

SOUTH ATLANTIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

FULL COUNCIL SESSION I

**World Golf Village Renaissance
St. Augustine, Florida**

June 12, 2023

Transcript

Council Members

Dr. Carolyn Belcher, Chair
Trish Murphey, Vice Chair
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Chester Brewer
Gary Borland
Tim Griner
Judy Helmey

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Attendees and Invited Participants

Nikhil Mehta
Billy Broussard
Frankie Helier
Jessica Stephen
Rick Devictor
Lt. Patrick O'Shaughnessy
Matt Walia

Dr. Jack McGovern
Monica Smit-Brunello
Dr. John Walter
Shep Grimes
Dewey Hemilright
Kathy Knowlton
Manny Antonaras

Observers and Participants

Other observers and participants attached.

The Full Council Session I of the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council convened at the World Golf Village Renaissance, St. Augustine, Florida, on Monday, June 12, 2023, and was called to order by Chairman Carolyn Belcher.

DR. BELCHER: I am going to call everybody to the table, please, so that we can get the meeting started. I would like to welcome everybody to the June 2023 council meeting. We're going to start out with introductions, for those folks that are here, representing a couple of other agencies, or councils.

We have Billy Broussard from the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council attending, and Dewey Hemilright is here representing the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council, and we have Ally Alvarez-Stratton representing the Coast Guard, since our normal Coast Guard rep was tasked to other duties. I am going to ask that we go around the table, just to get voice recognition on the mic, and I'm going to start down there with Shep.

MR. GRIMES: Shepherd Grimes, NOAA Office of General Counsel, Southeast.

DR. MCGOVERN: Jack McGovern, NOAA Fisheries.

MR. BELL: Mel Bell, South Carolina DNR.

MR. BORLAND: Gary Borland, South Atlantic Council.

MS. MARHEFKA: Kerry Marhefka.

MR. GRINER: Tim Griner, North Carolina, commercial rep.

MR. ROLLER: Tom Roller, North Carolina, at-large rep.

MS. MURPHEY: Trish Murphey, North Carolina Division of Marine Fisheries.

DR. BELCHER: Carolyn Belcher, Georgia DNR.

MR. BREWER: Chester Brewer, Florida recreational rep.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Jessica McCawley, Florida FWC.

MS. THOMPSON: Laurilee Thompson, Florida commercial.

MR. HEMILRIGHT: Dewey Hemilright, Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council liaison.

MS. HELMEY: Judy Helmey, South Atlantic, charter fisherman.

MR. WOODWARD: Spud Woodward, council member, Georgia.

MR. BROUSSARD: Billy Broussard, Gulf Fishery Management Council.

DR. BELCHER: Thank you, everybody, for that. The next item on the agenda is the Adoption of the Agenda. Does anybody have any changes that they would like to make at this time to the agenda, as currently published? Seeing none, the agenda is finalized. Approval of Minutes from the March 2023 Council Session, is there any changes that need to be made to the transcript, as published? Okay. Seeing none, then the transcript will stand. The first item is to -- We have reports for the different agencies, and we're going to start with the NOAA Office of Law Enforcement.

LT. O'SHAUGHNESSY: Good afternoon. Lieutenant O'Shaughnessy, Southeast Office of Law Enforcement. Out of respect to some of our council members, I will keep this brief, so I don't add the extra-day-and-a-half that we were accused of adding last time. First up, stats for this period, there were 171 opened incidents, fifteen cases referred to General Counsel. Those referrals were primarily right whale cases, a couple of SEFHIER cases, as well as fishing in the National Marine Sanctuary and in the Oculina Bank.

There were seventy-two summary settlements, ranging from \$250 to \$2,000, and those consisted, as it shows there, of retention, closed area violations, some SIMP violations, fishing in the sanctuary, and some TED violations, and the rest of those 171 were either closed with compliance assistance or found to be unfounded.

Enforcement highlights, we had two noteworthy criminal convictions this period, and one was Aifa Seafood, which was convicted of intermingling Haitian lobster and then shipping it out of the United States as U.S. lobster, and a second case also was Elite Sky, which was using Nicaragua and Belize lobsters and comingling them with U.S. and shipping them out as U.S. product, and so two criminal convictions on those things, to help out the U.S. lobster industry, so they are not disadvantaged by using foreign seafood labeled as U.S. The last one, I briefed I believe at the last council, but the commercial gear theft of the shark longline gear, and that was also a criminal conviction for gear that was taken by another party and brought to shore.

For the enforcement highlights, enforcement partnership referrals, we had forty-four overall enforcement highlighted referrals, and those consisted, again, from FWC, Georgia DNR, and South Carolina DNR, and those were largely a variety of undersized, closures, fillets, and then fishing in the sanctuary, and a number of TED violations, and so our working with our state partners continues to be very advantageous to us, and we greatly appreciate their assistance.

Targeted operations, the first was Ready Reserve, which was a sanctuary operation where we put NOAA Enforcement officers onboard the large FWC vessel and patrolled throughout the sanctuary, as well as the Tortugas Reserves. It was a great opportunity to work together side-by-side and go onboard the larger vessel that FWC has, which continues to remain one of our strongest partners.

The Spring Festival was an IUU/SIMP focus, again protecting domestic seafood through inspections, and this op was centered in Cincinnati, Ohio. It was a joint op with the Northeast Division and the Southeast Division, and that's the largest DHL facility, the seventh largest air airport by cargo and volume, and 250,000 cargo shipments go through there, and so we were focusing on seafood imports and doing a focus on an area that we have not focused on before, to make sure the U.S. seafood industry is not disadvantaged.

Current spotlight, North Atlantic right whales continues to be a high-focus area for us, and we continue to do both patrols enforcing the speed rule as well as for our Atlantic Large Whale Take Reduction Plan gear requirements, and so we've had patrols up and down the eastern seaboard for that.

The Observer Safety was a letter that was sent out to all permit holders, for everyone who is covered by any of the observer programs, and it was just highlighting the requirements for reporting, observer safety, to let everybody know what is expected when an observer comes onboard and how and what the required reporting requirements are, and so that letter went out to literally thousands of vessel owners and operators. Then trade monitoring, and, again, we continue with SIMP and imports, to ensure that nobody gets around our existing laws and disadvantages U.S. fishermen and the fishing industry.

One other thing, and NOAA Office of Law Enforcement, our Southeast Assistant Director, Mr. Antonaras, and there is a photo there, and he's sitting right here, and he is here this week, and he oversees from the North Carolina-Virginia border all the way down to the Texas-Mexico border, as well as Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands, and he'll be here through Wednesday, and so I would strongly suggest that, if you have any issues, complaints, concerns, particularly about me, and that's my boss, and so please voice your concerns to him, but he will be here, and so if you have the opportunity to take some time to talk with him.

Then, finally, I was talking to someone last week, and they were not aware that we have a NOAA Law Enforcement hotline, that 1-800 number, and we have it advertised everywhere, and it's answered 24/7, and it's a call service. They merely take the information, and then it gets referred to the nearest local uniformed officer, and we take and investigate all of those calls, and so, if you know of anybody, or as you're talking to your constituents, and, if you get that number out there, it's a good tool to have, and we do take all calls for action. That's all I had, in four minutes. Any questions?

DR. BELCHER: Thank you for that. Questions? Okay. Thank you. Next up would be the report from the Coast Guard, and she's not here? Okay. We can see about scheduling that maybe a little bit later on in the agenda. We'll go to the council liaisons, and we'll start with the Gulf of Mexico. Billy.

MR. BROUSSARD: Okay. We ended our last meeting last week, and some of the -- I'm just going to kind of give a brief synopsis, or go over the things that we talked about, and one of the issues is gag grouper, and we revised the criteria used to determine whether gag is overfished or experiencing overfishing, and we revised sector allocations to 65/35 rec/commercial, based off the conversions from CHTS to FES.

We established a rebuilding time of eighteen years, with a corresponding annual catch limit of 75 percent. We set the recreational catch target, which is the buffer, and I think we went from 10 to 20 percent between the ACT and the ACL for recreational, and we lowered it to 5 percent for commercial. The recreational gag season will open on September 1 and close when the ACT is projected to be met, and we have the table there that shows the catch limit.

Red snapper reallocation, catch limits, and modifications to gray snapper, the main part of this was the states -- It's escaping me here, but the calibration, where we recalibrated the states and seeing

how they measured up to MRIP, and, as you see, some of the states got a pretty good decrease in their state allocation, Alabama and Mississippi being the two. Florida and Louisiana got a bump, and Texas stayed the same.

The Coastal Migratory Pelagic Advisory Panel, we were able to repopulate that panel, and very seldom on our council does everyone agree on things, and, with the Rice's whale speed limit petition, we were all unified in writing a letter against the speed restriction. That was going to encompass a huge area south of Alabama and northern Florida.

Commercial individual fishing quotas, IFQ program modifications, we're trying to just streamline and make a few tweaks to the IFQ program, to make it where it serves the needs of the Gulf, primarily with the red snapper expansion in the Gulf, and one of the main issues we've had is that most of the quota was given, or assigned, to the commercial fishermen that executed that fishery in the western Gulf of Mexico.

It has been successful in expanding out the red snapper abundance, to where the fish are showing up in Florida, in areas that traditionally -- Not all the time, but traditionally, in the last hundred years, haven't had a lot of red snapper, and those guys have no quota, and quota is getting higher and higher for those guys to lease or buy, and so we're trying to figure out how we can improve opportunities for participants to enter into the program, while still reducing IFQ discards in the red grouper fishery, where a lot of snapper are being harvested in that longline fishery.

Increase IFQ market transparency, and there is some fear that it's a little hard to access those -- What's going on in the IFQ system, and so we need a little more transparency, and reduce cost per unit of harvest, which I think is already in one of the National Standards.

Greater amberjack, we continued a framework action to consider modifying the recreational closure and the commercial trip limits, which it looks like we're kind of going towards five or seven fish, rather than pounds, and we'll see what's going to happen when we go final, but the selected preferred alternative would modify the recreational season to open on September 1 Gulf-wide and remain open until October 31, and we all have doubts that it's going to stay open that long.

Shallow-water grouper, I won't go through that, and it's kind of complex, in that it's just separating out yellowfin and scamp from black grouper and yellowmouth. Excuse me. It's separating scamp and yellowmouth from black and yellowfin grouper.

The midwater snapper complex, following the recommendations from the SSC, the council initiated work on an amendment that will consider removing wenchman from the Reef Fish Management Plan, and so wenchman are managed under the midwater snapper complex, and we had an otter trawl boat that moved into the Gulf several years ago, and, because he caught so many -- One boat caught so many wenchman in the otter trawl that he shut down the entire midwater snapper complex for the rest of the year, and most of the commercial fishermen that are regulated, that fall under the IFQs or are regulated by the Gulf Council, which this guy was not, they don't - - They just don't harvest a lot of wenchman in the Gulf of Mexico. There are some, but it's not a substantial amount, and, in order to prevent that midwater snapper complex from being shut down again by this one boat, we're trying to take it out of the complex, and it's still going to be a process, but that's where we were with it.

Yellowtail snapper, we were starting the conversation on yellowtail snapper, and then Dr. Sweetman pointed out that something was wrong with the landings from Monroe County, and Jessica could probably speak a little bit more to that, where they were allotted to one side and not the other, and so we needed -- We felt that we needed to get that information, and get that straight, before we moved forward or took any action regarding yellowtail snapper. We discussed the stuff with the ecosystem-based management, and we modified the priority list, to basically take smaller bites of the pie as we move forward, and, Madam Chair, this concludes my report.

DR. BELCHER: Okay. Thank you. Questions for Billy? Chester.

MR. BREWER: I was the South Atlantic liaison to that meeting, and one other thing that came up, and there wasn't a lot of time spent on it, but there was a presentation on the, what is it, MCS, I believe it is, with the new methods for perhaps managing some of the rarely-encountered species, or managing dolphin, doing allocation -- Not allocation, but taking a look at dolphin, because, as you all probably know, there has never, ever, ever been an assessment for dolphin, and you can't do one, and so the process was starting out, and I only went to one meeting, but they're starting out with dolphin, to see if there are other ways to obtain the information necessarily to properly manage those fish.

As it was discussed, and the representatives who were there from NOAA talking about it, and it became clear that the different things that they were talking about doing -- They were going to be running into the same problems that we ran into with that working group that we put together with regard to recreational and how to have more flexibility in the management of the fisheries.

Eventually, it came down to, in the discussion, that National Standard 1 is going to have to be modified and/or different interpretations taken by NOAA, and that's because there is some flexibility from the standpoint of how you go about managing the fisheries, with the exception of one thing, and that is you have to have accountability measures that kick in on a yearly basis, from what we best understand, and so they're going to be taking a look at it, and NOAA actually asked for a request from the Gulf Council to do just that, and I would hope that, if this council is given the opportunity, they would also make a request, or express an interest, in taking another look at National Standard 1, and, with that, thank you, ma'am.

DR. BELCHER: Thank you, Chester. Other comments or questions at this point? Okay. Seeing none, we'll move on to Dewey and the Mid-Atlantic's report.

MR. HEMILRIGHT: Thank you. The Mid-Atlantic met last week in Virginia Beach, the 6th through the 8th, and on the agenda that we discussed and worked through was 2024 blueline tilefish specs, 2024 golden tilefish specs, and we also had a presentation on unmanaged commercial landing reports, and we also had advanced notice of proposed rulemaking for National Standards 4, 8, and 9 guidelines that have to do with environmental equity and justice and climate change, and I think that's an ongoing thing, and there was numerous questions asked about that that I believe are still being in consultation to answer, because I think some of us are not sure exactly what the end result is, or what's going to happen.

Continuing on, we had specs for surf clams and ocean quahog, and we also had specs for 2024 butterfish specs, 2024 chub mackerel specs, and we had a presentation from HMS, particularly to

Amendment 15, and I think we're going to have a presentation here today on that same amendment, and I had numerous questions and comments on that, as usual, and imagine that.

Next, after that, we had a monkfish and dogfish framework to reduce the bycatch of Atlantic sturgeon, and we had offshore wind updates from five offshore wind projects and ongoing presentations from BOEM, and, following up on Thursday, we had our business session, and it was pretty much a short, tiny meeting, with not a whole bunch of obstacles in it, and so that's my presentation, and, if anybody had any questions or comments, feel free to ask. Thank you.

DR. BELCHER: Thanks, Dewey. Does anybody have any questions or comments for Dewey at this point? Okay. Seeing none, we'll move on to the state reports, and I'm going to start with Mel and South Carolina.

MR. BELL: Thank you. There's not a lot to report of interest to us here, and so it's the summer sampling season, and the weather has been a little bit dicey lately, as far as wind, but our offshore sampling, through the Research Vessel Palmetto and the Lady Lisa are underway, and it's traditionally what we call MARMAP and SEAMAP, and they have been able to -- It's finally settled down a little bit, and so that's underway.

The Lady Lisa, recall, is -- We have successfully purchased a replacement vessel for her, which is a steel-hulled trawler. The plan now is to retrofit her into a more suitable platform to take us through the next couple of decades or so of doing that type of work, and we're going to basically convert her -- The plan is to convert her into a stern trawler, as opposed to a side trawl, but, thanks to inflation, the money that we had originally to replace the vessel completely was insufficient to do everything, and so we were able to purchase a used vessel, and we got a good one, and we're short a million, or a million-and-a-half, to actually do all of the work to complete all the work on the vessel, and so we're currently exploring options to try to help turn this regional asset into just the right platform for us for the next, like I said, several decades.

We've been running the Lady Lisa, as a wooden-hulled trawler, for forty years now, and so we're hoping to get at least that, or maybe a little longer, out of a steel-hulled vessel, and so that's something we've -- Again, a big need right now is to kind of assist -- To somehow find the money to complete the revisions on this vessel to get it to do the job we need it to do and do it well, which involves things like, you know, a lot of internal work and external work, you know, a scientific lab, crew quarters, probably new engines, and, again, some of the external work to convert her into a stern trawler, but it's a very nice boat.

We're fortunate to find one, given the market right now, and boats are kind of moving, and I think there's a lot of demand on work-type vessels and all, related to the wind energy expansion offshore, and so a lot of things getting -- Are being taken up quickly, or fetching a high price, and so we were fortunate, and so that's something of interest to this group.

Also, at the state level, we opened our shrimp fishery on 1 June, fully, and we're hearing some complaints from the fishermen about low prices and the inability to sell product, and apparently there's a lot of product on the market, and some of that I know was -- There was a lot of frozen product still from the fall-winter timeframe, but a lot of initial complaints about prices and all, and maybe others are experiencing that as well, but the shrimp fishery, our shrimp fishery, is underway.

I briefed you before on our desire to add some regulatory restrictions to our blue crab fishery, the commercial blue crab fishery, which is pretty much wide open. That didn't make it through the general assembly this year, and we're hoping to go back and work with industry a little bit this year, and the legislature, and take another swing at it in January of 2024, but we really would like to see some additional regulatory requirements in our crab fishery, and so that will be something ongoing here for a little while.

We've talked about our -- We are ramping up to stock southern flounder, and apparently that's moving along fairly well, and they have actually -- They are growing some out now, and so we'll -- I am not sure what the timetable on that will be, but the idea is to, as soon as we can, be able to actually stock southern flounder in our state waters, and so those are things of interest, and ongoing efforts in our artificial reef program, and we basically, again, deal with a lot of opportunistic materials, and, you know, we're doing work there, and that's an area that overlaps into our council jurisdiction, because most of our reefs are offshore reefs.

Then, of course, we'll have a little red snapper season coming up in July, and we'll be ready to do whatever sampling we can do associated with that, and so that's pretty much it for us right now, unless somebody has any questions.

DR. BELCHER: Thanks, Mel. Any questions for Mel at this point? Okay. Trish.

MS. MURPHEY: Let's see, and so the division put out a survey -- We put out a survey to collect input and information on how to improve our engagement strategies. Our director has made outreach and education a priority, and so we're trying to improve on all of our outreach programs. It went out for a month, and we'll be working on the analysis here soon.

The division is also working on an automated system to be used to schedule observer trips for our estuarine gillnet survey, and we've held several outreach meetings to get input from folks, and also to provide information to our fishers, and we'll start testing this in the fall. It's basically a call-in system to get an -- To be observed, and it's for the RITP, for a requirement for sea turtles and Atlantic sturgeon.

We had a state-record big-scale pomfret, at twenty-six pounds, 11.4 ounces, which was caught fifty miles off of Morehead City, and it beats the IJF world record, and so they're going to, I guess, put in to get that world record, and we also had a state record mangrove snapper, at fifteen pounds, 3.2 ounces, at Frying Pan Tower, and that beat the old record of twelve-pounds-and-five-ounces.

Our commission met last month, and it put in place supplemental management measures to address overfishing of striped mullet, and, basically, these management measures is an indices and closure by region, from the north and the south, and so the north will close in early November, and the south will close a few days later, and then our commission also approved the goals and objectives for our spotted seatrout FMP, and the division staff, at the request of the commission, will continue to develop rulemaking language, with different management options, for false albacore.

Then, last, but not least, this past Saturday, the division had its 200-year jamboree celebration, where we had touch tanks and fishing demonstrations, drone demos, and we had mock rescues by our swift-water team, tours of living shorelines, and we had aquaculture facilities at the community college, and I'm happy to say that our South Atlantic Council was represented by Ashley Oliver

and Meg Withers. They had a booth there to demonstrate best fishing practices and descender devices, and also talk about the citizen science programs, and so I heard a lot of good things about the South Atlantic Council staff, and so thanks so much for you guys coming and participating, and that's it for North Carolina.

DR. BELCHER: Any questions for Trish at this point? Okay. Seeing none, Jessica.

MS. MCCAULEY: Thank you. I have a couple of items to report. At our recent FWC Commission meeting, the commission, for Atlantic greater amberjack, went consistent with the South Atlantic changes, and that will be effective once the federal rules are actually approved. Also, at this recent commission meeting, our commission is looking at regional management changes for snook, and so this is very similar to what they did for redfish, creating those different management regions, and so they're looking to take final action on that at a future commission meeting.

Also, at the recent FWC Commission meeting, they selected a new Executive Director, and so our new Executive Director is Roger Young, and so he was formerly the law enforcement colonel, the head of the Division of Law Enforcement, and he has been selected as the next executive director. We have been without an executive director since December 31, and we had an acting, which was the Assistant Executive Director, Thomas Eason, and so he will go back into his Assistant Executive Director role, and then Roger will be the new Executive Director, and so we have the South Atlantic Council meeting on the list for him to come and visit us at a future meeting.

Also, coming up at our next commission meeting, we will be bringing consistent regulations for Atlantic gag and black grouper, and so we'll be bringing that federal consistency item forward, with that being effective after the federal rule is actually effective, and then, also, we will see folks at ICAST, and so we're working on our booth and getting items ready to be part of donuts and descending devices, again, and many other items at ICAST, and so that's all I have to report.

DR. BELCHER: Thanks, Jessica. Any questions for Jessica at this point? Okay, and so Georgia, and it's a similar short list, but some key stuff, and our shrimp season is scheduled to open on the 21st of June, and we surprised Mr. Bell over there with that. Since they opened on the 1st, and our shrimp advisory panel actually was meeting that night, and, where the biological recommendation was to consider the middle of the month as a potential, just to get past the peak of the spawn, and the market concerns were addressed around the table, again the fact that there's a lot of frozen product and all in there, and the group decided that they wanted to wait until a little later, and so that was where the 21st came from.

Offshore reefs, we've been working with the Corps to try to get the update for our offshore permits to do those projects, and we've actually been holding opportunistic sources of materials in some dry lots, because we've been without a permit for a number of months, and they finally just issued that permit to us, and so we'll be starting back in with some reef projects that we've been waiting to do with a couple of older vessels and culvert.

Our commissioner has resigned from his job, and he's taking up a new role with the Jekyll Island Authority, and so I'm not really sure where -- Other than it's just been announced within the last couple of weeks, and so stay tuned on who our next commissioner will be, and then Coast Fest.

For those of you who have been involved in Coast Fest in the past, it's always the first weekend in October.

This year, we ended up hosting it on Earth Day, which was kind of a blessing and a curse, because, obviously, it's tied into a good cause, but there were a lot of activities that happen on Earth Day, and the reason it was shifted was because of the inconvenience of a hurricane that weekend, in October, and we still had a good turnout, and not quite the number of vendors that we've had in years past, but it was still well attended, and people really seem to like it, and they requested some of our general stuff come back that they didn't see this year, but we will be having Coast Fest, and it's going back to October.

Of course, the big scare was everybody thought that we were going to do it twice within six months, and we're not, and it's going to be October of 2024, and so the council has been gracious in coming in years past, and we look forward to having staff there again in 2024. With that, that's all I have to report out from Georgia, and so are there questions for me? Okay. Seeing none, then we will move on to the next item on the agenda, which is the report from NMFS Highly Migratory Species, and is the update from Karyl.

MS. BREWSTER-GEISZ: Thank you, Madam Chair, and hello, everyone. It is so good to see you all again. I think the last time I sat in front of this council in-person, it was your meeting in Jekyll Island, and so it's been a few years. For those of you who don't know me, I'm Karyl Brewster-Geisz, and I work in the Highly Migratory Species Management Division with NOAA Fisheries, and I am here today to present on three actions. Thank you, Dewey, for giving a little tickler of what I'm going to be presenting about.

These three actions are very large, and so, as a heads-up, I am just presenting it at a very high level, and I'm still here to answer questions, if you have any, but just know that I am not going to be presenting a lot of detail, and I'm going to be focusing in on what it is we're actually presenting or thinking about, and so the three actions, and the first one is a proposed action that we are out for public comment on right now, and this is Amendment 15 to our fishery management plan. Amendment 15 deals with spatial management and electronic monitoring. The other two actions are both in the scoping phase, and so we are also open for public comment on these, and we are looking for comments on what we should be thinking about or ways for us to move forward, and we don't have anything proposed yet for those two actions.

Moving on to Amendment 15, Amendment 15 is a very large document, and, as Dewey has told me, when you print it out, it is almost two inches in thickness, and it deals with two portions of our regulations, spatial management and electronic monitoring. We published the proposed rule and draft environmental impact statement in early May, and the comment period ends on September 15. You can see the link to the homepage for this action, and that homepage has not only the draft environmental impact statement and the proposed rule, but it also has a story map that goes through, in more detail, and hopefully in more plain language, about the spatial management portion. We also have a lot of the scientific research that we've done in preparation for Amendment 15.

I am going to be taking this in two parts, the spatial management part and then the electronic monitoring, and the so the spatial management -- We have four closed areas. These areas have been closed for almost twenty years, and we have, with the exception of the shark bottom longline

closed area, very little data from any of these areas, and, as you all know, twenty years is a very long time.

These are static closures that have been in place without analysis, without determining whether they are appropriate, and so the red area on the map is off of North Carolina, and that is our shark bottom longline closed area. It is in effect every January through July 31 of every year. The green area is the Charleston Bump, and it is in effect from February through April every year, and it is closed to pelagic longlining. The gray and the blue area are the east Florida coast and Desoto Canyon, and those are closed year round.

The question, when we were coming into Amendment 15, was how do we collect data, and these are static areas that are closed for dynamic fish that migrate up and down, and, in the last twenty years, we've seen a lot of changes, including stock status. As an example, swordfish was overfished when we put these in place, and it's now completely rebuilt.

Shortfin mako is a stock that probably was overfished back then, but we didn't know it, and it is now overfished, and we have a retention ban in place, and so the species, and what we're concerned about, have changed in the last twenty years. The ocean itself has changed in the last twenty years, and I think we're all aware that we're dealing with species that are migrating further north and moving away from warmer areas, and we are dealing with wind areas, people wanting to put different things into the ocean, and we are dealing with changing technology and changing fishing.

How the fishermen fish has changed dramatically in the last twenty years. We used to be almost all j-hooks for pelagic longline, and now we are all circle hooks, and we don't know what impact any of this has had on these four areas, and so that's what we would like to do, and that is what the focus is of the spatial management portion of Amendment 15.

The other portion is the electronic monitoring portion, and so, in Amendment 7 to our fishery management plan, we implemented the individual bluefin quota, or IBQ, program. This is a LAPP. Every pelagic longline fisherman receives a certain amount of IBQ, and we made changes to how they receive it in Amendment 13, and I'm sure that Dewey will tell you all about it, but I'm not going to focus on that. What I'm focusing instead on is, in order to verify the IBQ, we also require all our pelagic longline fishermen to have electronic monitoring onboard the vessel, and this means videos.

About 10 percent of all their sets are reviewed, to determine about the IBQ and the bluefin tuna that have been caught or discarded, and this program has been very successful, and it has changed a lot of bluefin dead discards into landings for the fishermen, but, since implementing the program, the agency has written a cost allocation policy, and so Amendment 15 is looking at coming into compliance with that cost policy, and, in short, that means shifting the sampling costs from the agency to the industry, and so that is all the background.

In terms of spatial management, we have preferred alternative packages for every -- For all four areas, and each preferred package has changes to the area, and it has changes to how we can collect data, based on our risk of bycatch in those particular areas, and then it looks at the timing of future evaluations of these areas. All four preferred packages, for the timing, are the same. We are looking at evaluating every three years for all the areas. In addition, if we're noticing something

going on, or something that we're not expecting, we could review it much sooner than every three years.

Starting with the Mid-Atlantic shark area, this is a bottom longline closure from January through July 31 every year, and the hatched area, in the red area, is what the current closure is. We are proposing changes to the closed area, going from January to July, and the proposal is to go from November through May, and so the same number of months, but it is shifted earlier in the year, and this matches what we've been hearing from the fishermen and seeing with our shark research fishery, that the sharks we're concerned about are entering the area sooner and leaving earlier, and so we are proposing a shift in the timing.

We are also proposing a shift, slightly, on the offshore area, to more closely match the shelf break, and so it increases the area, and it keeps the timing of different particular months, but the same amount of time, and this area is also a high-bycatch risk area, which is why it is red, and so the only way we would continue collecting data is through our shark research fishery program, which is an EFP.

Moving further south, the Charleston Bump, once again, the hatched area is the current closed area, and this area is closed every year from February through April, and we are proposing to split the area into two. The northern inshore area is a high bycatch risk area. That area, you could only go into if you had an EFP, and we are also proposing that it remain closed year-round, which is a shift. Right now, it is only closed February through April.

The offshore area, which is in yellow on the map, would become a monitoring area, and, by monitoring area, I mean the fishermen would be allowed into the area, but they would need to abide by additional regulations. One of those additions is 100 percent review of their sets with electronic monitoring, and they would also need to, in real time, report specific species of each set, and so it's more reporting, and it's more monitoring, and it's allowing them in with those restrictions.

The other restriction is a total cap on effort of sixty-nine sets between February and April. In other words, anyone could only go in there up until sixty-nine sets, and then we would close the area. We would be monitoring those real-time reports, as they happen, and, if anything shows up that we're not expecting, if bycatch is much higher than what we were expecting, we could close that monitoring area and not reopen it until after the evaluations happen.

All right, and I'm going to continue moving south, but I wanted you to look at that southern boundary that overlaps with the east Florida coast area, and those boundaries match, and so, as with the Charleston Bump, this east Florida coast area would be split into two. The red area matches the boundaries of the Charleston Bump, and it would create a year-round closure in those areas. The only way we would collect data would be through that exempted fishing permit program.

Similarly, that yellow area on the east Florida coast would be a monitoring area. Again, fishermen could go in, and they would have real-time reports of select species, and they would have 100 percent review, over electronic monitoring, and they would be limited to 124 sets per year to that area, and then it would close.

Moving on, there is also the Desoto Canyon closed area, and I'm going to go into that in detail, because that's not what this council does, but I wanted you to at least see what it is we're proposing, and, lastly, on spatial management, we are proposing a number of changes to our regulations that outline what it is we would be evaluating, what type of criteria we would be looking at, and we would be using those evaluations and criteria not only to evaluate the current areas that I just went through, but also any future areas that might come up, and so that's the end of the spatial management portion, and that's the longest part of my presentation.

Moving on to electronic monitoring, as I mentioned before, the agency has a cost allocation policy that we are trying to come into compliance with. Right now, electronic monitoring is fully paid for by the agency. We are proposing switching 100 percent of the sampling costs, and so that's the purchase of the equipment, the installation, maintenance, review of the videos, storage of it, service provider fees, to the industry over three years.

This next slide goes through how that process would work, where the agency would be approving vendors and then reviewing the vendor reports and possibly asking to review the video ourselves, if we feel that we need to. The vendor would be working directly with the vessel to install the EM and figure out exactly what the placement should be, how the transmission should happen, all of that, and that would all be paid for by the vessels. We may require to review the vessel monitoring plan, to make sure it matches the management needs that we have, but we would not otherwise be involved in that contract between the vessel and the vendor, and so that is Amendment 15 in a nutshell.

Moving on to these other documents, these are also very large actions, and so, again, I am just covering it at a high level. Amendment 16 is in regard to the shark fishery, and those of you who have been paying attention to the shark fishery know that we just finalized Amendment 14, and Amendment 14 established a framework for establishing acceptable biological catch and annual catch limits for the shark fisheries, and it also made some operational changes. Amendment 14 didn't include any regulatory changes, and all of that is going to happen in Amendment 16.

Related to all of this is our shark fishery review, or SHARE, document. In the SHARE document, we reviewed the entire shark fishery, and all the factors involved in it, and we identified areas of success along with areas where we needed to potentially make changes to the regulations, and all of the results from SHARE you will see echoed throughout Amendment 16.

Lastly, regarding the shark fishery, there are two factors that happened just recently that will dramatically change the shark fishery. For those of you who are unaware, there is this organized called CITES, and it monitors the trade, and so the imports and exports of various wildlife. Sharks have been listed before on Appendix II of CITES, which just monitors the trade, and so great, smooth, scalloped, hammerheads, for example, or silky sharks, have been listed as Appendix II.

What this means is that fishermen coming in from the high seas, or scientists coming in from the high seas, need an import from the sea permit, and dealers and scientists wishing to export products, and so whether that's a fin clip being transferred to another country for scientific research or that is a dealer trying to sell either shark meat or shark fins to another country, they must get an export permit. NOAA Fisheries does not issue either of those permits, and that's done by the Fish and Wildlife Service.

In November, CITES voted, and approved, two major changes to what goes on in Appendix II, and one of those is the listing of bonnethead sharks, and that went into effect in February, and that means now that every hammerhead shark is listed on Appendix II of CITES, and the other was the addition of all the carcharhinids onto Appendix II, and, for those of you who are unaware of what a carcharhinid is, it's pretty much every shark that we manage, and so blacktip sharks are carcharhinids, and sandbar sharks are carcharhinids. You name it, and is probably a carcharhinid. What this means, for all intents and purposes, is that every non-prohibited shark species we manage will be listed on Appendix II, come November of this year.

The last thing, major thing, that happened, right at the end of 2022, is the President, as part of a much larger act, signed the Shark Fin Sales Elimination Act, and that act is in effect now, and it means that every fin that has been removed from the shark can no longer be sold, possessed, or transported, and so these things, in total, together mean that the shark fishery needs to change from a fishery that used to sell the entire shark to now a fishery that can only sell the meat locally, unless they obtain a Fish and Wildlife Service export permit, and so, with all of that background regarding the shark fishery, and that doesn't even touch on one of the issues that I know this council is very concerned about, and that's depredation, and that is just the background of what we're dealing with going into Amendment 16, which is where we are going to try to make some pretty big changes.

The scoping notice for Amendment 16 -- Once again, this is scoping, and so we're looking for comments on ways forward, published in early May, and the comment period ends on August 18, and we are going to be looking at establishing the ABCs and ACLs for all non-prohibited shark species, optimizing the ability for the commercial and recreational fisheries to harvest quotas, as much as we can, and also increase management flexibility, so we can deal with some of these additional factors that keep coming up.

I think, when I say that Amendment 16 looks at everything shark-related, it means that we are looking at everything shark-related. We are looking at all the quotas and reestablishing them commercially and establishing some for the first time recreationally. We are looking at the management group structure, and so you all are probably familiar with large coastal and small coastal pelagic sharks, and we may rename all of that and mix-and-match some of the species. We are looking at the regional and sub-regional splits, and so between the Atlantic and Gulf of Mexico, that blacknose Atlantic boundary that stops the blacknose quota up near North Carolina, and we've seen a lot of blacknose move farther north, and so maybe that boundary needs to be changed or removed.

We're looking at exempted fishing permit quotas and how that should be redone since the 1999 FMP. We're looking at commercial retention limits, along with recreational retention and size limits, and so it really is looking at everything sharks.

I am not going to spend a lot of time on this graph, but this is just an example of what the blacktip quotas could look like, depending upon the years we look at and the risk policy, and the one thing that I want to make sure that people are aware of is, when it comes to recreational, we are thinking of setting up that quota in number of sharks, whereas the commercial quota would remain in weight, and that's it for Amendment 16.

Moving on to the last action, this is our electronic reporting action, and the scoping notice for this published in early May, and the comment period ends on August 18. In this action, we are looking at streamlining and modernizing our logbook reporting. In other words, moving from paper to electronic, and we are looking at expanding logbook reporting for for-hire, along with commercial vessels that are not yet required to report, and we're looking at collecting additional vessel and dealer information, incentivizing HMS reporting compliance, including for recreational, and offering an electronic reporting platform for our exempted fishing permit holders. In other words, Amendment 16 looked at everything sharks, and electronic reporting is looking at everything reporting for all of our fishermen and dealers, and so it also will be a very large action.

In HMS, we are working toward one-stop reporting, and this means submission of a single electronic report that would satisfy all overlapping requirements, and so, anything this council requires, we are looking to hopefully work it in so that fishermen would only have to report once and it would count toward your requirements along with ours.

We're considering the reporting options for commercial and recreational, including expanding requirements and timing of submitting reports and options for reporting requirements that take in current requirements, and so we're looking at species, the trips, and the timing of everything, and so that's it for that action, in a nutshell.

We are open for public comment on all three of these actions, and so this slide just shows you the webpages for the actions and the comment period. That number in the parentheses, and so the "NOAA-NMFS 2023-0010", you can copy-and-paste that into the search bar at regulations.gov, and you can see any of the written comments that we've received so far, along with submitting your own comments. We are doing a lot of webinars, along with in-person hearings, our first set of in-person hearings since 2020, and so we're very excited. This lists some of the upcoming public hearings and webinars, and there's a number going on this week, and so please free to join, and then, as I said, I covered everything on a very high level. If there are questions, you can ask me now, or you can always feel free to reach out to anyone who is listed on the slide. Thank you.

DR. BELCHER: Thank you, Karyl. Are there questions for Karyl at this point? Laurilee.

MS. THOMPSON: I think it's great that you guys are going to turn us loose and let us do some more shark fishing, but we're not even catching the quota now, and the shark fin bill killed the market, and there is no meat market. You can -- There's a few people that are surviving on puppy sharks, and there is no demand at all for the large sharks, and so I don't think increasing the allocations is going to do anything to reduce the shark populations, because nobody is going to fish for them if they can't make a little bit of money.

You need a place to get rid of the sharks, and so would there be -- Like in partnership with opening the shark fishery, could the -- You need protein for prisoners that are in the federal prisons, and it seems to me like shark would be a really low-cost form of protein for the federal prisons, because you need a market, and, without the fin sales, nobody is going to go fishing, and so would there be a possibility that, you know, maybe the federal government could look into buying shark meat, or the federal prisons, so that we would have a market, because it doesn't matter if you increase the allocations, and they're not going to go fishing. That's it for that question, and I have more, but I will let somebody else go.

DR. BELCHER: So other questions or comments at this point for Karyl? Mel.

MR. BELL: Just so I'm clear on the fins, the dogfish, smooth dog and spiny, they're exempt from the fin restriction, right?

MS. BREWSTER-GEISZ: Yes, and they are the only exceptions, really.

DR. BELCHER: Chester.

MR. BREWER: Karyl, thank you for the presentation. Believe it or not, I've been around for twenty years, and I was around when the what you're referring to as the closed area, and actually it's a gear-restricted area, was put into place, particularly the one that's off of south Florida, and I am curious, and I don't see it mentioned, but, in the attempts in the past to reopen the south Florida area, the attempts were through EFP. Bill Hogarth, when he did it, and Margo Schultz-Haugen, and those were attempts through EFPs.

I don't see any reference here to the agency obtaining an EFP to -- Essentially what it sounds like to me you're trying to do is put longlines, pelagic longlines, back into these gear-restricted areas, because there is no other restriction, per se, and you can use barrel gear, and you can use hook-and-line, and you can use all of these other gears for harvesting swordfish, but there's a prohibition on longlines, and there is a reason for it, and so my first question to you is how is it that this program is going to go through without obtaining an EFP?

MS. BREWSTER-GEISZ: So this is a proposed rule, and it is changing the regulations, and so the monitoring areas would no longer need an EFH to go in there. You could still obtain an EFP if you wanted to try to fish with longline differently than what is allowed, but the monitoring areas would be open for fishing, with those additional restrictions and changes, and so the total cap on effort, the 100 percent review of sets over EM, and the real-time reporting of specific bycatch species.

MR. BREWER: So, if you pass this new regulation, the next day, pelagic longlines are going to be allowed into the gear-restricted areas?

MS. BREWSTER-GEISZ: Yes, if this rule is finalized, as proposed, then pelagic longliners could go into the monitoring areas, with those additional restrictions.

MR. BREWER: Then I have another follow-up question, which is I don't know how familiar NOAA is with the -- One of the benefits of the gear-restricted areas is that it -- I'm not going to say it was the only reason, but it was certainly one of the big reasons that this fishery, you know, was rebuilt, and, when I was sitting on ICCAT, that whole system that was in place there was referred to as one of the great success stories for ICCAT.

Everybody looked on it with pride, and there were benefits beyond just the recovery of swordfish. We saw, in south Florida, a dramatic increase in the amount of other billfishes, particularly with regard to sailfish, and is there anything within your monitoring system where you're going to be monitoring bycatch of other species besides swordfish, or is it strictly going to be swordfish and the bycatch that's going to be monitored? Thank you.

MS. BREWSTER-GEISZ: So, yes, and these areas were very successful and helped rebuild swordfish. We no longer are concerned about swordfish, and this is not a blanket opening up the entire area and let's see what happens. This is opening up the area in order to, and opening up only a small portion of the area, in order to see what is happening there now, what is happening in terms of changes of bycatch, what is happening in terms of changes in the ocean environment and how things have changed, and we don't know, because we haven't been able to get in there.

You mentioned the exempted fishing permits, and you are correct that there was one exempted fishing permit that allowed a few vessels in it in the early 2000s, and we tried again right around - I don't remember the year, but I'm going to say 2015, thereabouts, give or take a couple of years, and that effort to get in was not successful, and so no vessels went in under that exempted fishing permit, and so we don't know what's happening now.

The whole purpose is to allow some vessels in, with restrictions, to see what is happening now, and those select species -- That is real-time reporting, and, yes, billfish is on that list that we would be monitoring. It is not just monitoring swordfish, and, in fact, swordfish is not one of the bycatch species that we are as focused on, at the moment, because it is so rebuilt. I would also point out that, when these areas went into place, there were several hundred people in the pelagic longline fishery, and we are now down to seventy, and so there are many fewer fishermen involved in the fishery, which is why that total cap on effort, the 124 sets per year, and that is not very many sets, but that is indicative of just how few pelagic longline fishermen we have left in the fishery.

MR. BREWER: A follow-up, please?

DR. BELCHER: Sure. Chester, and then I've got Tim, Jessica, and Laurilee.

MR. BREWER: Let me get my thoughts together, and my question just went out of my head, but who is administering the monitoring here? Is it going to be some outside agency, or is it going to be done directly by NMFS/NOAA, because a little correction as to what you said. On that second attempt that was made, I know the names and everything, but that -- One of the biggest objections was to who was going to be running the program, and how it was going to be run.

NMFS/NOAA did grant the permit, and then the university who was named in the application said, when their board of directors got wind of what was going on, they didn't want any part of it, and they demanded that their name be taken off, and so there had to be a re-application, and the re-application is what was denied, and so there actually were three attempts. This is going to be run by NMFS though?

MS. BREWSTER-GEISZ: Yes, we would be doing the monitoring.

MR. BREWER: Okay. Thank you.

DR. BELCHER: Okay. Tim and then Jessica and Laurilee.

MR. GRINER: Thank you, and thank you for the presentation, and, following-up a little bit on what Chester was talking about, or alluding to here, this is really not opening up anything. This is closing a fishery down. You just heard that this fishery is down to seventy vessels, and, previously, all this monitoring was funded not by the industry, and now we're going to move to

100 percent funding by the industry, and we have nobody who has even discussed what the order of magnitude of that really is.

I can assure you that, once the order of magnitude of this 100 percent real-time monitoring -- That this fishery is not going to be seventy vessels for very much longer, and it's certainly not going to increase any landings, and it's not going to get you a whole lot more data, and so I think, really and truly, you know, the real heartburn for me with this thing is this monitoring, without any discussion of what it really and truly is, and the impacts that it's really going to have on this fleet, is -- It's more important in the fact that you're willing to look at ABCs, relook at every single shark out there, because, without that fleet, it's really a moot point.

DR. BELCHER: Jessica and then Laurilee and Dewey.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thanks for your presentation, Karyl. I guess some of our questions are about -- In the slide that you had on the board earlier, the areas off of Florida, have you thought about the impact to things, and you mentioned this a little bit, but to shortfin mako, or even the dolphin fishery, since we're really concerned about what's going on with dolphin, and is that something that's in the broader document, or is it something that we would need to comment on to ask you guys to look at, and I guess I'm just trying to seek some more information on that.

MS. BREWSTER-GEISZ: So, yes, shortfin mako is definitely considered in this document. Dolphin not as much, and that's more just the data streams, but it is discussed somewhat.

DR. BELCHER: Okay. Laurilee and then Dewey.

MS. THOMPSON: Will the electronic monitoring, which is video, from what I understand, will that be required on the bottom fishing for sharks also, or is it strictly for pelagic?

MS. BREWSTER-GEISZ: It is only required right now for the pelagic longline fishery and not the bottom longline fishery.

DR. BELCHER: Dewey.

MR. HEMILRIGHT: Well, I wish that I had some better news to tell you, instead of doom-and-gloom, but I'm going to be like -- Have you ever heard of Paul Harvey and the rest of the story? Amendment 13, and please bear with me for a few minutes, but Amendment 13, which just recently happened, had to do with the IBQ quota, and the agency decided, and the industry wanted, to disperse quota among working vessels, and the agency said we're going to use electronic monitoring, a vessel monitoring system, to make that choice of how many sets you made, and, out of that seventy vessels that got IBQ quota, there's twenty-five, right now, that are a part of an appeals process that's been going on since January, and to some to no resolve, and so one-third of an amendment -- Can you imagine this council doing an amendment and one-third of the people, the fishers, have the appeal process? I would call that a failure.

So what happens is, in this appeals process, is the only way you get IBQ quota is you have to make sets. You have to go fishing, even if you catch nothing, and within twelve hours report. Well, the issue was people's vessel monitoring systems were broken, unbeknownst to them. Luckily, when we talk about furthering of electronic monitoring, luckily we had our paper logbooks to send in

and to verify what we're doing, even though some of us are having to redo it again, sending in our logbooks, through this appeals process, this black hole that's been going on for six months with no leadership.

We go on here to Amendment 15, and Karyl is right that there is seventy vessels that is left from Maine to Texas, and the shark fishery has been devastated. There's a few fishermen around that have got boutique fisheries that are able to go catch some small puppy sharks and sell them to restaurants or to the supermarkets, and the shark fishing industry, as I know it, prior to 2006, is done and gone, and it's not coming back, unless it's subsidized by the government to two-bucks a pound for shark.

The Shark Fin Elimination Act, whether I like it or not, right now is hindering people from going shark fishing, because, even if you can't sell the fins, you can't throw them away at-sea, and you have to bring them, naturally attached, back to the dock and cut them off and then decide how you're going to get rid of them, because you can't have them.

When you look at the last twenty-three years, and talking about these closures, it's ironic that, for twenty-three years, we've had these areas closed, and not once have we ever went in there to do science. The sportfishing community don't want people to go do science. They're afraid of that, and that's why we've had, at previous times, exempted fishing permits, and people go irate about that, and here we have, with this stuff coming forward, and there's more closures. The Charleston Bump has only been closed for three months a year, and they're proposing to close half of it inshore twelve months a year, and so there's a furthering of closure.

Well, when you look at this stuff here, you've had, since 2015, 100 percent vessel monitoring system, and thank god it works, if it's works that time, and you had cameras onboard, and you could have had 100 percent observer coverage and put caps to go in these areas to do science.

Internationally, the U.S. fights for science at ICCAT, and we fight for things to make others, as we're the guinea pigs to other countries to do things, but, for some reason, our country here domestically doesn't want to do the science about the use of circle hooks, the light mono, and the different things that we're having more interactions, but we're getting away from them, because we're fishing further offshore, but, with interactions, you have bite-offs, and so what is wrong with going in these areas and letting the pelagic longline area, where they have all these caps, and they have all this vessel monitoring, do some research?

If it doesn't work, your caps are met, and you go on, but we're down to seventy vessels. With this Amendment 15, what could really take place is a vessel monitoring system costs \$3,100. Well, in 2015, it cost \$3,100. Your camera systems is about -- I might be off, but let's say \$12,500, and so you could have, in reality, with some of these proposals they have going forward, and there was one thing, on one of the slides that was omitted, that the cost for an individual to monitoring each set could be up to \$289 of a contract you sign with a vendor, and so we could have some hypothetical realities here of your vessel monitoring system breaking, which is \$3,100, and somebody add this up, if you could, and you've got the camera system, which is \$12,500, and you could have some people, and not myself, because my vessel is not that large, making fifty or sixty or seventy sets, at \$289 a set, in areas that have to have full monitoring, maybe up to a hundred, and so you could have, at one time, a hit of \$50,000.

Do we think that anybody in the pelagic longline industry has got an extra \$50,000 to do the vessel monitoring system and to have somebody look at their camera system? I don't think so, and so what we're seeing here, and through this inch-and-seven-sixteenths document, that has taken two years to put together, and probably ten staff, that have been diligent in their work, and we're watching a continuation of the end of the pelagic longline industry, and there's going to be more sharks, and it's going to get worse, and you're going to be crying more, and they're going to be eating more of everything you catch, and so we have the management, and also the Congress of past administrations, to thank for the shark mess we've got going on now, and it's not going to stop. It's going to get worse, and so be prepared, and keep crying, and just hope you get the fish in the boat before the shark gets it. Thank you.

DR. BELCHER: Jessica.

MS. MCCAWLEY: My question was about, in considering the areas, inside the document, is there an economic analysis? Is that in the document? Okay. Thank you.

DR. BELCHER: Laurilee.

MS. THOMPSON: Is there a baseline of what, twenty years ago, before the closures went into effect, and do we have a baseline of what the boats were catching back then, the bycatch, you know, as well as the size and amount of swordfish that they were catching? Do we have something? If we actually do get new data, do we have something to compare it to?

MS. BREWSTER-GEISZ: Yes, we do. Every year, in our SAFE report, we actually analyze where we're at now with all the bycatch species and target species, compared to what we were predicting we would be at, and so we have already been doing that, as a whole, and we also have all that data from before, and that is some of what we're looking at.

DR. BELCHER: Dewey.

MR. HEMILRIGHT: One thing I don't understand is, prior to 1999, you had over 350 vessels, and we're down to seventy, and, ten or twelve years ago, at our highest, or maybe fifteen years ago, we were setting eleven-million hooks, or twelve-million hooks, and we're down to less than four-million now, and so we decreased the fishermen, decreased the hooks, decreased the trips, and decreased everything else, and so, hell, there's got to be more animals out there in the ocean, critters, all kinds, turtles and everything else, and so that's something that they haven't looked at, is a total decrease.

I mean, haven't we decreased the fishermen enough, and his effort, to where, hey, it should be that we should be asking HMS how many boats, pelagic longline boats, do you want left from Maine to Texas, and that should be the answer, because, when we look at your stock portfolio, and what you have achieved over the last twenty-three years, you see where nobody is going to buy this stock, and so that would be the question, and hopefully the outcome, in going through this amendment, lengthy amendment, and how many vessels do you want left, and we can't continue on doing what we're doing, and we're not going to be here, and I know I'm not, in the next few years, because I am not putting up with this, and life is too short to have to deal with you all's conundrums and shenanigans.

DR. BELCHER: Okay. Are there further comments or questions for Karyl at this point? Okay. Seeing none, thank you, Karyl, and I will get with staff about what we need to supply from the council. Okay. I am going to go ahead and say let's break for ten minutes, and we'll come back and start in with the joint commercial electronic logbook amendment, and so Myra will help us through that, and so ten minutes, and so come back at five after.

(Whereupon, a recess was taken.)

DR. BELCHER: We're going to go ahead and get started again. Myra, whenever you're ready.

MS. BROUWER: Thank you, and so the next item on the agenda is the joint commercial electronic logbook amendment, and so I wanted to give you guys just a quick update of where we are, and I don't have anything, a decision document or any sort of thing like that to show you, because there's been -- If you recall from our March meeting, we talked about we have most of the document put together, and so there's a draft document that you can see was available for your March meeting.

In the meantime, the Southeast Fisheries Science Center has provided cost estimates to develop the administrative effects analysis for the proposed action, which is to move the coastal logbook from paper to electronic, and so those cost estimates have been provided, and we are currently working on drafting that admin effects section, and then the regulatory impact review, and whatever other portions of the amendment need to be drafted or completed, based on those cost estimates, we'll have that ready for the time that we take this out to public hearings, which the council approved public hearings for this amendment back in March, and we have yet to schedule those, and they will probably take place at the very end of July, or early August, and we want to kind of coordinate with the Gulf Council.

They are also doing their own set of public hearings, and then the other piece would be to request participation from the Southeast Fisheries Science Center, in order to demonstrate the software and be there to address any technical questions from their side of the house, and so, also, make sure that the Mid-Atlantic Council, and the GARFO region, are aware of these hearings, so that they can encourage fishermen who have permits in the GARFO region and the Southeast to attend, and so that's the update that I have for you, and I would be happy to answer any questions while we get Sarah Privoznik on the webinar, and she's going to give you a presentation, next up, and so are there any questions for me?

DR. BELCHER: I am not seeing any, Myra.

MS. BROUWER: Okay, and so let me quickly queue up Sarah here. Give me just a second. Sarah, we are ready.

MS. PRIVOZNIK: Thanks, Myra. Hi, everyone, and thanks for your patience while we get that set up. My name is Sarah, and I am part of the Commercial Monitoring Team at the Southeast Fisheries Science Center, and, today, I'm going to present a demonstration of the electronic logbook app that was developed for the South Atlantic commercial fishing reports. You probably have already seen some version of this, and so we do have a few updates, just to keep it fresh for you, but stay tuned for those.

Today, the purpose of this is to give a practical presentation of the currently-available option for electronic reporting, which is the eTRIPS app, and so, as we've migrated to electronic reporting, we've tried to keep the changes minimal. However, some have been unavoidable, and we would like to go over some of these and hopefully demonstrate that a lot of the changes actually are going to reduce overall reporting burden and the time spent completing the logbooks, in the long run, and it's also going to streamline the data entry process.

Let's give a little background on how we got to where we are now, and the Greater Atlantic Fisheries Office is also running a logbook program, as well as the Southeast charter/headboat logbook program, and so many vessel owners have what we call dual permits, which just means that they have multiple permits or they're overlapping in the diagram that you see, either by the type of permit, and so charter or commercial, or by the region where they're fishing, and so the Southeast or the Greater Atlantic region.

Under the current paper logbook system, anyone with dual commercial permits has to report multiple logbooks, which are mailed to separate science centers for every commercial fishing trip, and so one of the goals of developing electronic reporting was to reduce reporting for these types of users to a single report, and then also reduce confusion between the different logbook programs, and so the eTRIPS app was developed by our partner, the Atlantic Coastal Cooperative Statistics Program, or ACCSP, and its contractor, Harbor Lights, which builds and maintains the software.

ACCSP is getting up-to-date permit information from us, which they can use to enroll users, and then, once they're on the app, show those users the correct logbook questions. The data submitted are shared with the Science Center, and we do a little backend processing, so that we can then grant them compliance for their logbooks.

Every vessel that has a SERO federal permit with logbook requirements must report these fields for every trip, and so there's general trip information, such as the county of offload, the days-at-sea, and then there's effort and catch information, and so most vessels are just going to have one effort per trip, and there are some exceptions, like anyone who uses multiple gear types, as well as our HMS-permitted vessels will have multiple efforts.

A portion of our fleet, about 20 percent, are selected to report supplemental data regarding either trip expenses or trip discards, and so these are the additional questions that they would see in the logbooks. Economic questions are supplemental, and they're at the trip level, such as the price of fuel or the total revenue for the trip, and these, again, are not required of all vessels. The discard questions are also supplemental, and these are at the species level, such as the estimated number of fish, the weight of the fish, and what their condition was when they were discarded, and, again, this is about 20 percent of vessels that are selected for this reporting.

The new electronic logbook is designed to replace the fishing trip reports, the surveys that are associated with the logbooks, and so discard and economic reports, and the no-fishing reports, which are due monthly when no fishing takes place, and so, right now, there's just one mobile version that is approved for people who have dual permits, but, in the future, other developers will have the opportunities to develop software, a website, or forms associated with a VMS unit. NOAA does not develop this software, but we do provide technical specifications, to allow them to meet our requirements.

Here is a look at one of the nice features of the eTRIPS app that will help expedite reporting electronically, and we're going to show this in action in the demo, and this is called our favorites feature, and so these are the categories that users can select favorites for, and they can save their number-one species, the port that they usually fish out of, and I showed an example of a few species that I selected as favorites. Many of the fields in the app are selected from a drop-down menu or a searchable list, like you see here, and there's also calendars and favorites that can be saved for quick access, and there's also options notes fields, which are not submitted to us, but users can use them as reference.

eTRIPS runs on several different devices, and probably the most common is a cellphone or a tablet, which would be pretty easy to use on a fishing vessel, and, on these devices, the data is entered and then uploaded when there is either Wi-Fi or a cell signal, and then there's also a website that mirrors the data in the app, but you would need to be connected to the internet in order to enter the data for that platform.

We're going to start the demo, and I'm going to press play in a second, and this is a real-time start-to-finish logbook. We used an actual logbook report from our office and pretended that we were actually the user putting it into the app, and so, as you watch, I will give kind of a general overview of what you're seeing, and it's going to go by fast in some parts, but then we'll break it down, in the following slides, and compare it to the paper logbooks, and so here we go.

We start on the home screen, where the user enters a new trip report, or they can view their old logbooks in progress, and they select their trip type and their vessel, which populates the proper questions for them, and so now we're entering just general trip information, like the captain's name the port that they ended in, the number of crew, a phone number, so that we can contact the person who is filling out the report if we have any questions, and the days-at-sea as well.

For simplicity's sake, we've chosen a trip that does not have any trip expense data, and so the app allows you to select your location from an interactive map, and so you can see that the area codes populate when you zoom-in and out and then select your location, and then you can see which area you were fishing in. Then gear type and the locations can be saved as favorites, or you can search, like we see here, and the appropriate gear questions populate based on which gear was selected. You can see, for this gear type, we have the number of sets, the number of lines, and then the bottom depth.

The app does require a start and end time, to prevent overlapping trips, and this is a built-in validation. If someone put in a date or a time that they already had a trip for, they would receive an error message, and these are easily input with a clock feature, and so then we're going to go into our catch information.

You can see our favorites list there, and you can also search for the species that you're looking for, and there are a few other fields that you see pop up as we enter the weight of the fish, but they're already pre-filled, and we'll go over those a little more closely later, and the only field that you really need to enter is the quantity and the weight of the fish, and everything else is going to automatically default, and so you can see an example of us searching for one of the species that we added.

Finally, we're going to get our offload information together, and we're going to select all the fish that we caught and put in the information of where we sold the fish, and so we'll put in the port where the fish were sold, the date that the fish were sold, and then, finally, the dealer, and all of these, again, can be from our favorites list, and the dealer is also from a pre-approved list of registered dealers as well, and then, finally, we're going to certify the trip for accuracy and then submit, and we're going to go over all of these in-depth in the next slides.

Back to that first page, and the trip type field is one of our additional fields that we added for the app, and this is a drop-down menu that includes commercial, charter, headboat, and recreational options, and so we need this field in order to generate the correct logbook questions for the user, since the different logbook types have different questions and data. There is an option to name your trip, for internal records, and the VTR number is a unique number automatically generated for each trip. All trips are going to default to this fishing trip with effort, but there is other options, such as turned around due to bad weather or gear malfunction.

The captain's name here, and, once you type it in once, it will auto-populate on the next trip, to save some time with typing that in, and then, on the right there, you see the vessel name. You can search from a list of vessels, or you can save your vessel as the Number 1, so it pops up right away, and this is really handy if you have multiple vessels in your name.

Moving on, we selected our end port from a list of favorites, as you can see here, and the days-at-sea and the number of crew were entered manually, and so, any fields that are numbers only, a nice big keypad is going to pop up, so you're not fumbling with a tiny keyboard, and we also don't get any accidental letters in fields that are meant to be numerical. We opted out of the trip expense section for this demonstration, but, if users were to select that, yes, they were selected, they would then fill out the questions that are just as you see on the paper logbooks.

In the next section, users are selecting their fishing area, using the interactive map and a list of the areas, and the waters fished, and the gear type can also be selected from a list of favorites. In contrast to the paper logbook, the area and the depth and the gear needed to be rewritten every time that there was a new species caught, and so this reduces that redundancy for trips with multiple species.

Next, we have trip date and times, and so, again, these are some of our additional fields. The paper logbook only asked for the start and unload dates, but you can see an example of the calendar and the clock, how they pop up, and it's just a few taps to put in your information, and, again, the addition of these fields allows us to prevent overlapping trip submissions, which is an error we often see a lot and have to send back letters and potentially hold up compliance for users, and so this is another built-in validation.

The gear details are identical to the paper logbook, but users are not going to be able to submit their logbooks unless all the fields are filled out properly, and so that means they can't leave anything blank, they can't put in the wrong data type, and, again, this prevents the receipt of logbooks that have missing details, or maybe they put in a range or letters into the field, which would cause the logbook to be sent back for correction. We often see these errors where users forgot to put in the number of hooks they used, or they didn't select the type of longline that they used, and so this is going to really reduce the errors that we see.

In the catch section, we added four species on this trip. This one that's marked here as king mackerel, it was selected from our list of favorites, and then we added the weight, and so these other fields, the unit of measure, catch disposition, catch source, and the market grade will default to the values you see there, and they shouldn't need to be changed unless someone is reporting discards, and so the average user is not going to need to change these fields.

In comparison, the paper logbook had this table, and it was very small, and it had the most commonly-caught species written down, with space to write in additional species, but, with the electronic logbook, we have some more accuracy in the species data. For example, sometimes we have people write in for triggerfish when they mean tilefish, or they write in a common name that we don't recognize, and so it just reduces the ambiguity with the species that are caught.

There is an option here to report an offload dealer for each species, with the plus-new button there, but we're going to show, in the next slide or two, how to offload the entire catch at once, and, just going back to the small portion of permit holders that are selected to report their discards, they no longer need a separate form, and rewriting all of their trip information, and they just would add their discarded catch here, along with the rest of the catch, and the only thing that they would need to change is the catch disposition to be one of these discard selections that you see here, and this also allows non-selected users to submit their discard information if they wish, and so we could potentially have more information than we normally have.

Lastly, we're going to look at the offloads page, and this vessel sold everything to the same dealer, and so we selected all the fish and then entered the offload information, and so eTRIPS allows us to predetermine the list of dealers, improving accuracy of dealer names and reducing the ambiguity. Sometimes users report an outdated dealer number, or a dealer name, or they forget those fields, and so this allows us to improve that data, and then, finally, the trip is certified for accuracy and completeness and submitted, and it gets uploaded right away.

Here's a summary of the trip we just went through, and it's very easy to go review and back and edit any of the previous pages, and you can also add an additional effort or gear, if fishing moved to a different location, and you can very easily add a second or third effort. If fish were sold to multiple dealers, you could also add an additional offload.

Users have options for exporting, backing-up, and viewing their submitted trip reports, and so, after submitting a trip report, the user can email an angler receipt to themselves for a record outside of the app. If they're changing devices, or just want a little extra security, they can back-up their current device's database with ACCSP and then just restore it later, when they get a new device, or if something happens to their current one, and, finally, all trips and data can be viewed on the SAFIS website, the South Atlantic Fisheries Information System, with the same user account information that they used to log into the app, and so that's another handy way that they can view their information.

In summary, the eTRIPS app is successfully being used by our other partners. We did have to add a few data fields, but these were minimal and were added to increase the accuracy of the data and reduce the need for sending back logbooks to fishermen. Features like drop-down menus and favorites lists are going to allow for quick and accurate data entry, and, also, we have built-in validations to reduce errors. The logbooks are going to be received more quickly, via the electronic app, and we're eliminating the need for manual data entry, and then, finally, those selected for

discard reporting are not going to have a separate discard logbook to fill out, and so we are significantly reducing their reporting burden, and that's all I have, and so, if you have any questions, I would love to answer them.

DR. BELCHER: Okay. Thank you, Sarah. Are there questions for Sarah? Kerry.

MS. MARHEFKA: Thanks, Sarah. That was a great presentation, and I'm personally very excited about this finally happening. My first question was about the new addition of the time of the trip, and that's, obviously, not something we've done before. For a lot of like snapper grouper guys, they are traveling for, you know, six to eight hours before they get to the fishing grounds and start fishing, and I just worry that they're going to be nervous about that time being included in future calculations of CPUE.

I hope there can be some education, you know, to the guys, that the reason that's in there is the reason you stated, which is making sure there aren't duplicate trips, but I know, in the past, especially our AP members, who have been very, very involved in stock assessments, they really look at their days fished, and their hours fished, as being really important information, because of how it can be calculated for future CPUE calculations, and so let's just make sure that they understand why that number is in there, because like, in our case, sixteen hours of that is simply just travel time and not fishing time, and so that's just a comment.

My second thing is a question, which is it's my understanding that sort of the, quote, unquote, beta testing of this has been allowing dually-permitted GARFO and SERO vessels to report, to use this to also report their South Atlantic catches right now, while those of us who are just South Atlantic have not been able to yet, and there may have been some issues with those trips being transferred down to the South Atlantic, and I know of at least one person who has had issues, showing that they were non-compliant with reporting to get their permits, and so I'm wondering if that issue is being worked out, or if we're worried that's going to continue to be an issue, and I will stop there, and then I have one more comment, once I get an answer to that, please.

MS. PRIVOZNIK: Sounds good. Thanks so much for the comments. Your first comment, about the time of the trip being calculated into their CPUE, that's a really good thing to be aware of, and we do have an FAQ page that we're working on, and that might be something worth adding some language in there about.

In addition to the time that they leave the dock and come in, we also have the fishing time that's going to be associated with their effort, and so that would be the information that's going to be looked at for CPUE, if they have concerns about that, but that's good to know, that that might be a worry.

As far as the beta testing for the app right now, we are blanket telling fishermen that they still need to report with their paper logbooks. There have been a few cases where someone has been reporting in eTRIPS with their dual permits up in the Northeast, and they have had a pending permit application in, and we've been able to make an exception and give them compliance for that, but it is certainly not the norm, and we don't have the system automated yet to be able to keep up with that, and so that's what we're telling people right now. Did that answer your question?

MS. MARHEFKA: Yes, it did. Thank you so much, and I really appreciate that, and then my final comment is just that I couldn't agree more, and this isn't necessarily for you, but I couldn't agree more with Myra's sort of ask, if you will, and not that it's Myra's ask, but the ask for us as a council that NMFS staff be present at our public hearings, and then further in training, because, you know, I don't think our staff, as being not the ones who developed it, and not the ones that maybe know the ins and outs, and I think they need support on this, and so I hope that we can request that, as a council, on behalf of our staff.

DR. BELCHER: Thanks, Kerry. Laurilee.

MS. THOMPSON: I think this is fantastic, and I think you've made it really simple, and I think I could even operate it, but there are -- There are some older people, that have been fishing for decades, that they're not into -- They don't do electronics, and so would those people that just simply can't adapt to electronic reporting, would they still be able to do the paper reports, and my second question is I think I read where it would email the receipts, and does it automatically email the receipts to the boat owner, or does the system automatically email the receipts, or does the boat owner, or captain, have to go back and physically search for their receipts? Thank you.

MS. PRIVOZNIK: Thanks for those questions. We do -- You will receive an email with the receipts upon submission of the trip, and so, if you've got one that's kind of pending in the app, you wouldn't get a receipt for that, but, once it's certified and submitted, the email address that was registered with the account does receive a receipt of the trip.

As far as the requirement for electronic reporting and some folks still being able to submit paper, we will have a transition period, because we do understand there is going to be a learning curve, and we're going to provide as much support as we can, and we're currently working on educational materials right now and doing all we can to support, but, once it is switched over, it will be required to be electronic.

MS. THOMPSON: I didn't understand the last part. What did she say?

DR. BELCHER: There will be a transition. Sorry. Go ahead.

MS. PRIVOZNIK: No, and that's okay. I'm sorry, and I know it's hard to hear. There will be a transition period, and I'm not sure how long it will be, where we'll be accepting paper and electronic, but, once the transition is made, it will be solely electronic requirements.

DR. BELCHER: Laurilee and then Dewey.

MS. THOMPSON: Okay. Thank you, and you're not doing anything wrong. You can't believe how horrible the sound is in this room, and I can't understand half of what anybody is saying, but you did a good job. If you've got somebody that can't do the electronic reporting, can the dealer then do that, somebody in the dealer's office, and can they help out the captain, or the reporter, because I guess that's what it's going to come to. If it's mandatory, it may be placing an extra burden on the fish house operator, too. Thank you.

MS. PRIVOZNIK: Yes, and I believe it would be acceptable for someone to provide assistance for them in putting the trip into the app, if they're having some struggles.

DR. BELCHER: Dewey.

MR. HEMILRIGHT: This is -- I'm curious about how much data does it take to send a report, and how much gigabytes, or whatever the word is, and how much data does it take to send a report?

MS. PRIVOZNIK: I don't have the specific numbers, but I know it's very, very small. These are not large files, especially because you're not sending images or anything like that, and so very small.

MR. HEMILRIGHT: My reason for asking is there's a thing nowadays called Starlink that vessels have, and they're able to text and make cellphone calls and all of the above, and I guess watch videos too, and I was just curious, and, if you're filling out something on a tablet or your phone, and then you're able to send it then, via that link, just how much data was going to be used, because there's a link on what the vessel has for its monthly basis, and I was just curious about that. Thank you.

MS. PRIVOZNIK: Sure, and I feel confident that, if you're able to text or watch a video, you will have enough data to send in the app, but you don't actually need to have the satellite, and it will work just fine on cell service or on Wi-Fi.

DR. BELCHER: Are there further questions or comments for Sarah? Okay. Myra, do you need additional from the group right now?

MS. BROUWER: No, and I think we're good. I will capture guidance from the council in the report, and that will be that. Thank you. Thanks, Sarah.

MS. PRIVOZNIK: Thank you, all.

DR. BELCHER: Okay. The next item is the SAFMC Research and Monitoring Plan, which is Chip.

DR. COLLIER: The document is 4a, and it is the South Atlantic Research and Monitoring Prioritization, and this one is for the years 2023 through 2027. As a requirement of the Magnuson-Stevens Act, each council is required to have a research and monitoring plan, and it's supposed to be updated every five years, with some additional comments in between, and so what we do is we bring this document to the SSC, typically in April, for our June council meeting, and we have them review it. This year, we did it a little bit different, where we went to some of our advisory panels and get their comments in there as well, and so we reached out to the Habitat Advisory Panel, the Mackerel Cobia Advisory Panel, as well as the Snapper Grouper, and so their comments are included in this.

What I have done is I have actually highlighted a few additional items, and council staff have talked amongst each other, trying to figure out maybe some of the prioritizations, not only just listing them in this document, but, given that we hear about limited budgets quite a bit, we want some real prioritization, and providing some highlights to some of these key items might be pretty good.

I don't want to read the entire document, because it would be extremely boring, but, basically, it starts out looking at stock assessment questions and some of the important pieces of information that are needed for stock assessments, and you will see the first highlight right there is looking at to resolve the issue between black and gag grouper, as a species identification problem in the landings, and that is actually what stopped our previous SEDAR for black grouper, and so, obviously, that has to be resolved before we can start the next stock assessment for black grouper.

For the other ones, those are important research recommendations, but not nearly as important as trying to recognize the landings going into the data stream. If there are other items that you guys would like highlighted, please let me know, and I will highlight those as we go through.

If you go down to hogfish, just remember that was a pretty data-limited species, at least in the Georgia/North Carolina stock. In the Florida stock, there was considerable information, and a lot of work has been done in the North Carolina/South Carolina area, gathering otoliths and doing some of the research necessary, and so we don't necessarily have the North Carolina, the Georgia through North Carolina, stock highlighted for gathering more information, but we feel like it is going to be improved in future stock assessments.

Red porgy, you know, it's a lot of recruitment issues with that fishery, and we do have quite a bit of information that could help to inform the stock assessment, and maybe not drive the stock assessment, and, right now, red porgy are overfished and overfishing, and we just had an FMP, or an amendment, go in place to adjust catch levels for that species, and so we think it's very important, and we do have some of the information from the catch level workgroup included in there, but nothing really prioritized for that species.

For blueline tilefish, we do have a couple of pieces highlighted for this species, and one is looking at an index of abundance for that species. If you remember back to the previous stock assessment for this one, it is a biomass model that's heavily reliant on an index of abundance, and there hasn't been an index of abundance for this species, and I believe the last one ended in 2010, and so we definitely want to get an index of abundance for that biomass model.

The same thing for golden tilefish, and the SADL index will be very important for that, not only potentially an index of abundance, but just collecting the life history information that would be going into that stock assessment.

Scrolling on down, king mackerel, and we do have that one coming up in 2025, and there are two items that are highlighted for this, and it's working on the ratios of landed to discarded fish, making sure that those stay in line with what's observed, and then also including the length data from the FISHstory project into that stock assessment. Scrolling down, this was an item that was prioritized by the Snapper Grouper Advisory Panel and it was to identify sources of recruitment, declines in several reef fish species, including black sea bass, gag, red grouper, red porgy, scamp, and yellowmouth grouper.

The next species where we have quite a few things highlighted is the Spanish mackerel fishery, and one of them is to describe observer coverage of fisheries that catch Spanish mackerel for bycatch estimates and the other one is to develop a fishery-independent survey for pelagic species, to decrease the reliance on a single index of abundance that has unexplained trends in residual values in recent years.

Gag grouper, once again, that is looked at that decreased recruitment that we're seeing in several of those winter-spawn fisheries, and we don't have anything highlighted for red snapper. We do have the current South Atlantic red snapper research project going on, and that's going to be providing a ton of information for the next stock assessment, and there is other projects that are going on related to that, and so we don't have any additional items highlighted for red snapper, and I know that is a big issue, but, if there's anything that you guys would like highlighted for red snapper, please let us know, and we can come back to these at the end as well.

Black sea bass, once again, that's looking at that decreased recruitment for black sea bass, and then, for dolphin wahoo, we need to better define the migratory patterns for these species, and figuring out where the dolphin and wahoo go, and is wahoo just an Atlantic coast species, and is it a single stock in the South Atlantic region, and how is the stock from the South Atlantic region interacting with other fisheries outside the U.S., if that's the case, and then we also need to define potential stocks and stock boundaries.

Some of the work for the MPAs is we need to document the occurrence of spawning within the spawning SMZs by high-priority species, and we need that by 2025, because there is a sunset provision for the spawning SMZs. If those are being effective, if they're protecting spawning fish, we need to know that and put those projections in place again.

Then another thing that's highlighted here is evaluate compliance with regulations for managed areas, and we need to make sure that the regulations that are in place are being followed, and, if not, how do we change it?

Some of the management needs, and this first one is looking at developing predictive models in managed fish populations due to climate change, including species distribution, movements, and reproductive patterns. We listed a few key species here of dolphin, king mackerel, Spanish mackerel, shrimp, and wahoo, and those species have all been documented to be changing due to climate change, and so understanding exactly what is happening is going to be important for those.

For socioeconomic priorities, looking at regularly-updated estimates of recreational economic values for council-managed species, and some members of the SEP have documented that this was a very important issue and could be resolved fairly easily, with just a little bit of coding and some time to put into it.

Develop a socioeconomic profile of commercial and recreational participants involved in council-managed species, and we need to know more about the people fishing in our area. As we're getting into some of these climate change and MSEs, this type of information is going to be very important to developing effective ecosystem-based fisheries management. We need to understand the fishery, and the people in the fishery, as well as we understand the fish themselves, and so it's going to be very important in helping to manage stocks going forward.

We also have characterize usage and evaluate compliance with best practices for reducing discard mortality in the snapper grouper fishery, develop or modify fishery-dependent reporting programs to collect the information necessary for this, and I will say that the headboat program is currently collecting this information, as well as the Florida State Reef Fish Survey, and they're collecting information on descending devices.

For habitat and research monitoring needs, map and characterize mesophotic coral and euphotic coral distribution in the South Atlantic region, and then, for EFH classifications, it would be nice to move some of our classifications from Level 1, presence/absence, to higher tiers, and if we could expand the characterization of juvenile reef fish use of habitat.

Then develop models that better incorporate habitat changes and environmental variability into stock assessments, particularly looking at habitat suitability. If habitat is going down, in all likelihood, so is your ability to produce a sustainable harvest, and then more closely identify optimal salinities for life phases of penaeid shrimp and examine relative abundance, survival rates, and growth rates of young shrimp in habitats near the freshwater/saltwater interface of the upper estuary.

That is the list that we have highlighted for you all, and we have a couple of other comments, looking at some of the funding, some evaluation, and then also improving estimates of discards, and so, if there's anything else in there, and I know that's an exciting review, and I apologize for that, and I don't know how to make it any better.

DR. BELCHER: Thanks, Chip. I've got Laurilee and then Trish.

MS. THOMPSON: Thanks, Chip. That was good, and there's a lot of stuff in here that excites me, but, on page 8 -- So, on page 8, the third little dot down, it says to explore management alternatives that would facilitate overlapping harvest seasons that would allow commercial boats to minimize economic costs, particularly through the fuel savings and reduction of the industry's carbon footprint.

I've brought this up before, and I hate to sound like a broken record, but National Standard 5 talks about the efficiency in utilization of the fish resources, and so, down off of Cape Canaveral, right now, basically the only thing that we can fish for is snowy grouper, and they're a long way out, and so we've got to go out and catch 200 pounds and then come back and unload them, and why can't we look at a way to combine the trip limit, but let them stay out and fish, you know, for five days, and catch a thousand pounds, and bring that to the dock, and I really would like to see us try to figure out a way do that, because I don't know how you could get more efficient than that, you know, as far as saving fuel. You're not going to be taking any more fish out of the ocean in the process, but the fuel savings would be really, really good for the boats. Thank you.

DR. BELCHER: Trish and then Jessica.

MS. MURPHEY: So I've been listening to the SSC meetings and, you know, the different groupers, like scamp and black sea bass. Well, I don't know if black sea bass counts, but still all these guys that are having recruitment failure, and the SSC keeps discussing regime change, but it like doesn't quite meet the criteria. Each one, there is like close to meeting the criteria, but it doesn't quite meet it, and so I was wondering, and is there a place here to look at regime change within the complex, and, instead of looking at it from a single-species aspect, look at it maybe from a recruitment failure aspect, and the only reason why I said that I wasn't sure if black sea bass counted was because I was really thinking groupers, but, anyway, I'm wondering if that's a research need, and maybe a priority, to look at a regime change within the complex, centered around recruitment.

DR. COLLIER: Maybe a good place to put that would be what I have highlighted here in yellow, to develop models to predict changes in managed fish populations, and throw the shallow-water groupers, as well as black sea bass and red porgy, in there, thinking that it's likely a climate issue that could be causing that, and knowing the mechanism will help to inform whether or not a regime shift is occurring. The Klaer paper that's been used, knowing the mechanism actually gets you points, and not knowing it you don't get any points towards a regime shift, and so that could be one place where it could be incorporated.

MS. MURPHEY: Yes, and that's what made me think of -- When you went through that one, that's made me think of a regime change, but I just wonder if you should actually state regime change in here then, just to clarify that, but, yes, that particularly bullet actually is the one that kind of triggered me to think about it.

DR. COLLIER: All right. I will add that in there, and I will let you guys know, at Full Council, where I put it, and we'll get it put in there.

DR. BELCHER: Okay. I've Jessica, Kerry, Laurilee, and then Mel.

MS. MCCAWLEY: On the first page, where it talks about FWC doing the benchmark stock assessment for black grouper, I thought that that got pushed back to 2026, and it says 2025 on there, and so you would have to update that, and then the bold header at the top would need to go through 2026, and then one more thing on page 11, on the table of the stock assessments, and I still see white grunt on there.

DR. COLLIER: All right. I will get that taken off. Just thinking -- I will change that right now to not scheduled. That hurts.

DR. BELCHER: Kerry.

MS. MARHEFKA: Chip, when you're caught up, if you could go to page 7, please, and I would like to direct everyone's attention to third bullet from the bottom, which is the develop an economic model for the South Atlantic headboat component of the for-hire sector, and I've been thinking about this a lot, especially since the last AP meeting, and, as we talk about EEJ issues, and I think we're getting to the point, in the snapper grouper fishery, where access to a wide segment of the population, of which is probably economically more challenged than the rest of the fishery, is going to lose access, and we're already at one gag and one snowy for a headboat, right, and we have headboat operators that are on the advisory panel, and we don't have anyone who sits around this table, but, you know, in my mind, that headboat sector has traditionally been a place where people with lower means could afford to go fishing.

I think we're on the verge of losing our headboat sector, certainly in South Carolina, and I don't know that is happening in North Carolina, but I would like to lightly bold it, or bold it, depending on how the rest of my fellow council members feel, and I think we really need to pay attention to what's happening there and how that's going to affect people who are not at our meetings, and, you know, they might be people who live in the Midwest who go fishing once a year, and this is all they can afford, and I'm very worried about losing that segment of the industry, and I would like to move that up.

DR. BELCHER: Okay. I've got Laurilee, Mel, and then Trish.

MS. THOMPSON: So I was going to wait to talk about this, but Trish opened the door, and so for the regime shifts, one of the definitions is a large, abrupt, persistent change in the structure and function of ecosystems, and, in another definition that I read, it also added sudden, a sudden shift, and so there's three big things that have happened since 2010, when everything seemed like it started going south.

Number one is we stopped fishing for red snapper in 2010, and so this unimagined increase in the biomass of the red snapper is upsetting the balance of everything, and the next big thing that happened was the death of the Indian River Lagoon estuary, which started in 2010, when we had a big freeze, and it killed millions of fish, and they sank to the bottom and rotted and turned to nutrients and started that progression of horrible algae blooms that we've been having, which has killed all of our seagrass, and then the third thing that has happened is this incredible increase in the shark populations that seems to be accelerating.

I think these are things that we really, really need to look at, and I think they need to somehow be incorporated into the analyses that the SSC is doing for the stock assessments, because these things are really impacting -- When you look at Spanish mackerel and black sea bass, you know, all the shallow-water grouper species, they all use estuaries, and the other thing that has happened is this phenomenal increase in development along our coastlines, and so you have more and more stormwater going into the estuaries, and, even if it's treated with baffle boxes, you know, to try to take the trash out of it before it gets dumped into the estuary, fresh water is a pollutant to a healthy estuary, and so we need to look at how development is changing the salinity in the estuaries, and so that's my comments for now. Thank you.

DR. BELCHER: Mel.

MR. BELL: Kind of following-up a little bit on where Trish was going, and even Laurilee, I think, but under red snapper -- So we've got in there to evaluate the effects of environmental variation on recruitment and survivorship, and we've also got monitor the impact of climate change on distribution and peak spawning and incorporate the findings in an assessment, and I just -- You know, we've talked about problems we've had with the serranid species, and they're kind of going in the tank, or not doing well, let's say, and then here we have red snapper, who seem to be doing very well, just by appearances, but I can't help but -- I guess it just strikes me, having paid close attention to the South Carolina, the waters off of South Carolina, the bottoms and the reefs and going back -- I mean, I only go back to 1982, but what we're seeing now -- I can't believe that ever existed like it does before, and so what's going on? What is different?

Is it because, all of a sudden, our waters, associated with our hard bottoms, for whatever reason are now considered prime real estate by red snapper, and they're very comfortable there now, whereas, before, maybe they weren't, and, you know, we were certainly in their range, but we weren't in their range to the magnitude it seems like we are now, and so what's going on?

Well, if that's all caused by -- I guess, you know, that could be a positive regime, a regime range kind of thing, and, I mean, it could work either way, but there's just something going on there, where I would be willing to say, all of a sudden, off of South Carolina, with the amount of hard

bottom we've got, particularly out -- You know, you get out pushing a hundred feet, although we're seeing them all the way into forty feet now, but, you know, predominantly in numbers out in the sixty, eighty, ninety, and a hundred -- Particularly out in a hundred, a hundred or 120, and I just can't believe that it ever looked like that before, and so what's going on?

Then, now, if all of that bottom represents productive -- I assume maybe spawning available habitat for red snapper, and what is that going to do to the population even more, and so they have more area, perhaps, than they had decades ago that they are successfully spawning in, but it just -- I know it's much more complex than I'm thinking, but I have just never seen anything like that, and we can say, well, yes, they're rebuilding, and that's great, but I don't think -- Even, you know, go back forty, fifty, or sixty years, and I don't know that it ever looked like that, and so understanding how that is factored into future assessments, and how do we factor in all this now potentially available bottom for them, that they didn't utilize before, and how does that factor in, and so there's a little piece of that under red snapper.

We've kind of covered some of that, and maybe that's captured in there, and then like what Trish was saying about understanding regime change, understanding that and how to identify it, and then I go back to -- I think at the last meeting I mentioned this, but that, okay, it's regime change, and so, from a management perspective, well, so what? How do we deal with that? What is it that we do in understanding? If one of those scores that we use -- You know, we were one point away, and I forget which species it was now, and maybe it was scamp, but we were one point away from, you know, following the paper, and, okay, and let's say we would have hit it. So what? What do we do? What do we do with that?

I just wanted to point that out, and red snapper is just kind of perplexing, because I would be willing to bet you that we have -- The population is rebuilding, and it's rebuilding to an extent, perhaps, that it never looked like that off of our state, perhaps, and I don't know about North Carolina or further, but I just find it hard to believe that we ever had that many red snapper.

DR. BELCHER: Chip.

DR. COLLIER: So, Judd, help me remember, but we did have a regime shift in there, and it's on the bottom of page 3 and into page 4, where it's evaluate current methods for determining regime shifts, particularly with respect to multispecies fisheries.

DR. BELCHER: I've got Trish and then John Walter.

MS. MURPHEY: I just wanted to speak to Kerry's comment on headboat use and concerns about losing that sector, and I know you guys have heard me talk about my mountain cousins, and that's how they're going to fish, and John and I were discussing, you know, how minorities, those folks that may have more financial limitations, you know, that's going to be where they're going to go to fish, and I've ever talked to Jason Walsh, our economist, and, you know, was there anything -- You know, can we do some work, or do some surveys, to see that the use of headboats are by minorities, financially-limited folks, and so I think -- Just to add to her concern, I think, you know, that's something that may be of value to look at, especially, again, as NOAA and the councils are shifting more towards this EEJ stuff, and so that might be something else to talk about or to add.

DR. BELCHER: Okay. John Walter.

DR. WALTER: Thanks, and good afternoon, everyone. John Walter from the Southeast Fisheries Science Center. I will be speaking next on the progress towards the previous 2019 research plan, and so I'm glad to see the new one. My first take on it, since it's an eleven-page plan, and the previous one was six pages, is that it will do as a research plan until the real research plan comes along, but it's going to take a lot of work to get that done.

It's pretty extensive, and it doesn't have much that is in the way of prioritization, and I think that's where the difficulty is going to come, in terms of we're not going to have the funds to do all of this, and that's where we're going to have to make decisions about how to allocate funding to specific projects.

I will note, and I note that the sound here is pretty horrible, that there aren't that -- A number of people around the room of said, well, how does this get into management, and how do we use this, and, even if we've got a regime change that happens, what does this mean, and I think one of the things that can be improved in the research plan is better fleshing out the on-ramps for the science to management action, and I think that's where we're seeing things like the ongoing dolphin management strategy evaluation that's looking to develop empirical management procedures that should be climate ready, and so whatever productivity, and we'll test multiple different productivity scenarios, but whatever the future productivity has, and, ideally, that management procedure would be robust to that, in terms of it will be able to account for ups and downs in the dolphin population.

Those kind of concepts I think are going to be ones that we might want to build into further management procedure testing, as we conduct MSEs for maybe other species, and that's something that, as we are tasked with developing climate-ready fisheries management advice, we think we're going to have to do more often, to determine how we can manage our way through what is likely going to be a changing future, and so we'll talk a little bit more about this, and I'll talk about it in the research plan, highlighting a couple of areas of research on that, and I think it's going to probably be something that we're going to want to think about, maybe even adding something to that research plan on a specific development of on-ramps to management, because I think that's kind of the key there.

I think, currently, the multispecies reef fish MSE is providing a good framework for an on-ramp to management, if it continues on, but that's where we should probably try to focus, and then maybe build that out a little more. Thanks.

DR. BELCHER: Okay. Are there additional comments for Chip? Chip.

DR. COLLIER: John, I can work with you to get that put in there. The reason that we are highlighting these things in yellow is to provide some additional prioritizations, and, you know, I have reviewed several of the other research recommendations from around the country, and ours definitely is not the longest, and yet we manage quite a few species, like every other group does, and so we're not the worst, and so I believe I looked at one of the councils, and there was one over a hundred recommendations, research recommendations.

DR. BELCHER: Spud.

MR. WOODWARD: Am I correct that some evidence has recently emerged that a portion of the South Atlantic red snapper stock is originating from the Gulf of Mexico brood stock? If that's the case, then I would recommend that we take the first bullet under red grouper and duplicate that under red snapper, and that bullet says "evaluate the frequency and magnitude of recruitment coming from other regions, such as the Gulf of Mexico or areas to the south".

DR. BELCHER: Thanks, Spud. I will give Chip a second, and then are there any other further comments or questions to put in the queue at this point? Chip.

DR. COLLIER: John Hadley had a recommendation on changing some of the language, and so, when we come back on Friday, I will let you know what those changes were, just highlight those, and then we'll put this research and monitoring plan on the website, and we'll also incorporate the citizen science research recommendations, as an appendix, just to make sure we have all the research recommendations that come forward from the council in one area, and then we'll also provide that to the agency as the council's recommendations.

DR. BELCHER: Thanks, Chip, again. Any further comments or questions for Chip at this point? Chester.

MR. BREWER: I am not sure that this deals with what Chip is presenting, but I just had an epiphany, and I thought I should share it with the group. Listening to the presentation about the limited areas, particularly the one off of south Florida, and thinking about how we have found ourselves essentially unable to properly manage red snapper under the current rules that we have to deal with, some of which have been sort of brought into question, but I think one approach to solve the problem is to go to NMFS and say, listen, we've got a problem here, and we don't think we can solve it, and let's do the same thing that you want to do with regard to these limited gear areas and apply it to red snapper.

All we've got to say is we don't have good data, or whatever excuse you want to use, and just say let's change the rule and see what happens, because that's what they're doing, and so, if they've got that power, I would like to see it applied to red snapper, and I am only being a little bit facetious when I say this, because we're run up against everything else, and we've tried everything else, and so let's just have a period where we do away with the rules with regard to red snapper, within some limitations, and see what happens. Thank you.

DR. BELCHER: Okay. Are there other comments? Okay. Moving on, we will go to John Walter's presentation on what the Science Center has been up to. Jack, did you have something?

DR. MCGOVERN: I was just talking to John, and, to Chester's point, you know, we're not like HMS, and NMFS just implements what the council recommends in amendments, and so I just wanted to make that clear. Another thing is Spud made a recommendation about recruitment from other areas, like the Gulf for red grouper, and I think that would be true for gag, and scamp as well, and like there's a paper later on that we're going to talk about from Mandy Karnauskas, who talks about scamp and red snapper from the Gulf recruitment.

DR. BELCHER: Thanks for that, Jack. John, are you ready?

DR. WALTER: I am. I will try to get through this without the back in my ear, but is there another microphone, and could I use another microphone, maybe? This is an experiment to see whether it's me or the microphone. Is it better? All right. Thanks, and I'm happy to be here to present on the Southeast Center's responses to the research recommendations and where we've gone and how far we've carried through with many partners here on the original 2019 research recommendations.

The outline of the talk is that research takes a community, and we're far from alone. While we get kind of the honor of presenting a lot of this work, or at least the progress on it, it happened with many different partners, through academia and the states and the council, to be able to implement all of this work. I will give an update on the status of the research plan and highlight several key initiatives, and, in particular, I will note that the research budgets are limited. Right now, we've been largely level funded, which means declining buying power, due to inflation and the cost of everything being more expensive, and so that means that our ability to conduct research that is outside of our primary operational load has been declining and is somewhat being challenged.

We're seeing, primarily, as the Fisheries Service, which is an operational service, and we provide -- We do the science and the assessments to give fisheries management advice, and we're not necessarily seen as a research entity, and there are other line offices of NOAA who are primarily research, such as the Office of Atmospheric Research, or OAR, and they get money to do basic research, and we get money to do surveys and assessments, primarily. However, we do have a budget for doing research, particularly if it's focused on key priorities, such as what's in the plan.

I will also talk about, at the end of the week, the plan for the \$1.8 million in congressional reef fish funding for FY23, and I won't go into that on this plan today, but I will go into that in our Southeast Center report-out, and, right now, we're still working through a few of the details on that, and I should be able to give a verbal update on that.

One of the take-homes here, if you take nothing home from this, is that we've actually accomplished a tremendous amount of work here. If you look at the green, those are completed, and red are delayed, or not planned, and yellow are ongoing, and we are at, right now, I believe 75 percent of the projects are either complete or are research that is ongoing and annual, and this is an increase from 68 percent last year, and the primary ones that are delayed, or not happening, are ones that either no longer are long-term needs or there's a lot of work in the special management areas, and spawning areas, which is challenging for us to implement, because it's pretty costly to go in and do that research.

In terms of stock assessments, we're largely in the green, and there is only one that is the red, and that is our perennial species that doesn't get the respect that it should, and that one is again further delayed, unfortunately, and most every other stock assessment is either completed or it's ongoing as of this year.

There's long-term needs for stock assessments, and there's a number of ones that are delayed that are very heavy research focused, such as the effects of hermaphroditism on steepness parameters, incorporating dynamics of sexual transition into assessment models, and a lot of this stuff really was going to require a substantial amount of analytical time, simulation time, and empirical modeling, which we just haven't been able to do, and it's one of those things that I think is probably carried on in the next research plan, but I think we need to think about, carefully, whether we are going to -- What the on-ramp is for management for many of these priorities, and, as I noted,

speaking previously, this -- We want to engage in research, but we really want that research to be focused on providing a decision point in the fisheries management process.

Then there's a number of other things that have been delayed, in terms of otolith chemistry for the gag population structure, comparing genetics of gag, and we have been exploring using genetics, and maybe close-kin-mark-recapture, for gag, but, right now, the projects I believe are not currently funded, and then there's a number of other projects that are ongoing, in particular looking at the effect of environmental variation on changes in recruitment and survivability, and I will go into highlighting some specific research that's looking at recruitment trends across a multispecies complex, which gets to Trish's point about perhaps we could be examining regime shifts in a multispecies complex, and are there groups that tend to be affected, and you think that, it's an environmental regime, it's not going to affect one species, and it would likely affect multiple stocks.

Here is where I think we're probably in the largest amount of red and yellow, and nothing complete, and that's in the MPA and special spawning management zone work. Here, we don't have dedicated work going out this year, and a lot of the work that was funded for this is either moved to other regions or, right now, we don't have current funding for this, and, unfortunately, one of the problems is this is where there isn't a direct on-ramp to the management actions or the stock assessments, because it's really challenging to be able to quantify what the impacts of a spawning closure, or a spawning management area, are on the stock assessment.

Part of it is a matter of scale, and part of it is also the agility for us to do enough work to have power to detect the change, and so I think we need to think carefully as to how these are going to inform a management action, other than I know that some of the areas are up for reconsideration.

I will just note that a couple of external research programs, MARFIN right now, the external MARFIN initiative, was not funded in 2022, and the next funding, I believe, opportunity -- This might be a typo, and think the next funding will be published this year, and so it should be announced this year, and I will have to check on that. No South Atlantic cooperative research program projects were funded in 2022, and one project out of the 2023 Saltonstall-Kennedy research program was funded, and that was refining ecological reference points for Atlantic menhaden.

This is a report-out from a number of state projects, which we have very strong partnerships with all of the states, in particular collecting fishery-dependent data on commercial, recreational, and for-hire trips, observers on charter and for-hire vessels, collecting length, age, reproduction, diet, and genetic samples from fishery-dependent and independent samples, and, in particular, supporting the South Atlantic red snapper research program, which is the ongoing research to count all of the red snapper, which is being done both using genetic close-kin-mark-recapture as well as a hierarchical model, and so there's going to be two estimates of total abundance. That is being provided with a tremendous amount of samples from the fishery, and that progress is quite well, from what I hear, and it's going very well.

Then monitoring the red snapper mini-season, improving estimates of recreational catch through FWC's new State Reef Fish Survey and validating results through video monitoring and then validating and updating conversion factors for gutted and whole fish, and, in terms of the research plan, state projects have addressed 71 percent of the research plan main bullets, and they did not

occur solely by NMFS alone, and then we've also developed and now have multiple years of surveys, such as the South Atlantic Deepwater Longline survey, which is a cooperative project with the longline fishery, and then they SERFS trap ongoing trap video survey.

We're also looking at new hook-and-line surveys focused on red snapper and the dive survey in the Florida Keys, and so, as I've noted, assisting with the red snapper and greater amberjack abundance estimates and then maintaining receiver arrays for acoustic telemetry studies.

One of the things that has come to fruition in the last couple of years are two papers that quantified the fraction of recruitment that's coming from areas outside of the South Atlantic, in particular from the Gulf of Mexico, and both papers found that about one-third of the red snapper larvae and one-third of the scamp larvae that settled in the U.S. Atlantic originated from spawning locations in the U.S. Gulf of Mexico, and this comes from oceanographic modeling of egg and larval fish particles released off of southwest -- Primarily it's coming from southwest Florida, and then, as they drift through and are pushed through tidal loop current in the Gulf Stream, eventually they settle out in the South Atlantic.

That is pretty interesting, that that nonconsequential fraction of the population may be subsidized by what's going on in the Gulf of Mexico, and we always kind of had that thought, that that might be happening, and these determined that it's likely the case, and so, in that situation, how that factors into management, well, again, that's where I am really trying to focus on for next research steps, is how do we build those on-ramps for taking this kind of information into a management context.

The other research that had kind of come to fruition has been linking changes in recruitment to environmental linkages, and so we published the ecosystem status report for the South Atlantic region, which has a number of different environmental indicators, and then a recent paper that looked at correlated recruitment across a suite of species, and, in particular, you see fairly long-term declines in recruitment for many of the winter-spawning serranids.

This seems to be a situation that is across many of them, and it's in opposition to recruitment increases that we're seeing for red snapper, and so we, right now, don't have the smoking gun as to why this happening, but, paying attention to the SSC's deliberations, and many of the stock assessments, it has caused a lot of challenges in how to incorporate that, in terms of what to use for projections, and what does recent recruitment mean, and then is this evidence for a regime shift, and then, as they now are applying the catch level working group recommendations, to apply the regime shift scoring of Klaer et al.

We're generally going through that scoring process, but, oftentimes, it's not entirely clear that a regime shift has occurred, and maybe it scores on six of the seven metrics, but not all of them, and then I think what we're still left with is what do we do in those situations, and how do we change the benchmarks, and how do we project forward for recruitment, and what do we use for management advice, and I think building those out even more formally, incorporating that into the assessment advice framework, is where we really probably should be focusing our efforts, to be able to use this kind of information to bring informed decision-making to this group.

Some of the other specific monitoring priorities that are in progress are increase funding for fishery-independent monitoring in the South Atlantic, and, in this case, the red snapper count, the

South Atlantic red snapper research program, is ongoing, and there's an additional 2023 \$1.8 million to augment that and then to carry what we find from that forward and, in particular, incorporating the science from the research program into the next stock assessment, and that is one of the stated priorities for the 2023 funding, as well as to evaluate and get a better handle on discards.

The greater amberjack count is ongoing, and then the South Atlantic Deepwater Longline survey is also ongoing, and we think that provides some really novel abundance information for species that we otherwise didn't have good data on.

Develop a monitoring program for dolphin. Well, it would be nice if we could monitor dolphin, and the problem is that that would be quite expensive, and we are developing the dolphin MSE that is going to likely use an empirical, or index-based, management procedure, and so you'll see a presentation and update from Cassidy Peterson later on in the meeting.

Then maintain or improve our ability to document commercial and recreational landings and discards, and we've doubled commercial observer coverage, and that should help us get a better handle on what discards are. From the presentation on the electronic reporting for the commercial fishery, we should get a much better handle on discards, because they can be reported electronically, and then as I noted, I will present the reef fish spend plan, which is going to have a number of initiatives to get a better handle on commercial and recreational, in particularly recreational, discards and the magnitude of discards.

In conclusion, we have seventy-seven research priorities, and 78 percent are completed or in progress, and I think a number of key research areas have made pretty substantial progress in trying to elucidate patterns across species and to get a handle on what recruitment might be coming from the Gulf of Mexico. We look forward to working further to align the research with NOAA and the Southeast Center strategic priorities with the new revised research plan, and so I look forward to talking more this week and trying to incorporate more specific on-ramps for the science and management. Thanks.

DR. BELCHER: Thanks, John. Are there questions or comments for John? Dewey.

MR. HEMILRIGHT: You mentioned the deepwater survey, and is it possible to, given that it's a random selection of sites -- Would it be possible to have the landings be turned into dollars, to money, to augment the research that's there that would help to fund it?

DR. WALTER: That's a really intriguing possibility, and there are things, such as, as you know in the Mid-Atlantic, a research set-aside that formalizes that kind of a program. Whether the catch in that particular survey could help augment it, and purchase additional days-at-sea, additional trips, is interesting. Right now, I think that those are able to be -- Are they able to be sold by the boat, or are they not entered into commerce?

MR. HEMILRIGHT: They're not entered into commerce, and the golden longline survey are donated, but my idea was people are bidding on the jobs themselves, at a certain amount, and so, therefore, they would take the fish, and they would sell them to a dealer, and there would be a report generated, and, when the person, or vessel, that receives the grant goes to get paid, they

would turn that amount in, to show, you know, what they've caught and sold for fish, and then that would be less.

They would receive less of what they bid on their amount, and so it would be just another way, and, in some years, given the random selection, it might be a good amount, and, in other years, the selection might be, you know, crumbs, but it would help out, meaning another way for you all to augment, and it's not like your, you know, survey, and it's being caught anyway, but the randomness of it is not like, hey, I'm going fishing, to go to a favorite spot to catch fish, given its randomness, and you don't have a captain's choice, and I am just looking at other ways, and I'm sure there is bureaucratic red tape to get to that point, but it would just be another way that maybe it could fund some of the work to be done or increase the work, I mean, increase further work to be done, and so I was just curious of asking that question.

DR. WALTER: I think we would have to look into whether it would be worth the paperwork, given that the random samples -- They're not going to catch the same catch rate that the fishery would catch when they're trying to fish for money, and so I don't know, and we would have to look into whether that would be actually worthwhile, because it might cause more -- Create more hassle than it's worth, but thanks, Dewey.

DR. BELCHER: Other comments or questions for John Walter at this time? Jack.

DR. MCGOVERN: One thing I didn't see anywhere, John, was a discussion of social and economic studies, and maybe it wasn't a priority, but I was wondering if you were aware of any progress on any social and economic data collection and any kind of research.

DR. WALTER: I think it was a little bit light in the 2019 plan, and I think the new revised plan has them highlighted, and so I think it's good progress towards seeing that really we manage humans and not the fish, and so understanding that human dynamic is critical. A number of the ongoing work that --

I mean, there's a number of work in progress that I know is just about to come out that looks at like the fishery performance and evaluates, I think, the ITQ fisheries, a comparison of ITQ and non-ITQ fisheries, and there's going to be a paper that looks at different management strategies of the reef fish fishery, and these are just off the top of my head a number of things that I'm aware of that our social sciences research group -- That they're looking into, but they're still working their way through the publication process, and I think, once they come out, they will be ones that will be informative for this council. Thanks.

DR. BELCHER: Other comments or questions for John? Okay. Thank you, John. Chip, what else can we do for you at this point? Are we good?

DR. COLLIER: I think we're good, and I just want to note that Attachment 4c is what has been accomplished by our state partners, and the SSC members provide me with a list of things that are accomplished over the years by their agency, and so that's included in 4c, and John already went over several of those things, and so no need to rehash them, and I just wanted to let you guys know that that's included there, and a thanks to those SSC members that provided the information.

DR. BELCHER: Okay, and so any other further comments or questions for Chip? Okay. Seeing none, we will move on to the Citizen Science Committee.

(Whereupon, the meeting adjourned on June 12, 2023.)

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Certified By: _____ Date: _____

Transcribed By
Amanda Thomas
August 8, 2023

Full Council (Open Session)

Monday, June 12, 2023		
Attendees	Present	Remote
COUNCIL		
Dr. Carolyn Belcher, Chair	✓	
Trish Murphey, Vice Chair	✓	
Robert Beal	✓	
Mel Bell	✓	
Gary Borland	✓	
Lt. Cameron Box	NOT ATTENDING	
Chester Brewer	✓	
Tim Griner	✓	
Judy Helmey	✓	
Kerry Marhefka	✓	
Jessica McCawley	✓	
Tom Roller	✓	
Andy Strelcheck	✓	
Laurilee Thompson	✓	
Spud Woodward	✓	
SAFMC STAFF		
Myra Brouwer	✓	
Julia Byrd	✓	
John Carmichael	✓	
Chip Collier	✓	
Judd Curtis	✓	
John Hadley	✓	
Allie Iberle	✓	
Kim Iverson	✓	
Kelly Klasnick	✓	
Michele Ritter	✓	
Mike Schmidtke	✓	
Nick Smillie	✓	
Christina Wiegand	✓	
OTHER		
David Hugo		
Rick Devictor	✓	
Dr. Jack McGovern	✓	
Monica Smit-Brunello		
Dr. John Walter	✓	
Shep Grimes	✓	
Dewey Hemilright	✓	
Lt. Patrick O'Shaughnessy		
Billy Broussard	✓	
Nikhil Mehta	✓	
Frankie Halier	✓	
Jessica Stephen	✓	
Cathy Knowlton	✓	

Matt Welia ✓
 Manny Antonaras ✓

Attendee Report: SAFMC 2023 June Council Meeting OPEN Council Session I

Report Generated:

06/20/2023 01:11 PM EDT

Webinar ID	Actual Start Date/Time	Duration	# Registered
147-909-795	06/12/2023 01:00 PM EDT	4 hours 36 minutes	118

Attendee Details

Attended	Interest Rating	Last Name	First Name
Yes	66	ALHALE	SYDNEY
Yes	34	Antonaras	Manny
Yes	82	Beal	Bob
Yes	83	Bell	00 Mel
Yes	92	Berry	James "chip"
Yes	43	Bianchi	Alan
Yes	49	Brennan	Ken
Yes	78	Brouwer	Myra
Yes	34	Clinton	Haley
Yes	94	Clinton	Haley
Yes	90	Cox	Jack
Yes	54	Cox	Derek
Yes	50	Crosson	Scott
Yes	50	DeFilippi Simpson	Julie
Yes	34	DeJohn	Frank
Yes	46	DeVictor	Rick
Yes	34	DuBeck	Guy
Yes	39	E Brown	Julie
Yes	96	Finch	Margaret
Yes	45	Flowers	Jared
Yes	45	Foss	Kristin
Yes	41	Franco	Dawn
Yes	58	Gore	Karla
Yes	35	Gray	Alisha
Yes	34	Guyas	Martha
Yes	92	Hallas	Sara
Yes	41	Helies	Frank
Yes	88	Helmey	Judy
Yes	69	Hemilright	Dewey
Yes	61	Heyman	William
Yes	92	Hoppe	Walter
Yes	64	Howington	Kathleen
Yes	98	Hudson	Joseph
Yes	93	Hull	James
Yes	49	Iverson	Kim
Yes	38	Karnauskas	Mandy
Yes	100	Klasnick	01Kelly
Yes	43	Knowlton	Kathy

Yes	65	Kramer	Rob
Yes	59	LaRoche	Kelcie
Yes	90	Laks	Ira
Yes	53	Lazarre	Dominique
Yes	92	M Borland	Gary
Yes	55	Malinowski	Rich
Yes	62	Marhefka	00Kerry
Yes	38	Masi	Michelle
Yes	53	McCoy	Sherylanne
Yes	72	McGovern	Jack
Yes	90	McWhorter	Will
Yes	90	Meehan	Sean
Yes	68	Mehta	Nikhil
Yes	45	Meyers	S
Yes	39	Moore	Jeff
Yes	47	Muffley	Brandon
Yes	89	Murphey	00Trish
Yes	44	Neer	Julie
Yes	97	Newman	Thomas
Yes	37	O'Shaughnessy	Pat
Yes	59	Oliver	Ashley
Yes	35	Peterson	Cassidy
Yes	41	Poston	Will
Yes	97	Prewitt	Brian
Yes	63	Privoznik	Sarah
Yes	67	Pugliese	Roger
Yes	36	Ramsay	Chloe
Yes	100	Ritter	Michele
Yes	91	Roller	00Tom
Yes	43	Sauls	Beverly
Yes	53	Seward	McLean
Yes	66	Smit-Brunello	00Monica
Yes	38	Soltanoff	Carrie
Yes	34	Sramek	Mark
Yes	48	Sweetman	CJ
Yes	43	Travis	Michael
Yes	90	Vecchio	Julie
Yes	40	Vincent	Matthew
Yes	62	Walia	Matthew
Yes	42	Walsh	Jason
Yes	82	White	Geoff
Yes	81	Withers	Meg
Yes	85	brewer	00chester
Yes	91	broussard	billy
Yes	37	collier	chip
Yes	36	gloeckner	david
Yes	37	sandorf	scott

Yes	42	stephen	jessica
Yes	99	thomas	01 suz
Yes	59	thompson	laurilee
Yes	47	walter	John
No	0	Bailey	Adam
No	0	Batsavage	Chris
No	0	Blair	Holly
No	0	Cimo	Laura
No	0	Dover	Miles
No	0	Groeteke	Mike
No	0	Heffernan	Katie
No	0	Keilin Gamboa-Salazar	Keilin
No	0	Kersting	Anne
No	0	Kolmos	Kevin
No	0	Mahoney	Andrew
No	0	Merten	Wessley
No	0	Noell	Brian
No	0	O'Malley	Rachel
No	0	Owens	Marina
No	0	Pehl	Nicole
No	0	RINCONES	RON
No	0	Rohrer	Frank
No	0	Salmon	Brandi
No	0	Sedberry	George
No	0	Sheridan	Sean
No	0	Smillie	Nick
No	0	Stemle	Adam
No	0	Stephenson	Sarah
No	0	Thomas	Lauren
No	0	Wamer	David
No	0	alvarez-stratton	ally
No	0	griner	tim
No	0	vara	mary