of it, because it's more lucrative to jump into another fishery, but, you know, I think there's also people that feel that, you know, if the stock is in better shape, that's limiting what they can catch going into the future, because they're not able to access it now.

There was also talk about, you know, the initial allocations with these fish, and when this was decided, and the zones might not have got the amounts they deserved in either way, but there's always been a little bit of controversy on that and how it was looked at, and the fishermen definitely wanted to have that looked at again, to maybe see what the correct amount for each zone is.

You know, in the Southern Zone, there is -- Especially off of Florida, and it's just a large fishery, and you just get a bunch of boats that jump in and out of it, and it leads to market prices that aren't steady. You get a lot of glut in the market, when a bunch of fish come in and the price goes way down, and it leads to prices that, you know, we saw with big roller rigs, you know, thirty or forty years ago, and so that's a concern that was brought to the table.

You know, there was also concern about really looking at the increasing landings in the Mid-Atlantic, and, you know, we talk about climate change, and I think these mackerel are on the forefront of it, right, and, I mean, they are out in front, and they're the leading indicator, and how are we going to deal with it? You know, you look at things such as even for-hire permits, in the Mid-Atlantic, that are needed by those vessels to catch Spanish and king mackerel, and there is almost none of them. There is very, very few of them, and so it's a messaging, but it's also a lack of data, right, and we're talking about all of the data that we're missing, and that's somewhere where we're not getting it from.

You know, this fishery moves up and down the coast, in and offshore, and it's just imperative that the states work with the council to really get a comprehensive management plan that works for everybody, and it's just that it can't be piecemealed up and down, and there has to be just the thought that -- You know, the AP was very concerned that everybody work together to try to get this fishery in better shape.

You know, there's always the fear that in any of this, that one sector is going to lose out to the other, and, you know, I think it's natural to say that recreational fishermen fear losing to commercial fishermen, and vice versa, and that's always something that comes up in the AP meeting, and they definitely brought that back up with Spanish mackerel.

You know, what we just talked about, and the lack of data in the assessment, it really had a lot of angst with the AP. You know, they see all this stuff that's done, and all these studies, and the fact

that there is these gaps in the data, and the fishermen are not seeing what's being said in the assessment, or coming out of the assessment, and they really feel like that needs to be addressed, in a serious way that it needs to be addressed, that this just can't be piecemealed, and we have to really look at this, and I know we do a lot of things for other different species, and it's -- You know, it's time that mackerel are not the Rodney Dangerfield of the fishing world, and they need to get a little respect, and so I think that was the consensus of the AP, that, you know, it's an important fishery, and they need to be treated that way.

I think, overall, we just really want to see a targeted look at this, and the fishermen in both sectors are seeing really good amounts of fish, and I just think that we really need to look at a closer look at this, and the AP is very concerned, like I said, that we're not doing that, and we want the data, and we want it all to be incorporated in a stock assessment that will work for everybody. Are there any questions?

MR. ROLLER: Any questions? Go ahead, Spud.

MR. WOODWARD: You know, I was there for this AP discussion, and, you know, there was a lot of frustration, but I guess a question that I've got for you, Ira, and this was talked about a little bit at that meeting, is, you know, right now, the management area is New York through Florida, but, obviously, this species is expanding its range beyond New York, and do you think we're at the point where we need to consider expanding the management range for this species? I mean, we've tried to bring in some Mid-Atlantic representation on the AP, and I think we had Virginia and Maryland represented there, and we're looking at these port meetings and all, and so do you think it's time for us to consider expanding that? I mean, Bob was just telling me that they're catching Spanish mackerel in fish traps off of Rhode Island now.

MR. LAKS: Yes, definitely. You know, I've seen YouTube videos of charter guys in Cape Cod fishing for king mackerel, and, for someone who has been involved in the king mackerel fishery my whole life, and who attended college in Rhode Island, it's just baffling for me to even think of that, and so I definitely think that, you know, moving forward, there has to be a comprehensive look at this whole fishery, and it is definitely a coastwide fishery now.

Every day, they're moving further north, or, every year, their range is expanding, and I don't think we have an understanding of what that's doing to production in these stocks or, you know, how much more food is up there. You know, it could be a bonus for the stock, and I definitely would think that, you know, at least up to the southern end of New England has to be included, because there's definitely a fishery there that's pretty steady.

MR. ROLLER: I am going to make a quick comment, and then I'm going to go Laurilee. You know, as a former Mackerel AP member, before I was appointed to the council, one of the points that you brought up is a lot of fishermen don't feel that this fishery gets enough respect, and that's something that has been there for a long period of time. You know, we've got a couple of AP members who traveled a long way to be here, to listen to the discussion, and I recognize them, but that AP is great, and these fishermen understand how important these species are to our greater fisheries economy, right, and so I think that's just one thing that I wanted to say, and it's something that I recognize, is how important they are and, you know, how we do need to recognize that. With that being said, I'm going to move to Laurilee.

MS. THOMPSON: Well, I just have a question, and so I'm looking at the AP members, the list of AP members, that were at the AP meeting, and would it be burdensome for staff to include the state that each AP member is from next to their name, in the roster, and I think that would be helpful for us, to make sure that all of the region has the right coverage, because I am looking at these names, and I don't know where any of them are from. Thank you.

MS. WIEGAND: I can certainly add that to the AP report itself, and all of that information is included in the directory as well, if you're ever looking for it.

MR. ROLLER: Anecdotally, with my experience, and I'm not going to speak for Ira, there's a pretty great geographical representation from all of our member states on that AP. I don't have any hands in the queue, and is there any other questions or comments for Ira? Seeing none, I think we're going to move to the next agenda item, and so we're going to talk now about the Spanish mackerel allocation decision tree, and I'm going to pass that over to Christina here.

MS. WIEGAND: Thanks, Tom, and so, if you guys will remember, back in September, you had requested that staff run the allocation decision tool for Spanish mackerel, which we have done, but I do want to sort of explain some caveats with it.

The understanding was that we would be here in December with catch level recommendations from the SSC. As you heard from Jeff's presentation, we're not quite there yet, and so we've got this interesting situation, with the allocation decision tool, where the information that goes into that tool is in FES currency, because that's the most up-to-date best scientific information available, but, because we didn't get new catch level recommendations from the SSC meeting in October, the current ABC and ACL for Atlantic Spanish mackerel is still in CHTS, and so there's a little bit of a disconnect, and staff is not sure how illuminating the allocation decision tool is going to be, at this point in time, because there is some missing data, just because of the disconnect between CHTS and FES.

We do have the fishery overview and the allocation decision tool ready to go, if you would like us to run through it, but I guess I will leave that to the committee to decide, whether you feel that is a useful exercise, at this point in time, or whether you would like to wait until you have catch level recommendations from your SSC.

MR. ROLLER: I am going to look to the committee here and just see what the interest of the committee is, given what Christina has said. Go ahead, Jessica.

MS. MCCAWLEY: I would really rather wait until we get the assessment figured out, and that's just my opinion.

MR. ROLLER: Thank you, Jessica. Go ahead, Tim.

MR. GRINER: Part of my frustration is, you know, we keep having this disconnect between FES and CHTS, and when is it going to stop? You know, I tried to look at the ACL monitoring, and it's always in the Coastal Household Telephone Survey, but, you know, we're waiting on data to come out of the SSC from the SEDAR process, and yet we can't even use our own decision tree now, you know, and it's like how much longer do we actually switch over -- When do we switch

over from one to the other, or how are we ever going to, you know, overcome this part of it right here, because this is very frustrating.

You know, we wanted to use this decision tool to try to, you know, just take a broad look at allocations, because that's kind of where we are, and we need to, and we can't even do that, and so, I mean, I just don't -- I mean, who makes the decision of when we go from one to the other and stop flipping back and forth?

MS. WIEGAND: My understanding is that we are switching everything over to FES as we move through the assessment process, and so Spanish mackerel has this disconnect right now, because we've gone through the assessment, but we haven't gotten catch level recommendations, and so, once we get those catch level recommendations from the SSC, everything will be in FES currency, and my understanding is, for other species, they're all sort of going through this process. As stock assessments get updated, so do the catch levels into FES.

MR. GRINER: Thank you. That's very helpful.

MR. ROLLER: Go ahead, Mel.

MR. BELL: I would agree with Jessica, and I think it's best to let the SSC kind of do their thing first, and then we'll come back and consider it at that time.

MR. ROLLER: Anyone else? I am not hearing any support to run through the exercise for the allocation decision tool at this time. Is anybody needing a break? I know we've been in session since eight o'clock, and so let's do a ten-minute break, and we'll be back here at 10:25.

(Whereupon, a recess was taken.)

MR. ROLLER: All right, everybody. We're going to start, to reconvene the Mackerel Cobia Committee, and our next item on the agenda is our false albacore white paper, and I'm going to pass this to Christina, or, actually, we're going to start with Ira. Sorry about that, and so, Ira, when you're ready, we'll talk about the AP's discussion on this.

MR. LAKS: We discussed false albacore, little tunny, bonita, whatever you're calling them, depending on what your location is, and it was a good conversation that we had, and it was very interesting to hear people's perspectives. I think the one thing that came out of the AP was that these fish are very valuable, and I think that was the consensus from everybody, that everybody has a different use for them.

The geographic location of where they mean something is what I found fascinating, and so, as a fisherman in Florida, they tended to be a nuisance fish for us. As you get further up the coast, they're a valuable recreational commodity, and there's evidence that their commercial value is increasing, and we were told there's a large bait production, especially off of south Florida, that they're being sold for bait, and some of the comments from the AP members were this is something that the states have to look into, particularly to start with.

I know that there was some mention that Florida make them a restricted species, and there's been talk about a lot of fish that are caught and sold as bait, that are unregulated and untracked, and

nobody knows about it, and some of the comments also were that an unregulated fish is a fish that gets no respect, that, if you're going to say that it's not worth regulating, it's not worth anything, and so those were the concerns that people had.

I would say, overall, there was -- Everybody wanted to do something for little tunny, and we ended up, as a group, making a motion not to, but it seemed, to me, that that was fear of it becoming a regulatory nightmare, and I think everybody on the AP, from at least what I observed, was that they want to see something done, but, right now, not include them into the FMP, but further consideration of the value of these fish and, moving forward, trying to gain more information and setting up some data collection that would help these fish in the future. Are there any questions?
Tom.

MR. ROLLER: You know, this was a really good discussion, and I was really -- Like you said, and, as a former AP member, we've had this discussion multiple times, and I don't think there was anybody there who didn't recognize their importance to their fishery, or to their state, and the only thing that I was a little bit disappointed in was when we asked the AP to look at this white paper and whether or not they should be -- They meet the threshold for federal management. We didn't really address that paper very much, and it seemed -- The conversation seemed to be more along the lines of we just don't really want ACLs, or regulations, at this time period, right, and so is that a fair take, do you think?

MR. LAKS: Yes, and I would say that their experience with some management issues in other species probably made them fearful of going ahead and having them regulated more at this time.

MR. ROLLER: More of a fear of ACLs, as opposed to --

MR. LAKS: Yes.

MR. ROLLER: I am looking around the table, to see if there's any questions for Ira here. Go ahead, Tim.

MR. GRINER: Ira, I wanted to maybe talk a little bit more about how the AP felt this fishery was actually prosecuted, and I'm looking at the MRIP numbers, and the State of North Carolina numbers, both in-state waters and out-of-state waters, recreationally and commercially, and it appears, by all landings, that it's basically a state fishery, in all the states, and was that kind of the consensus of the AP as well, that it's state fishery, for the most part?

MR. LAKS: I would say that was conversation with some fishermen, but I could tell you, as someone who has fished off of south Florida, that those fish are right on the line, and so it really depends on where you are, and especially as you get say north of Jupiter, and those fish are all -- Probably the majority of them are federal, and you still will encounter them in state waters, but it sounded like, as you go north, and from what I saw in North Carolina, it was a state fishery, but I really don't think we really got specific about where they are at different times of year and different locations.

MR. GRINER: Thank you. Yes, I think -- It seems, to me, from the guys that I've talked to in North Carolina, that it is mainly a state fishery, and there is a small, you know, 100,000-pound, commercial component to it, but it's 100,000 pounds, but it is an important recreational fishery,

especially for the state flyfishing guys, and it's a big, fun thing, and it brings in a lot of dollars for the state, and so, you know, I think it's definitely worth looking at, but it seems, to me, that it lends itself to a state-managed species.

MR. ROLLER: I am just going to -- I am going to go Gary in just a second, but I just want to touch on Tim's comments. You know, as someone who prosecutes this fishery myself, I think one way to look at it is we target them where we want to target them, but they're very omnipresent. You know, we catch them on the beach, and we catch them five miles out, and we catch them in the Gulf Stream, and they're a very common component of the offshore fishery, and so they're in a lot of different places. I'm going to go to Gary.

MR. BORLAND: Ira, was there any talk about abundance, or trend, with the AP team, or committee?

MR. LAKS: I don't think we really got into specifics about trends. You know, I think, if anything, it was really so specific to where people fish, right, and, I mean, I think I might have brought up that, in south Florida, I might be seeing less of them, and the ones that I am seeing are smaller, but I don't really think we had an overall conversation that really included the abundance in every location.

MR. ROLLER: I am going to go to Andy.

MR. STRELCHECK: I appreciated the comments about kind of the AP not looking more thoroughly at the white paper, but I do feel like they've kind of indirectly weighed-in on a number of factors that this council will need to weigh, in terms of whether it's in need of management, including kind of the question of whether an FMP can produce more efficient utilization of the resource, right, because that's kind of what they were weighing with regard to their comments about federal management.

I also heard Tim talk about, you know, state management, that it may be more suitable for state management than -- We've had similar discussions about species potentially in need of federal management in the Gulf, and the difference has been, recently, that those are heavily regulated and managed by the states already, right, whereas little tunny, false albacore, is not managed by the states, as far as I can tell, right, and so I think that's a major difference.

One of the things that I feel like would be relevant, and important, in terms of this council's discussions, is seeing if there's any data, information, in terms of, you know, trends in abundance, changes in catches, that can be presented to us from a biological standpoint, to see if there's anything alarming going on with the population without a stock assessment, right, because I think that can also help tell whether or not there maybe is a growing need for management, whether at the state or federal level.

MR. ROLLER: Thank you, Andy. I'm going to go to Ira, and then we'll go to Tim. Go ahead, Ira.

MR. LAKS: I think the feeling of the AP was that there needs to be some way to track these, you know, and some of the comments about the states, you know, having them be a restricted species, or tracked better for commercial sales, or for bait, or whatever might not be captured at the present

time, was that, unless we do something in those small steps, that we're never going to gain the information to really get that information in the future of where the stock is headed.

MR. ROLLER: I am going to go to Tim.

MR. GRINER: Yes, and I think you're absolutely right, and, Andy, as you say that, you know, without any other data, I guess really the only thing that we do have to look at, to look at any trends, would be the landing data, and, you know, commercially, from the state -- I look at the commercial numbers from the State of North Carolina, and, you know, they basically have been steady for I know at least the last ten years. I mean, they go up and down a few thousand pounds here or there, but, if you look at just the past year, it was half of what it was the year before, but you're still looking at just a couple hundred thousand pounds of fish, and so, you know, other than just looking at landings, I don't know what else we have to use as any kind of indices of abundance, or any trends, or anything like that. Would that be fair to say, that that's the only way to really look at it?

MR. ROLLER: Go ahead, Andy.

MR. STRELCHECK: I think, generally, you're probably right, Tim, and I would want to talk to the Science Center, and is there -- I know they're not frequently landed, and the information on, you know, size of being caught and the amount of fish being reported in the landings data is important, and do we have any state or federal surveys that are conducting fishery-independent, you know, data collection that might catch little tunny and have a time series that we could look at, and those are the sources of information that I was referring to, and just kind of patching together whatever we have.

MR. ROLLER: Let me make a quick comment here myself, from a couple of things at the AP meeting. Through my work in North Carolina, what I will point out is that landings increasing, while it's not extensive, are trending upward in North Carolina, and that's one of the reasons why I believe this issue keeps coming up to the AP and is kind of very present in a section of the fishing community, is because there's some anecdotal stuff out here, and we have an increasing bait market that we keep hearing about.

We had some AP members mention that they're developing new food markets for these fish, and we had -- I think one fisherman said he gets as much as \$2.70 a pound for them, at certain times of the year. I mean, that's more than Spanish mackerel, and so that may not be an arching trend, but those were comments made by the AP. Go ahead, John Walter.

DR. WALTER: This species is caught in pelagic longlines, to a small extent, and we have used pelagic longlines to develop indices for a lot of our stocks that otherwise we can't develop fisheries surveys for, and it probably is such a small component, and not targeted in any way, and Dewey could probably comment to some extent, if it's even useful or not, but we have developed them for yellowfin tuna and for swordfish and for the billfishes, usually using observer data for those rare species that otherwise would kind of rate as market species, and I would like to hear from Dewey. Thanks.

MR. HEMILRIGHT: I am happy to say that I've never caught a little tunny, or a false albacore, pelagic longlining. I think, when we look at the data here, it's something that there is so many

different facets that people catch the false albacore, whether it's trolling for king mackerel in federal waters, or you might use it for bait, and you might sell it, and, you know, you made mention of a niche food source of \$2.75 a pound, and I wonder what would happen if they had a thousand pounds, and you would probably get a quarter for it, and so I think that you have to look -- As far as the white paper, and what was produced, you have to look at all the facets of what this fishery is used for, throughout its range, and see if there's any pressing, or any looking, at a trend of where one thing is going on, because, you know, people cut it up for bait, recreational and commercial fishing, all the time, and it's great bait, and you've got something fresh.

King mackerel fishing, we've caught it many a time, you know, but the last thing you want to do is be catching false albacore when you're trying to catch a \$2.75 or \$3.00 king mackerel, and so it's not like you're sitting there banging on them, and, as far as the gillnet thing, guys probably catch them, or catch them sometimes, but, as far as an emerging fishery, to go gillnet fishing for little tunny, I don't see that happening right now, unless the price was to be \$5.00 a pound, and it stayed at that, and so it's like take all the information that -- Get all the states maybe to do some data queries, from New England to Florida, and look at different things, and then you come back at a time and say, hey, what's on the table, and, to me, that would be a more extensive look at a white paper in the future, to see what the trends are, or something like that, and so that's just my thoughts. Thank you.

MR. ROLLER: I've got Spud, Gary, and Tim, but I will say that let's -- This discussion seems to be moving into probably the white paper presentation, but we can take a few more comments here, and so, Spud.

MR. WOODWARD: Thank you, Tom, and I certainly won't drag this out, but I suspect that we've got an issue here with this species, probably like we have with dolphinfish, it's a widely-distributed fish, and, you know, we probably have factors far outside of our EEZ that may be influencing it, and I suspect that, as we've seen throughout the rest of the world, there is a lot of pressure being put on species as food sources, and so do we know anything about the Caribbean? I mean, is there increased fishing pressure?

I know I will point out, and I think we mentioned this at the last meeting, but I think it's the American Saltwater Guides Association that started a tagging program to try to give us some information about, you know, migratory behavior of these fishes, and I think that will help us, but I think, you know, we should be vigilant, but I'm not sure we're at the point where we need to do anything in federal waters, and Bob Beal told me that he will run screaming from the room if it's even mentioned that we want to do an interstate plan, and so I would rather not have him do that, and that would be very uncomfortable, I think, for all of us, but I think it's the right approach, and I think we can inform this white paper, maybe, by trying to learn as much as we can about what's going on, both within U.S. waters and outside of U.S. waters.

MR. ROLLER: Thank you, and, before I go to Gary here, you know, that's an interesting comment, because I think some of us, who care deeply about this fishery, that's kind of why we're here at the council, and I worked with my state to try to develop something, and they keep pointing towards ASMFC or the council, and they seem to be pointing back towards the states, and so I think there's some frustration here.

One of the things that we keep hearing, and I think the AP kind of mentioned this, and maybe not directly, is people kind of like what this fishery looks like right now, and the idea is how do we maintain that abundance, right, maintain that level of satisfaction in that fishery, and be proactive, and so, with that, I'm going to go to Gary.

MR. BORLAND: In hearing all the comments, I would ask staff what's the next move forward, right, and what's the next move after a white paper, and what are the options, going forward, to continue to keep this in the forefront?

MR. ROLLER: That's a good comment, Gary, and maybe we should hold that for after the white paper presentation, and are you okay with that? Okay. Do you have anything else to add? Okay. I'm going to go to Tim, real quick, and then I think we'll go into the white paper discussion, if everybody is good with that.

MR. GRINER: Thank you. I just wanted to speak to the comment about the \$2.75, or whatever it was, as a food source for these fish, and, you know, I don't know anybody that fishes for them, and we do catch them, from time to time, especially when we're king mackerel fishing, and I can tell you, in my experience, from every single time I've tried to sell these, or have been forced to sell them at the fish house, that they're not worth the cost of the box, the paper box, the wax-paper box, that it takes for me to put them in, and so they're not really a food source. I mean, if you've ever tried to eat one, you would know that it's just not a food source, and so I would never see that there would be an emerging market for an edible false albacore. Thank you.

MR. ROLLER: I believe our AP member spoke to the fact that there is some focused Filipino-based markets that really like these fish as a food source, and that's where a lot of his fish goes. With that, I think I'm going to pass it over to Christina to go through the white paper.

MS. WIEGAND: Thanks. To give you guys a bit of context for sort of why we're even talking about little tunny again, if you will remember, back in September, the American Saltwater Guides Association submitted a letter to you all requesting that you consider re-adding false albacore, little tunny, back into the CMP FMP. It had originally been put in the FMP, back when it was originally instated, but no management measures were put in place, and then, in 2015, through CMP Amendment 18, it was removed, and it was removed because that amendment was coming on the back of the reauthorization of the Magnuson-Stevens Act, which would require ACLs and accountability measures, and, at the time, the council felt that little tunny was not in need of federal management, and that state management was more appropriate, and so it was ultimately removed.

What I have done here is gone through the ten factors that are in the Magnuson-Stevens Act that help determine whether or not a species is in need of conservation and management. All of the data that went into this can be found in the fishery overview, and I encourage you guys to click on that link and look at it. It's got landings information, commercial and recreational landings information, that we have available, and I will sort of go over each of those points as we go through the different factors.

One thing I do want to make clear is that this is sort of a preliminary look at these factors, and in no way sort of constitutes a conclusion on whether or not these species are in need of conservation and management. That is ultimately a council decision, and it is very likely that you guys will

probably want more information than what we were able to provide here, before making that choice.

To dive right in, the first factor is the stock is an important component of the marine environment, and, as has been discussed here today, this is a very wide-ranging fish, all the way up from Massachusetts south to Brazil, including the Gulf of Mexico, the Caribbean, and Bermuda.

Next up, and probably more germane to the discussion you all have been having, the stock is caught by the fishery, and so, if you look at that landings table that's in the overview, you can see that, since 2000, total landings of false albacore have averaged about 3.1, or 3.2, million pounds per year along the east coast, and so primarily recreational landings, with recreational landings averaging about 2.7 million pound, and commercial landings being just shy of half-a-million pounds per year.

They have been relatively consistent, except for a bit of a bump, which, if I go back to this, you can sort of see there was a bump right here, around 2015, where there was an increase in landings, but, otherwise, they have stayed roughly steady, though, as Tom noted, you can see that landings from North Carolina and South Carolina increasing slightly over the time period. Again, all of these landings primarily occur within the South Atlantic region, with minimal landings occurring up through the Mid-Atlantic and New England.

The next is whether an FMP can improve or maintain the condition of the stock. As you all have noted, little tunny hasn't been assessed, and so the stock condition is not necessarily well understood, but there is also no available information suggesting that the stock may be depleted, and so whether or not an FMP presents some potential to improve, or maintain, the condition of the stock is something that the council would need to discuss, and it also, of course, depends on where harvest is primarily occurring. If it's primarily occurring in state waters, management under an FMP may allow, you know, current conditions of the stock to stay the same, but state management would be important.

Next up, Number 4, we've got the stock is a target of a fishery, and this is where information from your Mackerel Cobia Advisory Panel really came in handy, and we did what I've been sort of lovingly terming as a mini fishery performance report, where we sort of skimmed through all of the big issues, to try to get some information to inform this white paper, and so AP members indicated, as you heard Ira talk about that, recreational fishing for little tunny has become more popular and targeted in recent years. However, commercially, it tends to be incidentally caught, when fishing for other species, and it's often used as strip bait in the trolling and shark fisheries.

For the commercial fishery, the AP members did indicate that it's a pretty niche fishery, and, while a small food market has developed, it's not really a volume fishery, and so, if anything more than say 10,000 pounds are caught, the market becomes flooded, and the price will drop significantly.

Next up is Factor 5, and so the stock is important to commercial, recreational, and subsistence users, and, again, really relied heavily on advisory panel member input from this, and AP members did discuss the incredible importance of little tunny for the recreational sector in the Mid-Atlantic, and particularly in the Carolinas. They talked a lot about the for-hire component in particular, and little tunny can often be caught on bad fishing days, and so, no matter what, you're going to be

able to get some fish for your customers, which is incredibly important to keep trip satisfaction high.

It was also noted that, in the Carolinas, fly fishing has become really popular for little tunny, and you're actually seeing people come to North Carolina specifically to participate in this fishery, and so it's become an important driver of tourism. On the other hand, commercial AP members noted that, again, little tunny is used as bait and that landing it to sell is really sort of a niche fishery, as is illustrated by those low commercial landings.

Next up is Factor 6, the fishery is important to the nation or the regional economy, and so, given the low landings of little tunny over the last twenty years, when compared to other fisheries, it doesn't seem to be of notable importance to the nation. However, based on AP comments, it is likely that this fishery is important on a smaller regional level.

Then we've got the need to resolve competing interests and conflicts among user groups. To our knowledge, there are no interest or conflicts among user groups within the current fishery, and so management under an FMP wouldn't necessarily resolve the non-existing conflicts.

Next up, we've got the economic condition of the fishery and whether an FMP can produce more efficient utilization, and certainly the recreational representatives on the AP indicated that this is important economically, while the commercial fishery is more niche, and so more discussion is likely going to need to be had by this council, to determine whether or not you all feel like an FMP can actually produce more efficient utilization of the fishery.

We're getting close to the end, with Factor 9, the needs of a developing fishery and whether an FMP can foster orderly growth. Again, I feel like I'm becoming a bit of a broken record here, and AP members said the recreational fishery is really developing, while other AP members felt that the fishery was stable and not increasing in the Atlantic, as discussions in the previous sections have noted, and so, again, discussion is likely needed to be had by this council on whether or not you feel that an FMP could foster orderly growth.

Then, finally, last, but not least, the extent to which the fishery is already adequately managed by states or other state and federal programs, and, to our knowledge, there are no regulations in place that are directly managing little tunny on the state or federal levels, and they may be indirectly managed, through other, you know, gear restrictions or generic bag limits and things like that for other fisheries, but there are no regulations directly impacting little tunny, and so, with that, I will pause, and I will sort of get back to Gary's question about what are your options here, moving forward.

In terms of specifically management of little tunny, if you guys felt that you wanted to add them to the FMP, you've got your two routes, adding them informally as species in need of conservation and management, and this would require ACLs and accountability measures to be implemented for little tunny, and the other option is to discuss whether or not they would fit the criteria for an ecosystem component species, to be added into the FMP that way, which would not require the ACL and AM, and it would be similar to what you all did for bullet and frigate mackerel.

Other options are gathering more information, and we're going to talk about port meetings in a little bit, and, you know, some things for little tunny that could be addressed through port meetings,

to help get you guys some of the information that you've talked about around the table, as needed, or you could ultimately decide that nothing is needed at this time, or anything else that the committee might be able to come up with that I didn't think of off the top of my head, and so, with that, I will certainly turn it back over and see if there are any questions about what was included in the white paper.

MR. ROLLER: Thank you, Christina. I'm going to open the floor to questions and discussions. I've got Judy and then Mel.

MS. HELMEY: Well, I've been fishing in the same area for, well, more than I want to say, and we fish -- Little tunny is a bycatch for us, and I can honestly say that I don't think it has changed much over the years that I've been fishing, and so the way it works is the little tunny comes first, in the spring, before the Spanish mackerel in our area, before the Spanish mackerel, and that's our indication that you've got to watch out for the ocean -- I am trying to think of the name, but the big fish --

MR. WOODWARD: Mola mola.

MS. HELMEY: The mola mola, and they come in all about the same time, and so that's your time that you need to start watching for them, and we catch a lot of them, and we release most of the ones that we do keep, and we might keep some for bait, and, mostly, people use them just because they pull like a rascal, and so I'm just saying that they're great, but they're still here, and I don't think there's been any change to them.

MR. ROLLER: Thank you, Judy. I'm going to go to Mel.

MR. BELL: I was just curious, and, I mean, given that they're a scombroid, and given that they migrate, has it never reached any level of interest for -- I mean, it's not an HMS -- They have no interest whatsoever in that, I gather, or have they ever? That's just -- I am wondering if they've ever been approached, or at least considered.

MS. WIEGAND: To my knowledge, HMS has not expressed any interest in managing this species. I do not know if they've ever been approached by any group about managing them.

MR. ROLLER: I'm going to go to Chester.

MR. BREWER: I can't speak to the recent past, but I'm not aware of, you know, HMS being approached with regard to these fish, and, you know, as I think about how we utilize this species, I'm not sure how you would ever manage it, because you don't have people bringing these things back to the dock. I mean, I wouldn't, and you turn them loose, you know, and you catch them incidentally.

For us, we catch them incidentally when we're king fishing or when we're sail fishing, and maybe you will keep a few, but what you're going to do with it is you're going to cut them up in strips and use them for bait. They're also a lot of fun to get out and whale on with a fly rod. I mean, that's a ball, but, again, you're not bringing these things to the dock, and so, I mean, how are you actually going to manage them if -- Are you saying, oh, well, we're going to allow you to catch and release a certain number of these fish? What? So I think we're kind of spinning around

something here that -- The bottom line is I don't think they're in need of management, or at least not traditional management that we might think of with ACLs and all that sort of thing.

MR. ROLLER: Before I go to the next one, I'm going to make a quick comment, and so, you know, an interesting point about the white paper is that it's discussed in landings, and recreational fishermen have over, what, a million pounds of landings per year, and that's not discards, right, and I believe it doesn't include discards, or does include discards?

MS. WIEGAND: It doesn't include discards.

MR. ROLLER: So it's not including that other component of the fishery, which seems to be the majority of the fishery, and that was the question I asked, is this just people bringing them back for bait, but, if you look at catches across the east coast, particularly the offshore catches you see, it always seems to be albacore on the outside of the fish boards, right, and so one of the points that has been continually brought up though is the idea of putting some sort of guardrails on this fishery, right, and I don't know what that looks like, and I think that's a part of what we get out of here, in discussions, and so I'm going to go to Jessica.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thank you, and so, to HMS, just an example, blackfin tuna was something that we brought to HMS, to try to get them to manage a few years ago, and they said no on that, and so we put in regulations in state waters, and federal waters, because there is no FMP for blackfin tuna, and, when I looked at the white paper, and in listening to the discussion, and reviewing the AP comments, yes, I don't know that it's in need of federal management now, and I looked at the landings in a number of years, and there's way more state landings than there are federal landings, but I do agree with AP that I feel like it's something that we need to watch, and kind of keep tabs on this, but, yes, I just don't think that it needs it right now.

MR. ROLLER: Thank you, Jessica. I'm going to go to Gary.

MR. BORLAND: I agree with that, and I don't think it needs an FMP, but the concern is, up and down the coast, whether it's the northeast, or even Florida, and you heard Ira speak to it, and the AP team, or the AP committee, is that they're seeing a decrease, right, and I feel like there's a trend going on that's not being paid attention to, and I do believe, like all fish it seems, the data -- You know, there is an emerging bait fishery, where, you know, the fish are being stripped, and the bellies are being stripped, and the fish thrown back over, that's feeding the sharks and whatever that is not being captured in any data that we have, and, you know, again, hearing the trends that the fish are less abundant, and smaller, it leads me to believe that there is a trend going on that we need to pay attention to, and what I don't want is for it fall off the radar.

MR. ROLLER: Thank you. I'm going to go to Tim.

MR. GRINER: Yes, and I agree with all the comments so far, and, as Judy said, we see no difference in the abundance of these fish at all, and, you know, when you talk about the abundance of them, they're actually the most common scombroid in the entire western Atlantic, and so, you know, I mean, is there any evidence to say that they're less abundant today than they were yesterday? There is none, and so, you know, yes, I think it's probably worth keeping an eye on somehow, whether that's just looking at state landings over a period of five years or whatever, and see if there's any big trend, but, to think that it's a species that needs a South Atlantic Fishery

Management Council fishery management plan, I can't see that. Like I said, if anything, being a scombroid, I would think, if HMS wants to do it, or the states want to do it, then that would be the route to go.

MR. ROLLER: Thank you, Tim. I'll go to Bob.

MR. BEAL: Thank you. Spud is right, and I was thinking about running out of the room screaming if an interstate plan comes up, but, with that said, you know, if there are questions that, you know, I can bring to the Mid-Atlantic northern states, kind of states outside of this council's jurisdiction, about how the fishery is going in their states, what they're seeing, we can, you know, pull rec landings from the database, and that's easy, but, if there are other questions that, you know, you want the Mid-Atlantic and Northeast states to talk about and get back to this council, I'm happy to bring those forward, and just let me know, and we can easily facilitate that, or have a discussion at an ASMFC meeting about kind of what are people seeing along the whole coast, at our Policy Board or something along those lines, which is all the states from Maine through Florida.

MR. ROLLER: Thank you, Bob. What I'm hearing, as part of the discussion, is there seems to be some interest in looking at just keeping this fishery in the conversation, and continually looking at landings, and so what's the pleasure of the committee here? Gary.

MR. BORLAND: I ask again, what are the options, and do we need to make a motion to direct staff, or how do we proceed, and I'm sorry for my -- I will pull the new card out again, but how do we proceed on a fishery, or a fish, like this, to move forward on gathering more data?

MS. WIEGAND: I mean, I think that's something for this committee to discuss. If you're comfortable with me offering suggestions, you could have the AP complete a fishery performance report for little tunny every two to three years, and I will say that fishery performance reports are incredibly valuable, but also very timely, or time consuming, for the AP to put together for you all, and we would want to make sure that we're not -- You know, we have to do them for king and Spanish mackerel and east coast cobia, Florida east coast cobia, as well, and so, every few years, that could certainly be done, and I think you could ask for landings once a year, so that we can show you trends in the fishery, sort of like what has been put together in the fishery overview, or sort of, you know, anything else this committee wants to discuss and suggest, but, if those ideas are something that this committee is interested in, certainly a motion to that effect would be helpful.

MR. ROLLER: Gary.

MR. BORLAND: **I think I would like to make a motion for staff to put together a fishery performance report biannually, which, obviously, means every couple of years.**

MR. ROLLER: We do have a motion on the floor. Did you want to second that or no? Okay.

MS. WIEGAND: Does this capture your -- Is this what you want, everything to be included in your motion?

MR. BORLAND: Correct.

MR. ROLLER: Okay. What about tracking landings, and not to guide your motion.

MR. BORLAND: Is that -- Excuse me again, being the new guy, but is that included in a fishery performance report, and landings is part of that?

MS. WIEGAND: We do usually put together a fishery overview for the APs, when they put together a fishery performance report, and so that information would be included with the fishery performance report, and we could present it to you at the same time. We have not historically presented fishery performance reports to the council, and they're simply made available, but that's not to say that we couldn't start presenting summaries of fishery performance reports to you all, if that's something you're interested in.

MR. BORLAND: **So I believe, as part of that motion, just making it available to the committee to review, and then further decisions off of that.**

MR. ROLLER: I do have Tim in the queue, and Mel, but I want to see if I have a second for this motion. Is that a second? Okay. I've got a second by Mel, and I'm going to open the floor for discussion, and I'll go to Tim first.

MR. GRINER: **I would like to make a substitute motion that, instead of a full-blown performance report, we just direct staff to look at landings every three years, for trends, and so report back every three years with landings, instead of a full-blown performance report.** I don't think the performance report will tell us anything other than really landings, because we don't really know much about the fishery.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Second.

MR. ROLLER: Okay. We've got a substitute motion that's seconded, and do we have any discussion on the substitute motion? Mel. I've got a lot of hands up. I'm going to do Mel, Chester, Jessica, and then Andy.

MR. BELL: I don't want to get caught up in the clunkiness of what a fishery performance report is or whatever, but I think the point was we were -- The idea is we would just like to kind of keep our finger on the pulse of the fishery, and the fishery performance report seemed to be kind of the closest thing we do, and whether it's every two years or three years is immaterial, I guess, to me, but the other piece of this was that, what the fishery performance report model does for you, above just looking at landings, is that you're reaching out and kind of talking to the fishermen.

Now, that would be in our area, but I like the idea of, since we know this fishery goes all the way up the coast, is to somehow -- I know that's not part of our normal fishery performance report, but kind of do a crossover, and, like Bob mentioned, we could check to see how is it looking farther north, all the way up the coast. Now, that doesn't fit into the normal fishery performance report model, I guess, but I thought we were interested in, and there was value, in at least sort of keeping an eye on it, as we were saying, and so, if the fishery performance report is, you know, a little too restrictive, but it's just how do we -- That's where we were trying to go, is how do you simply keep an eye on it, and so I was okay with where we were going originally. I think above and beyond landings would be helpful, speaking to the substitute.

MR. ROLLER: I wonder if this just doesn't help us keep our pulse on the finger, or finger on the pulse, of the fishery, and I'm going to move to Chester and then Jessica.

MR. BREWER: This is a little bit reminiscent of what was going on with the bullet and frigate mackerel, because we've got a fishery that we don't know that it's in trouble, but we're concerned about it, and so we had that whole thing with regard to the Mid-Atlantic, with their forage fish amendment, their comprehensive forage fish amendment, and we went ahead and we made the frigate and bullet mackerel -- What was it, and help me with this.

MS. WIEGAND: An ecosystem component.

MR. BREWER: An ecosystem component species, and I'm just wondering if this might not -- If that might not be the way to go here, because this is not putting a bunch of restraints, or a bunch of extra work, on staff, but it is saying, hey, we do want to be kept up-to-date on this, and we want to take a look at it, even though, ever since we passed it, I haven't heard the words "frigate and bullet mackerel" again until today, and so -- But I think that probably is the way to go, because we're not even sure that this thing is in trouble, and what we're doing here is prescriptive, and, you know, we want to keep an eye on it, and, if we see that, you know, maybe there is potentially a problem, then let's revisit it and go back in and do what's necessary to, you know, ascertain really what the problem is, if there is one. Should I do that in the form of a motion? It would be an awfully long motion.

MR. ROLLER: Jessica, if it's okay, can I go to Chip, real quick, and he's up here.

DR. COLLIER: In the discussion of these, and I was going to do it after you passed your motion, just to see exactly what you wanted included in it, but I'm hearing a lot of interest in understanding where the landings are coming from, either state versus federal, and also potentially looking at international landings as well, and we can pull that from FAO, and it might not be the best data source, but at least it will give you an idea of trends going on through time, and so we can pull that into the overview as well.

Right now, we have, what is it, landings, size distribution, and catch per unit effort on trips, and so those are the key pieces of information, and we also have some information on the life history of the species. If there's any additional information that you would want in the overview, going into the fishery performance, please let us know, but it sounds like we want the international component, and also the state versus federal component, added to it.

MR. ROLLER: Okay. Jessica.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Before I speak to the motion, let me speak to what Chester said first, and so I don't think that I would be supportive of adding this as an ecosystem component species, just because I feel like the council, as a whole, needs to think about ecosystem component species and the makeup of the species in the FMP in a more overarching way and not just put species in there that we want to track. I just -- I am not supportive of doing that at this time, because I feel like we need a more holistic look at this.

I don't really support either one of these motions, but it's because I like the idea of doing the fishery performance report. Every other year seems too frequently, for me, and I think that three

years is better, and so it's almost like a hybrid between these two motions, and the reason that I don't want to do it every year is because it seems like it takes at least a couple of hours, or sometimes half a day, for the AP to either start a fishery performance report, or even update the fishery performance report, and I feel like we're going to end up sending the AP members off on reviewing all the items from the port meetings, and thinking about how the Spanish mackerel fishery should be managed, and the king mackerel fishery, thinking about what the Gulf has said about the king mackerel fishery, and so I just don't know, unless we're going to significantly extend the timeframe of the AP meetings, that they have the time to do this every other year, and I will just put that out there.

MR. ROLLER: Okay, and so I've got Andy, and then I've got Mel.

MR. STRELCHECK: I wanted to first agree with Jessica's comments about the kind of ecosystem component species, and I'm not seeing that a lot could be gained right now, in terms of officially designating this as an ecosystem component species. I am generally supportive of, you know, we need to keep an eye on this, and track this, and I do have concerns, obviously, about kind of the frequency and what we're asking. I don't like the substitute motion, because I think it's too simplistic, in that landings -- We need more than landings, and I think expert advice from our AP would be beneficial.

I also just wanted to comment that, in terms of the white paper, I really appreciate the staff putting that together, and I was talking to, you know, Monica about kind of the factors and walking through that, and I think you've come up with good rationale as to why you don't believe little tunny is in need of conservation and management at the federal level currently, right, but that's, I think, the opportunity then, going forward, is, if things change, circumstances change, we're able to keep an eye on it, and so I'm kind of with Jessica, and I'm struggling with both motions, primarily from kind of a workload and frequency standpoint.

MR. ROLLER: I've got Mel.

MR. BELL: Yes, and that's where I am, too. My issue with both of them -- I think, in my mind, if it was as easy as just like direction to staff to come up with a -- Like Chip was trying to say, and, okay, what things do you want us to look at every few years, or something, and, again, not looking for it to be as formal as a fishery performance report, and Jessica is absolutely right that they can spend a lot of time on that, when there's other things that we really need them to spend more time on, and so I am not --

I would be happy if we could accomplish this by simply like maybe directing staff to -- For Christina to kind of get back with us saying, look, here's a suite of things that we could look at, and we could easily check, and, you know, also communicate across -- Up and down the coast a little bit and just kind of report back to you guys, but that's more of an informal thing, but we kind of took a more formal path here. I'm not really totally happy with either one, and I don't know if we could accomplish this through simple direction to staff.

MR. ROLLER: I will go to Tim in just a second, and so what I'm hearing, from the committee, is that there seems to be some sort of consensus in moving towards somewhere in between these two motions, and the question I kind of have, for staff, is I think the point of the workload for the AP on the fishery performance report is an important point, and so three years may be more practical,

but, as far as tracking landings, and just having something that's available, is that a lot of staff work to do year, or biannually, or anything like that?

MS. WIEGAND: So I'm not the one that pulls of the landings and puts them into a beautiful fisheries overview, and so I am going to look to Chip and say, is this something you feel like you could do, putting together the fishery overview for little tunny and updating it once a year, or twice a year, and is that something that is feasible, or every other year? Chip is saying that, yes, he could do that every other year for you guys.

MR. ROLLER: Thank you, Chip. I'm going to go to Tim.

MR. GRINER: Well, after hearing this discussion, I think this is great, and I think that Chip brought up some nice additions to just looking at landings, and so, if I could, I would like to amend that motion to include the items, as Chip said, and do it every three years, and I believe it was life history, or some other components, that he --

MS. WIEGAND: So I have a suggestion. The motion has been seconded, and so it belongs to the committee, and so my suggestion would be to sort of dispense with the substitute and the motion on the board, and then we can certainly put direction to staff to do, you know, a fishery performance report every three years, or two have landings, and sort of list out everything you guys would like to see within that, and so that would be my recommendation for how to move forward with what we have on the board right now.

MR. ROLLER: Thank you, parliamentarian. Should we call this to question? What's the pleasure of the committee here? Do we have any more comments? All right. Let's take a vote. Everybody in favor of this motion, or substitute motion, and I'm still a little confused, and I could maybe get a point of clarification, going back to what Christina said, and so --

MS. WIEGAND: I've got you, and so, first, we would vote on the substitute motion. If the substitute motion fails, which is the impression I'm getting from the committee, then we'll vote on the main motion, and then, if that motion fails, what we can do is put together direction to staff after that.

MR. ROLLER: Thank you. That was what we needed. Okay, and so let's go to a vote here. **Everybody in favor of this motion, please raise your hand, or the substitute. Everyone in favor of the substitute motion, please raise your hand. I am not seeing any yea votes. Everybody opposed to the motion, please raise your hand. It would seem to be unanimous. The motion fails.** It takes some guts to vote against your own motion, and so thank you, Tim.

Okay, and so now we're going to go back to the main motion. Do we have any discussion, before we go to a vote? I don't see any hands up, and so let's call this to question and vote. **Everyone in favor of this motion, please raise your hand. I am not seeing any. Okay, and so everybody is opposed to the main motion.** I am still very confused, but I am going to pull the new committee chair card here for a second. Go ahead, Gary.

MR. BORLAND: Just, on the record, I have to admit that it got a little crazy there, understanding exactly where we were heading, especially because I'm not that versed in it yet, and so, with that said, let's move to the next thing.

MR. ROLLER: Okay. I am going to ask Christina for a little bit of clarification, particularly for those listening, what we're going to do here.

MS. WIEGAND: All right, and so what I've got up on the board right now is some direction to staff, based on the conversation you all have had, and that includes having the AP develop a fishery performance report for little tunny every three years, and then, in the fishery overview that would be included with that fishery performance report, have landings, include state versus federal and international landings, CPUE, length distribution, and then, if there's anything else that the committee would like to add to this list, we can do that.

MR. ROLLER: Dewey.

MR. HEMILRIGHT: I think that, for your landings on state versus federal, you also should do, in the federal part, if it's the large pelagic survey or if it's MRIP, where the landings are coming from, because, on the large pelagic survey, it's from Virginia to Maine, and it doesn't start, in some states, until June or July, I think, and so it would be good to know exactly, in the federal waters, for the federal landings, which is it, MRIP or the large pelagic survey. Once you go below North Carolina, it's MRIP, and it's not the large pelagic survey.

MR. ROLLER: Okay, and, just for some on-the-record clarification, we don't necessarily need a motion for this, correct, and so this is just what our direction to staff would be, to continue looking at false albacore moving forward. Do we have any other comments? I am looking around the table, if there's anything else that anyone would like to add on this. I know there was some discussion of having landings done every two years, or is the kind of consensus just to keep everything at three years? Okay, and I'm seeing heads nodding and confirmation there, and so we'll keep it at three years. Monica.

MS. SMIT-BRUNELLO: I'm just curious. For landings, what's the geographic area that you're interested in? I understand that the Caribbean Council manages it, at least for the Puerto Rico fishery management plan, and they have an ABC and an ACL and that sort of thing, and so I was just wondering what you were curious about landings.

MR. ROLLER: They have an ACL for false albacore?

MS. SMIT-BRUNELLO: That's my understanding, and just for the Puerto Rico Island-Based Fishery Management Plan.

MR. ROLLER: I guess I would hope that it would be picked up in here, right, or do we need more clarification? Tim.

MR. GRINER: I mean, I think, as far as what we would look at, I think we would -- I mean, as far as I can tell, we would just look at the South Atlantic. I mean, we don't manage anything other than the South Atlantic, and so, I mean, I don't think we can really -- I don't know what other landings we would really be able to get.

MS. WIEGAND: So, for the CMP FMP, we manage fisheries through the Mid-Atlantic region, and so that would -- In terms of, eventually, at some point, if you were interested in adding them

to the FMP, it would be from the Mid-Atlantic through the South Atlantic, because that's what the FMP's jurisdiction -- But we can certainly provide landings information outside of that jurisdiction, and so we can provide landings information from New England, the Mid-Atlantic, the South Atlantic, like we have in the overview now, and we can certainly work with the Caribbean Council, to get information on landings from them as well.

MR. ROLLER: Monica.

MS. SMIT-BRUNELLO: Thank you. When I look back at the letter that the American Saltwater Guides Association sent, it looked like they were concerned about landings off the Atlantic, right, and they mentioned Florida to Massachusetts and how important it was, and so I would imagine that you could focus there. Also, the other point is HMS can only manage the species that Congress has told them are highly migratory species, and so, if this doesn't fall within the Magnuson Act definition of highly migratory species, they wouldn't be able to manage it.

MR. ROLLER: Thank you. That's an excellent point. I believe I have Mel in the queue.

MR. BELL: Well, that kind of covered it, and I was -- What we wanted was a snapshot of the coast, because it's all connected, and, yes, we've got -- I mean, Tim is right, and we've got a certain jurisdictional piece of it, but that could actually extend farther north, and you had international in there. You did have international in there already, and so the idea would just be a snapshot of the fishery, every three years, because the other thing is, you know, we've got this climate and water temperature change thing going on, and, I mean, there may be changes in this fishery that are -- That we watch occur, and, I mean, shifts in inshore and offshore, more north and south, and I don't know, and so that's why looking at the whole coast would be good.

MR. ROLLER: I have a quick kind of question, and do we need to clarify when we want this to start? Tim.

MR. GRINER: I think three years from today.

MR. ROLLER: They did like what we would call a mini fisheries performance report.

MR. GRINER: I think three years from now would be adequate.

MR. ROLLER: I am seeing a few nodding heads, and does everybody seem to agree with that? I see a thumbs-up from Jessica. I am looking around the table, and I am not seeing any more hands. Does anybody have any comments, before we move on? I am not seeing any. That was an excellent discussion. Thank you. I guess we will be moving on to the next agenda item, which is probably one of our big ones, and that will be the mackerel port meetings. Ira, are you ready? You have the floor.

MR. LAKS: Yes, I am ready, and so some of you at the table have heard me express the AP's wishes to have mackerel port meetings in the past, and I am fully aware of the workload that staff has, and, council members, how busy you all are, but I really think that we're at that time that this has to be looked at. You know, mackerel have been a big part of my life, fishing, since I've started, and a comprehensive look at this fishery needs to go forward.

You know, this fish is growing, and expanding, in its range, and you guys have heard about climate scenarios this week, and it's in the forefront, but this isn't a scenario, and this is what's happening right now, and this is a climate issue that we need to deal with. You're going to have species, like king mackerel, moving north that, in commercial fisheries, is a limited entry permit, and you're going to have fishermen traveling to new areas, and you're going to have people wanting to get into the fishery, when fish show up, and some of these things need to be looked at now. I think, if we wait much longer, it will be a problem.

I mean, like I said, this week, you've heard about the climate change, and you've also heard, in public comment, about the king mackerel tournaments, and I believe there was two or three comments that were made just yesterday about that, and so I think, for these fisheries that are so valuable, recreationally and commercially, and the fact that they are expanding -- You have to go out there and get the people's opinion of what this fishery means to them.

You might be able to use some of this as a blueprint for climate issues going forward, since these are the forerunners of that problem, and so I know, for the AP, and for myself, I would implore you to go forward with this.

MR. ROLLER: Thank you, Ira. I've got Jessica and then Kerry.

MS. MCCAWLEY: I agree that we definitely need these, and so, just to add some history here, we had talked about doing this before, and we said wait until after the stock assessment is done, and so here we are, and I still would like to see what the results of the stock assessment really are, get figured out, before we really dive into this process, because it's hard to know.

Do we believe the stock assessment, that the fishery is in trouble, or is the fishery actually doing a lot better, and so it just seems like, in order to get the most applicable information, we need to know whether we're going to be -- If we're asking stakeholders to give us information about limiting the fishery, or are they thinking, hey, everything is going well, and we just need to kind of cap it where it is, and, whatever the thoughts are, but it just seems a little premature, until we can get the assessment figured out, but I think that this is a great idea, and I look forward to it, and so maybe we can set these to start, I don't know, in summer or early fall.

MR. ROLLER: Thank you, Jessica, and I think that Christina is going to cover a lot of that in the presentation as well. Kerry, go ahead.

MS. MARHEFKA: I think you all know how I feel about these sorts of outreach programs, and I think they're incredibly important, and, obviously, I'm supportive of them. The only thing that I will add is it says the port meetings will be held throughout the Mid and South Atlantic regions, and I don't know, at the very least, if you want to make sure that one of those is in the north Mid-Atlantic or semi into southern New England, if we're hearing some spread up there.

MR. ROLLER: I've got Mel.

MR. BELL: I agree with Jessica, again. I think, until we've kind of dealt with some of the uncertainty about the assessment and all, and we can -- That establishes your baseline, and so whatever kind of your baseline is, but, yes, it is important, and Ira is right, and I think it does need to be looked at, and I also agree that outreach, and being able to go out and talk to people, is very

important, but it's kind of a matter of timing, and maybe we should deal with uncertainties about where we are actually right now, establish that and then move forward, because, otherwise, you're just going to pick up on a lot of that angst over the uncertainty aspect right now, if you do it too soon.

MR. ROLLER: Thank you, Mel, and I know that -- You know, like I just said, Christina is going to cover a lot of this in this presentation coming up, but does anybody have any specific questions for Ira on anything in regard to the AP's discussion on this? Okay. I mean, maybe that's a good time to move on to Christina, and we can pick up this discussion there.

MS. WIEGAND: Thanks, Tom, and so, you know, Ira provided a lot of the background, but port meetings have been requested, from this advisory panel, for a number of years, and, like Jessica mentioned, we've sort of been putting it off until we get the results of the Spanish mackerel stock assessment, and so having this document in the briefing book I realize was a little premature, and usually we wait for the council to direct staff to start developing something.

The reason we went ahead and put this in now is because we know that December is sort of the meeting where you all are setting your priorities for the coming year, and so we wanted to make sure that you had this information in front of you as something to consider, and so one of the reasons we felt that port meetings were worth proposing to you all is because there are sort of a number of things going on in the CMP fishery right now that might lend itself to port meetings being pretty valuable, and one of those, that we talked about at this meeting, was revisions to the objectives for the coastal migratory fishery.

The next is the Atlantic Spanish mackerel stock assessment, and so we've got sort of a timeline here of what we expect for that stock assessment, and the goal, of course, is to have the SSC review modifications to SEDAR 78, and possibly provide an ABC to the council, where you all would begin working on an amendment, come June of 2023. Moving forward, if things stay on schedule, which, as you all know, can sort of be up in the air, when it comes to developing an amendment, specifically one with a fishery as complex as Spanish mackerel, we would be looking at formal review in December of 2024, but, again, that is heavy on the tentative for the timeline.

Next, of course, is the false albacore/little tunny management request and white paper, and port meetings are certainly a way for you guys to get more information from a wide variety of stakeholders on how this fishery is operating and whether or not they feel there are any concerns, or issues, that may need to be addressed, through federal management specifically.

Then, of course, you've got the king mackerel fishery, and you did hear from Ira about the request that the AP made to have management simplified in the Southern Zone, as it's incredibly complex right now, because it's sort of been adjusted piecemeal over the years, and so taking a more holistic look at that fishery, and then, of course, the king mackerel tournaments that were brought up during public comment.

Staff really feels that conducting port meetings for these fisheries would allow you guys to have a more thorough evaluation of the current management objectives, gather specific input from stakeholders, and also sort of promote transparency between what the council is discussing and you all's intent to involve stakeholders heavily in the process, as we start talking about how we want these fisheries to look into the future.

It's going to allow you guys to get more of a comprehensive picture of mackerel fishery dynamics, which are, you know, incredibly complex, and it's one of the reasons that we've ended up with a management system for king mackerel that is sort of challenging to explain to people, with, you know, three sort of de facto zones off of Florida, for example.

Then, of course, we've talked a lot, at this meeting, and at previous meetings, about expansion of this fishery and how landings are increasing north through the Mid-Atlantic, and maybe even into New England, and this is a way to sort of get a handle on what stakeholders are seeing out on the water, and so, to that end, we've put together this -- Again, you can see "tentative" in caps and in bold, and it's a tentative timeline, and the thought would be that, if this is something that the council is interested in seeing staff pursue, we would start sort of developing a plan that is a bit more concrete than just this broad idea that I am presenting to you today that we would then bring to you at the March meeting, and we would have the AP talk about it in April, and then we would be looking for you guys to approve that plan in June.

One of the reasons that we want to sort of take this time to go through and approve a plan for how we functionally do this is because, again, we don't expect to get ABC results from the Spanish mackerel assessment until the April 2022 meeting, and so this would allow you guys to know what's coming out of that assessment before we actually start talking to people in public and sort of finalize the plan, but it would give us time to, you know, develop it from this broad idea to a much more concrete idea in the interim, and, of course, if something happens with the Spanish mackerel assessment, and maybe you don't get recommendations until the October SSC meeting, this timeline can just certainly shift, and it just gives staff a little bit more time to develop the idea.

That's the broad plan that we're proposing for you today, and so, really, all we need from you is direction that you are interested in pursuing port meetings, and, if you are, is sort of the proposed timeline acceptable, where we would start developing the plan, but we wouldn't actually move forward with port meetings until we had recommendations from the SSC on Spanish mackerel.

MR. ROLLER: Jessica.

MS. MCCAWLEY: I like this plan, and so I'm good with the proposed plan, and, yes, I'm good with the port meetings, and I guess just something to think about is, I guess, we wait until we figure out what's going to come to the council, to try to coordinate with the Gulf Council, because we have here that we're coordinating with the Mid-Atlantic, and I don't want to -- As Christina mentioned, we've got multiple zones for king mackerel off of Florida, and I just don't want to leave them out of these discussions, but I don't know how to add them here as part of this process.

MS. WIEGAND: I agree that, given that we'll be discussing the goals and objectives, which, of course, are for the CMP FMP in its entirety, which includes the Gulf Council, this is certainly something that we should work with their staff on, and I guess find out, from them, what their capacity is and how they would like to be involved in this process, and that's certainly something we can do.

MR. ROLLER: Does anybody have any questions or comments? I have one, actually, for Ira, going back to my days on the AP. At the beginning of your presentation, you mentioned the complexity of landings in south Florida, and that comes up constantly, and is that something that

you think can be addressed through port meetings as well, or -- That may not be in line with what we're discussing here, but it was just a curiosity on my part.

MR. LAKS: I don't know how much port meetings would help that, because that's very specific to one sector of the commercial industry in one area, and so maybe the port meeting in that area might give you some insight to it, but, outside of that, nobody else would understand even what you're talking about.

MR. ROLLER: Okay. Fair enough. I mean, that's kind of what I was getting at, but it's something that comes up all the time, and, for those non -- You know, the non-Florida commercial fishermen in that area, it kind of goes over our heads, but it's obviously something people are very passionate about.

MR. LAKS: It goes over our heads too, and so --

MR. ROLLER: John Walter.

DR. WALTER: Thank you, and I guess I would also ask Ira, as chair of the AP there, to also -- Maybe, if there are questions about how the recreational fishery has changed, and increased their shore-based effort, if that is indeed what -- Because that's what the data says that has happened, and I would be curious to see whether that is an ongoing trend or something that was more of a COVID-based like increase, because of opportunity and more free time, but it seems like it's certainly something that is in the data, and whether that's going to continue is something that would be useful, because there must have been a lot of people out there fishing for Spanish mackerel. Thanks.

MR. ROLLER: Thank you, John. Do we have any more comments? I'm looking around the room, and so I'm not seeing any more comments, I guess I'm going to turn to staff and see what we need here. Do we need more direction? We don't need a motion on this, right? I am seeing clear consensus that this is something we want to do, going forward, particularly after we get, you know, clarification on what we're doing with Spanish mackerel.

MS. WIEGAND: I've got direction to staff on the board to begin developing a plan for conducting port meetings, and I think developing a plan that's going to work for this group, and for the AP, might take a couple of meetings, and so we'll sort of bring the first attempt at it to you guys in March and see how we want to move forward from there.

MR. ROLLER: I do want to go back to Kerry's previous comments, before the presentation, regarding making sure we do include something in the Mid-Atlantic, or the Northeast, because of the expanding nature of this fishery.

MS. WIEGAND: I will add that this group has talked a lot about working with the Atlantic States Commission, particularly in regard to Spanish mackerel, and making sure that, you know, our APs are occasionally meeting jointly, and that's been a motion passed by this group in the past, and so I imagine that you all may want us to reach out to the commission as well, given their reach throughout all of those states, and see how they might be interested in being involved, and I'm specifically looking at three people around the table, to make sure that that is indeed the case.

MR. ROLLER: Go ahead, Spud.

MR. WOODWARD: Well, you know, you might recall, a couple or three years ago, I had actually been bold enough to suggest that maybe we had a joint AP on this species, and nobody really liked that idea, which is fine, but, you know, somehow, we need to make sure that we synergize what's going on with the commission and the council better than what we've been doing, and, you know, some sort of -- We have a multispecies plan that includes Spanish mackerel, and so it's not just Spanish mackerel, and it's plan that includes spotted seatrout, our little omnibus plan, and spot and croaker, and so it's not just Spanish mackerel fishermen, and so, anyway, there is some mechanics to work out there, but I think there's certainly interest in making sure that we do whatever we do to get the broadest input, geographically, as we can.

MR. ROLLER: Looking around the room in the last few minutes, I've seen a lot of nodding heads for that general direction, and so unless anyone is negative on it, and are there any other comments or direction to staff? Seeing none, I guess we can kind of wrap this up. Trish.

MS. MURPHEY: Just, before we wrapped up, and you all don't shoot me. Don't shoot me, but can we go back to little tunny, the direction to staff, real quick, because I'm just a hair confused on the timeline. We were going to start this three years from now, to do the fishery overview, and I guess I'm confused, because I know we had landings -- It looked like we had state and federal landings, I guess, that was on the Shiny app, but we really didn't get into international landings and all that, and I wondered if it might be good to start it this year and then three years from now. Sorry, but, anyway, because I was just a little confused of what data we actually had now, and I thought it was really just that one graph, but --

MR. ROLLER: Trish, are you asking that we get landings put together, but that doesn't necessarily have to correspond with the fisheries performance report.

MS. MURPHEY: Right. Yes, because when the list of -- I'm sorry, and if you would put the list -- I may be confused and asking for something crazy, but, under landings, you've got state versus federal on the Atlantic coast, including information, blah, blah, blah, and then international, and I just was wondering if we could go ahead and get that information starting this year, and then, when you start doing the performance report, every three. I am not saying don't do the performance report now, but I just thought the landings might be good to have now, and I wasn't sure how hard that was.

MR. ROLLER: Okay. I guess we can add that. Tim, did you have a comment?

MR. GRINER: Yes, and, I mean, I don't know what that does for us. I mean, yes, I guess, but, you know, I think the important thing is that we get this report in three years, and see where this fishery has changed from today, and, I mean, that's kind of what we've decided to do. I mean, I don't know what else we can do, and I don't know, and what will international landings tell us today that we don't already know, but, you know, I just see this -- We could get that list, and get it three years from now, and we could take a good, hard look and see if anything has changed.

MR. ROLLER: Mel.

MR. BELL: So, if it's not a tremendous burden on staff, I think the advantage is you basically just enhance what you've already done, and add to it, and then the snapshot you take three years from now will kind of more match the snapshot that we just took, for comparative purposes, because, three years from now, we may not remember much of this discussion, but I think that's the advantage of that, if you can do that without a lot of trouble, and just simply kind of enhance what you've already done a little bit.

MR. ROLLER: Our discussion, up here, was that that's not a problem to add that, and so we've got something to base it on, and so thank you, Trish.

MS. MURPHEY: Yes, and everybody speaks more eloquently than I do, and that's basically it, and it's just to see those landings, and the concern -- You know, everybody is saying that we at least need to keep an eye on it, and why don't we just start with the landings this year, and that's it.

MS. WIEGAND: I guess just my question would be -- So we can update the fishery overview to include the things listed here that are not currently in it, and are you looking to have another presentation about the landings in March? No, and so -- I am seeing shaking heads.

MS. MURPHEY: No, I'm not looking for a presentation, and I was just -- You know, let's start - - If everybody wants to start kind of keeping an eye on it, let's go ahead and start keeping an eye on it.

MR. ROLLER: I've got Monica.

MS. SMIT-BRUNELLO: This is Other Business, really, but I wanted to -- You had a couple of comments about king mackerel tournaments, and so I just wanted to briefly give you a quick snippet of what the council has done in the past. In Amendment 20A, in 2014, the council -- The two councils, the Gulf and South Atlantic, decided on a process for state-permitted tournaments, and I will just read you, really quickly, from the regs.

Well, I'm not going to read you the whole thing, but, essentially, you said that king or Spanish mackerel harvested in a state-permitted tournament may not be sold for profit, but may be donated to a state dealer or a federal dealer, and then the dealers must donate the money value, which is the sale price, or cash equivalent, of the value received for the landings, from the sale of tournament-caught fish to a charitable organization, as determined by the state. Then the monetary value received from the sale of the tournament-caught fish may not be used to pay for tournament expenses.

What we thought we would do, or what I suggested, in talking with Rick and Andy, is that it's probably appropriate to send out a Fishery Bulletin from the Service, kind of reminding folks of what regulations are in place and all that, and so, anyway, I wanted to give you just a quick overview of what the council has already said in the past about these tournaments.

MR. ROLLER: Thank you, Monica. I'm going to go to Tim and then Kerry.

MR. GRINER: Monica, whose quota do these fish come off of? I mean, that --

MS. SMIT-BRUNELLO: Well, it's my understanding, when they get reported, the dealers must report them as tournament-caught fish, and it has to comply with all federal and state reporting requirements, and I don't believe that that is supposed to be caught against the commercial ACL, but I think that's one thing that we can look into, and come back to you at the next meeting, and maybe then we send out -- Because my idea is we get that figured out, and then that be part of the Fishery Bulletin too that goes out, so that people understand, because, I mean, I'm sure there are more people who have questions about this, and you already heard, yesterday, at least two people comment on it.

MR. GRINER: Thank you.

MR. ROLLER: So we've had this discussion before, and I'm going to let Christina kind of address it.

MS. WIEGAND: So this is actually one of the first things that I worked on when I started with the council, and, at the time, we had talked to Dave Gloeckner, I believe, who did let us know that, on the forms, the dealers are supposed to report that those are tournament-landed fish, so that they do not count against the commercial ACL, and then I just want to say, I guess, thank you to Monica and Rick, and I think it would be great to send out a Fishery Bulletin with information on how the regulations currently are for these tournaments.

MR. ROLLER: Tim.

MR. GRINER: Does anybody know if there's any audit trail? I mean, who goes back and checks against these dealers, to see where that money actually ended up and what charity was actually involved?

DR. BELCHER: I will speak to that for Georgia, and we do. There is a form that comes through, and they have to be registered, and there is a bill that comes with that, and so our person who is over the co-op stats stays in contact with them, and, most of the time, when you're hearing about the monies being used, they're going back to scholarship programs, and so it's people within the fishing club or whatever, but it's an open scholarship program that they use it for.

MR. ROLLER: Trish, do you know what we do in North Carolina?

MS. MURPHEY: I am checking now.

MR. ROLLER: Kerry.

MS. MARHEFKA: There was a conversation about this last night, after the public hearing, and my understanding is that the Gulf has a special like 2 or 3 percent set-aside, and I don't know if that's the right terminology, for tournament-caught fish, that is separate from the recreational quota, and separate from the commercial -- Or ACLs, and so I'm curious, and I would be worried that, if we handle it differently in the Gulf and the South Atlantic, but it's the same dealer report, and is it really happening the way it's supposed to be happening. There is at least a perception that, in the South Atlantic, they are coming off the commercial quota, and I would like to really follow-up with that, because the money is one issue, but I also think that the ACL is another issue, and that concerns me.

MR. ROLLER: Okay. I've got some hands in the queue, and I'm going to go to Dewey, Ira, and then Susan.

MR. HEMILRIGHT: I think it would be interesting to -- I don't know if it's a white paper on this, but just the magnitude of the large size king mackerel landings, and, when I say large size, the fish being targeted is your brood stock, and the amount of poundage that's being landed. Also, the paper trail of just the thousands of dollars that are donated to local charities, and just kind of an over broad view of this, because it is -- I've heard some concerns from some of the commenters last night, but I've also heard concerns that it's growing, and you're targeting large fish, and so it would be kind of similar to --

Maybe not, but, if you're going and targeting large red drum, you know what happens, because that's the largest ones that you're targeting as the catch, and that's the ones probably that is going to be the biggest producers, but I think, in general, people just got an idea of what the regs is supposed to, and that ambiguity of what you hear, or don't hear, and so, if there could be some clarification, in tracking it down, and not a lot of staff time, but I think it would help a lot of people understand. Also, the magnitude of it, that has changed over the years, with the increase of the tournaments and different things like that, and I think that could be helpful for the people to understand.

MR. ROLLER: Thank you, Dewey. I'm going to go to Ira and then Susan.

MR. LAKS: One thing, with the Gulf, is I believe their set-aside is for dual-permitted vessels that are still allowed to sell fish off of for-hire trips, and I think that's where their set-aside came, and so, unlike the South Atlantic, the charter boats can sell fish that are left to them.

I think one of the public commenters brought up, and it's a concern to me, and I know other mackerel fishermen, is that some of these tournaments are offering incentives to bring in more fish, and they give you raffle tickets, so that they have more fish that come in, and so that's something that, you know, if you allow these sales, you might want to look at saying, you know, that has to go, because that's technically trading and bartering, and that's considered illegal.

MR. ROLLER: Susan.

MS. BOGGS: Thank you, and, if Matt is on the phone, he can correct me if I'm wrong, but, yes, the Gulf is -- 2 percent is set aside, or shifted, I should say, to the recreational sector to allow for sale of king mackerel, and so it's a 68 percent commercial and 32 percent recreational.

MR. ROLLER: Kerry.

MS. MARHEFKA: Thanks, Tom. Tim and I were just checking, and I'm a dealer, and I am a king mackerel dealer and permit holder, and I just checked in the dealer reporting platform, and there is no way for me to report my king mackerel as tournament fish. I have one option, and it's food, and that's literally all that I can put as disposition, and Tim confirmed that he doesn't see it on the North Carolina state dealer report either, and so I don't -- I am not feeling very strongly that it's happening.

MR. ROLLER: I am going to go to Carolyn and then Jessica.

DR. BELCHER: Within Georgia, the way it works is our person who does the stats has the forms of everybody that -- We have to have a form for a tournament, and so, when that comes through, there is generally a receipt, a bill of laden, whatever, that explains that it is, and she has the ability to put the marker in, but it comes -- It doesn't come in with a dealer report. It has to be flagged and identified, and there's an expectation that there is a bill of laden that comes out of that tournament.

MR. ROLLER: Jessica.

MS. MCCAWLEY: In order for us to, you know, approve a mackerel tournament to do this, we have a form for this, and I have to sign all of them before the tournament happens, and then there is a trip ticket code for the tournament to report these fish specifically, so they can be tracked, and it is a code number specific to this.

MR. ROLLER: Trish.

MS. MURPHEY: I just got information from North Carolina, and so we have a recreational fishing tournament license to sell fish, and, to sell fish in a tournament, a tournament organizer must obtain a recreational fishing tournament license to sell fish, by applying thirty days in advance, and the holder of the license can only sell the tournament catch to a licensed fish dealer, and tournaments that wish to sell to the public must acquire a fish dealer license, and the proceeds from the sale of fish must be used for charitable, religious, educational, civic, or conservation purposes, and proceeds are not to be used for tournament expenses, and so that's what we have in North Carolina.

MR. ROLLER: Thank you for that, Trish. I think we heard from all the states here, and I think we're kind of informally in Other Business, and so does anybody here have any more comments about king mackerel tournaments, or is there any other Other Business items that they would like to bring to the committee? I am just going to give it a few more seconds here, and I see people talking. Kerry.

MS. MARHEFKA: Just to wrap that up, I just think that I would love some confirmation, given that Susan confirmed that the Gulf is doing it one way, and we don't have it that way, and I would just love a direction to staff, or whatever, to confirm how the quota, the ACL, is being used in this situation in the South Atlantic side, whenever we meet again, super informally, no white paper needed.

MR. ROLLER: Christina says this is a really simple, one-page sort of thing, and so that would be great. Tim, did you have your hand up?

MR. GRINER: Just one more thought, to this tournament thing, and, you know, for the state people, are the results of these charities public record, public knowledge? I mean, if you wanted to find out what charity these went to, would that be hard to do, or easy to do, or, I mean, is that on the record somewhere?

DR. BELCHER: Ours are usually published on the entry form, whatever the write-up is, the PR form, and it tells you what the monies are going towards.

MR. ROLLER: Does anybody have any other business to bring before the committee? Seeing none, I will then adjourn the Mackerel Cobia Committee meeting and pass it back over to the council chair.

(Whereupon, the meeting adjourned on December 8, 2022.)

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Certified By _____ Date _____

Transcribed By
Amanda Thomas
February 3, 2023

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- ✓ Jessica McCawley
- ✓ Trish Murphey
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- ⑧ Ashley Oliver
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- ⑥ Ora Laks
- ② Jeff Sudek

⑦ (wes)
Dr. Jack McGover

MACKEREL CMTE - THUR
12/8/12

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SAFMC December Council Meeting (12/5/22 - 12/9/22)

Attendee Report:

Report Generated:

02/05/2023 09:15 AM EST

Webinar ID

338-488-243

Actual Start Date/Time

12/08/2022 07:50 AM EST

Duration

9 hours 19 minutes

Attendee Details

Attended	Last Name	First Name
Yes	AYALA	OSCAR
Yes	Bailey	Adam
Yes	Bard	Dave
Yes	Batsavage	Chris
Yes	Bell	00 Mel
Yes	Bianchi	Alan
Yes	Bonura	Vincent
Yes	Borbely	Bernard
Yes	Borland	Gary
Yes	Box	Cameron
Yes	Brouwer	Myra
Yes	Bruger	Catherine
Yes	Byrd	Julia
Yes	Byrd	Julia
Yes	Calay	Shannon
Yes	Chaya	01Cindy
Yes	Clarke	Lora
Yes	Coleman	Heather
Yes	Conklin	Chris
Yes	Cooksey	Cindy
Yes	Cox	Derek
Yes	Cross	Tiffanie
Yes	Crosson	Scott
Yes	Dale (NMFS SERO)	David
Yes	DeVictor	Rick
Yes	Dixon	Michael
Yes	Dorman	Holly
Yes	Dukes	Amy
Yes	EL ALI	NAJI
Yes	Fifer	Jocelyn
Yes	Finch	Margaret
Yes	Flowers	Jared
Yes	Floyd	Brad

Yes	Foss	Kristin
Yes	Franco	Dawn
Yes	Franke	Emilie
Yes	Freeman	Matt
Yes	Friedrich	Tony
Yes	Glazier	Ed
Yes	Gore	Karla
Yes	Gray	Alisha
Yes	HEMILRIGHT	DEWEY
Yes	Hadley	John
Yes	Harper	Rich
Yes	Helies	Frank
Yes	Helmey	Judy
Yes	Hildreth	Delaine
Yes	Howington	Kathleen
Yes	Iverson	Kim
Yes	Kappos	Maria
Yes	Karnauskas	Mandy
Yes	Klasnick	01Kelly
Yes	LARKIN	Michael
Yes	LaRoche	Kelcie
Yes	Labocetta	Mark
Yes	Lazarre	Dominique
Yes	Malinowski	Rich
Yes	Markwith	Anne
Yes	Masi	Michelle
Yes	McCoy	Sherylanne
Yes	McGovern	Jack
Yes	Mehta	Nikhil
Yes	Murphey	Trish
Yes	Neer	Julie
Yes	Newman	Thomas
Yes	Newman	Sondra
Yes	Oliver	Ashley
Yes	Package-Ward	Christina
Yes	Poston	Will
Yes	Pugliese	01Roger
Yes	Ralston	Kellie
Yes	Ramsay	Chloe
Yes	Reichert	Marcel
Yes	Roller	00Tom
Yes	Rubner	Cody
Yes	Sedberry	George
Yes	Seward	McLean
Yes	Siegfried	Katie
Yes	Smart	Tracey
Yes	Smillie	Nick

Yes	Spurgin	Kali
Yes	Stam	Geoff
Yes	Stemle	Adam
Yes	Stephen	Jessica
Yes	Sweetman	CJ
Yes	Thompson	00 Laurilee
Yes	Travis	Michael
Yes	Vecchio	Julie
Yes	Waine	Mike
Yes	Walia	Matthew
Yes	Walter	Kate
Yes	Wamer	David
Yes	Williams	Erik
Yes	Withers	Meg
Yes	Wolfe	Wes
Yes	Wyanski	David
Yes	brewer	00chester
Yes	gloeckner	david
Yes	merino	joy
Yes	moss	david
Yes	oden	jeff
Yes	sandorf	scott
Yes	thomas	suz
Yes	thompson	laurilee
Yes	vara	mary