

# **SOUTH ATLANTIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL**

## **COUNCIL SESSION II**

**Radisson Resort at the Port  
Cape Canaveral, Florida**

**June 12-13, 2025**

### **Transcript**

#### **Council Members**

Trish Murphey, Chair  
Jessica McCawley, Vice Chair  
Dr. Carolyn Belcher  
Amy W. Dukes  
Gary Borland  
Tim Griner  
Judy Helmey

James G. Hull, Jr.  
Kerry Marhefka  
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Tom Roller  
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#### **Attendees and Invited Participants**

Monica Smit-Brunello  
Dr. Clay Porch  
Sonny Gwin

Rick DeVactor  
C.J. Sweetman  
Shepherd Grimes

#### **Observers and Participants**

Other observers and participants attached.

The Council Session II of the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council convened at the Radisson Resort at the Port, Cape Canaveral, Florida, on Thursday, June 12, 2025, and was called to order by Chairman Trish Murphey.

MS. MURPHEY: We're going to go ahead and start Full Council II, and so I think, as everyone knows, this is Tim Griner's last meeting. We did get to celebrate him the other night, but we want to celebrate him again, and recognize him for all the work that he's done, all the time that he has spent with this council, all the input and insights from his experience on the water and in the snapper grouper fishery.

He was here when I had my first meeting. He took me under his wing and, you know, mentored me through my first meeting, and actually still mentors me in stuff, but so I just want to take this opportunity to thank Tim, and we're going to miss you. You've been a great asset for the council. You've been a great asset representing North Carolina, and so, with that, thanks so much. Did you want to say something?

MR. GRINER: Sure. Thank you, Trish. It's been a real honor and a pleasure to work with each and every one of you guys. I've learned a great deal from each and every one of you. A lot of this stuff was not in my wheelhouse coming into here, but, you know, the entire staff has been extremely patient with me. Andy and his crew have been extremely patient with me. The Science Center has been extremely patient with me, and, you know, at the end of the day, I feel like I finally -- You know, there's a few things that I do understand. There's a whole lot I don't understand.

You know, it seems like some of these days drag on and drag on and drag on, but, you know, at the end of the day, nine years goes by in a hurry, and it just -- It seems like it takes a long time to get to get things done, and so, you know, I encourage everybody to hang in there, and stick with it, and don't give up, and you guys are all doing some very, very important things, and you've got some very important things to finish up here, and so, again, I thank everybody for all their help, and I'm sure I'll see -- I'm sure I'll be seeing a lot of you guys in the future, but just sitting out there on the other side. It will be great for a change. Thank you very much, everybody.

MS. MURPHEY: All right. We're going to go ahead and move into Full Council Session II, and so pretty cool. We were, what, four hours behind, and now we're ahead, and so we're going to -- Is everybody -- We need approval of the agenda. Is everybody good with this agenda? Any objections? Okay, and so we'll call the agenda approved, and so I guess we'll go first with the Executive Committee report that from the webinar that was held April 11 of 2025.

Just the short story on this was we convened to discuss the budgets, contracts, personnel issue, and, really, I think the short story was that we still don't know a lot about what's going on with the budgets. We did discuss the Mid-Atlantic, and we talked about this as well, but the Mid-Atlantic Council's concerns with the change in committee member representation.

We talked about the various grants that are underway at the time, and funds under these sources have been dispersed to the council, and are available for expenditures, and so progress is continuing on these projects, and these funds are separate from the administrative grant which funds council operations, and they can only be used for their stated purposes.

I have motions here. **Motion 1 was to move to use the 2019 to 2022 levels for the state liaison grants for the 2025 budget as part of the -- Wait a minute. On behalf of the committee, I so move. Any discussion? Any objections? Motion approved.**

All right, and we actually already did this one, because it was to talk about a topic of committee membership in the June meeting, which we've already done, and so I think we can just skip that one, and so, with that, I conclude the report, the Executive Committee report. Next, I've got Full Council closed session.

MR. CARMICHAEL: Trish, just a quick note on the documents. They have been uploaded to the website, but it seems to be slow on the uptake. There's apparently internet service issues going on all over the place, but they are there. Maybe soon they will pop up, but we'll just sort of roll through them here. Normally, you would be able to call them up on your screen, if you wanted, and hopefully, we can get through it the old-fashioned way. It's coming up for some people, and so Nick just said that, if you refresh, you might see it. I know I wasn't seeing it. It sounds like in some places it is, and I don't know.

MS. MURPHEY: All right, and so I will move into the summary report for Full Council Session I, the closed session, that was held on June 9, 2025. The council reviewed applicants for open seats on the Dolphin Wahoo, Habitat and Ecosystem, Law Enforcement, Mackerel Cobia, Outreach and Communication, Snapper Grouper, and Wreckfish Advisory Panels, and the following motions are presented here as recommendations, and so would anybody like to start making a motion? Tom.

MR. ROLLER: Would you like them all as one motion? Do you want me to just -- One motion to appoint everybody?

MS. MURPHEY: Let's do one at a time, but thanks.

MR. ROLLER: **I move that we reappoint Jay Kavanaugh, Daniel Owsley and Paul Pancake to the Dolphin Wahoo AP.**

MS. MURPHEY: A second? Charlie. Any discussion? **Any objection?** Okay. **The motion carries.** Who would like to make the second motion? Tom.

MR. ROLLER: **I move that we appoint Michael Shad and David Wamer, III to the Dolphin Wahoo AP.**

MS. MURPHEY: I have a second by Robert. Any discussion? **Any objections?** **The motion carries.** Next motion? Tom.

MR. ROLLER: **I move that we appoint Cameron Luck to the Habitat and Ecosystem AP.**

MS. MURPHEY: A second? We've got Carolyn. Any discussion? **Any objections?** Okay. **So moved.** Next? Tom.

MR. ROLLER: **I move that we reappoint William Palmer to the Mackerel Cobia AP.**

MS. MURPHEY: A second? I've got Judy. Any discussion? **Any objections? The motion carries.** Come on, Tom.

MR. ROLLER: **I move that we appoint Michael Hall to the Outreach and Communications AP.**

MS. MURPHEY: A second? Robert. Any discussion? **Any objections? Okay. So moved.** Next, Tom. Let's finish it out.

MR. ROLLER: **I move that we reappoint Cameron Sebastian and appoint Darren Willingham to the Snapper Grouper AP.**

MS. MURPHEY: Do I have a second? Judy. Any discussion? **Any objections? So moved.** Last one, Tom.

MR. ROLLER: **I move that we appoint Jake Harmon to the Wreckfish AP.**

MS. MURPHEY: A second? Amy. Any discussion? **Any objections? Motion approved.** Thank you, all. Now we'll go through the discussion of the advisory panel application form. The council received guidance from the NOAA General Counsel regarding any additional questions that may be added to the AP application form to aid in law enforcement background checks for applicants. The council currently requests an LE background check for fisheries violations from NOAA Office of Law Enforcement and recently from individual state law enforcement agencies.

After considering options, the council determined the current application form is adequate and directed staff to make minor edits to clarify the background checks are done at both the federal and state level and consider the prior three years, and we'll talk about appointing the SSC.

The council reviewed applications for open seats on the SSC and the SEP, and we have the following draft motions as recommendations, and so who would like to make these motions? Robert.

MR. SPOTTSWOOD: **I move to reappoint Genny Nesslage, Marcel Reichert, and Jeff Buckel to at-large seats for three-year terms beginning July 1, 2025 and ending June 30, 2028.**

MS. MURPHEY: Any seconds? Amy. Any discussion? **Any objections? Motion carries.** Robert, do you want to keep going?

MR. SPOTTSWOOD: Sure. **I move to reappoint Jared Flowers to the Georgia state-designated seat for the three-year term beginning July 1, 2025 and ending June 30, 2028.**

MS. MURPHEY: Do I have a second? Carolyn. Any discussion? **Any objections? The motion carries.**

MR. SPOTTSWOOD: **I move to appoint Luiz Barbieri to the Florida state-designated seat for a three-year term beginning July 1, 2025 and ending June 30, 2028.**

MS. MURPHEY: I need second, and I think Judy has a second. Any discussion? Andy.

MR. STRELCHECK: Yes, and so, given this is a full council report, right, we did not recommend Luiz during our initial full council session, correct?

MS. MURPHEY: You're correct, and I'm going to let Jessica explain.

MR. STRELCHECK: I understand why, but I just wanted to make sure that everyone was clear on that, that they've decided to replace Dustin Addis with Luiz Barbieri, and so I just wanted to make sure the record was clear with regard to that decision.

MS. MURPHEY: Thank you, Andy, I'll turn it to Jessica.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Yes, and I sent around his resume and materials to you guys, but yes, FWC, for our particular stated-designated seat, are now suggesting to appoint Luiz Barbieri.

MS. MURPHEY: Any more discussion? **Any objections? The motion carries.**

MR. SPOTTSWOOD: **I move we appoint Catherine "C.J." Schlick and Kelsey Roberts to at-large SSC seats for the three-year term beginning July 1, 2025 and ending June 30, 2028.**

MS. MURPHEY: Do I have a second? Amy. Any discussion? **Any objections? The motion carries.**

MR. SPOTTSWOOD: **I move we reappoint Adam Stemle to an at-large SEP seat for a five-year term beginning July 1, 2025 and ending June 30, 2030.**

MS. MURPHEY: Do I have a second? Charlie. Any discussion? **Any objections? The motion carries.**

MR. SPOTTSWOOD: **I move we appoint Kathi Kitner to an at-large SEP seat for a five-year term beginning July 1, 2025 and ending June 30 2030.**

MS. MURPHEY: Do I have a second? Charlie. Any discussion? **Any objections? The motion carries.** All right, we'll go into council committee membership. The council noted that there is a need to clarify the roles of council liaisons as well as committee members from organizations other than the council and supports the regional projects underway to evaluate committee operations and membership. The council supported the suggestion to develop written requests for comment on actions that affect neighboring councils and inviting staff from other councils to provide factual input on IPTs.

We'll go into the Law Enforcement Officer of the Year. The council reviewed nominees from its Law Enforcement Advisory Panel to receive the 2024 Law Enforcement Officer of the Year Award. Two nominees are recommended to receive the award. First, we have the FWC SRA Offshore Patrol Vessel Team, consisting of Lt. Edwin Harp, Senior Officer Specialist David Moss, Officer Specialist Casey Schroer, Officer Specialist Alexander Bruder, and Officer Zachary Dudas; and, second, South Carolina DNR Law Enforcement PFC Andrew Alexander. The following motion is presented as a recommendation. Who would like to make this motion? Jessica.

MS. MCCAWLEY: **I move that we award the 2024 Law Enforcement Officer of the Year Award to the FWC SRA Offshore Vessel Team and the SC DNR Law Enforcement Officer PFC Andrew Alexander.**

MS. MURPHEY: Do I have a second? Jimmy. Any discussion? **Any objections? The motion carries.** Then we'll get into Other Business here. The council discussed the need to appoint participants to the SEDAR 90, which is the South Atlantic red snapper assessment workshop, and provided the following motion as a recommendation. Who would like to make this motion? Jessica.

MS. MCCAWLEY: **I move that we appoint Luiz Barbieri and Will Patterson to the SEDAR 90 assessment panel.**

MS. MURPHEY: Do I have a second? I've got Carolyn. Any discussion? **Any objections? The motion carries.** The council also recognized the retirement of Pat O'Shaughnessy with the NOAA Office of Law Enforcement and his replacement, ASAC Benjamin Boots, based in Jacksonville, Florida. ASAC Boots will serve as the NOAA OLE representative on the council's Law Enforcement AP. Then, in addition, Lt. Loeffler, Commanding Officer at the U.S. Coast Guard Fisheries Training Center in Charleston, has been transferred and his replacement will serve on the Outreach and Communications AP.

Then I'll go through direction to staff. That is to readvertise an open commercial seat on the Law Enforcement Advisory Panel, to be addressed at the December 2025 council meeting, and request that the Mid-Atlantic Council update its representation on the Mackerel Cobia AP, due to attendance issues with current representatives and include the recent applicants from their region for consideration. For the Wreckfish AP, clarify that shareholder members are not allowed to designate a proxy. Contact new and reappointed AP members and applicants by June 30, 2025, advising of their appointment status.

Conduct an orientation session for newly-appointed advisory panel members prior to the September 2025 council meeting. Modify the language on the online advisory panel application form for applicants to indicate law enforcement background checks will be conducted by NOAA Office of Law Enforcement and state marine resource agencies. Contact the Snapper Grouper Advisory Panel for recommendations for a recreational representative on the SEDAR 90 Assessment Panel. Evaluate the SSC and SEP seats and committee size to ensure council needs are being met, and committee size is optimized, and send decision letters to applicants by June 30, 2025. That concludes the report for the closed Council Session I.

I guess, moving on to open session council. All right, and so, to begin, Full Council I met Monday, June 9, 2025 and Tuesday, June 10 in Cape Canaveral. The council adopted the agenda for the week and approved minutes for the March 2025 meeting.

We heard several reports. Representatives and staff provided reports to the council. The council directed staff to send a letter to the National Sea Grant Office and South Atlantic state Sea Grant directors expressing how valuable the Reef Fish Fellowship collaboration has been. The South Atlantic Council will be hosting the Council Coordination Committee meeting in May of 2027.

The Southeast Regional Office is working on re-initiating an Endangered Species Act Section 7 consultation on the shrimp fishery to evaluate impacts to smalltooth sawfish and manta rays, and they will bring information to the council at a future meeting.

Staffing changes and early retirement reduced the number of staff at the SERO by eleven since the beginning of the year. SERO is reviewing priorities for each council, and that's the South Atlantic, Gulf, and the Caribbean, in light of reduced capacity and recent executive orders. The Science Center has lost fifty-eight staff across divisions, many in key positions. Discussions are ongoing with NMFS leadership to triage the situation. The council requested that a summary of recent journal articles on dolphin be brought to the September 2025 meeting to inform discussions on possible changes to the management of dolphin.

Then we got into discussing the executive orders, and so, as you all know, April 17, 2025, the President signed Executive Order 14276, which is Restoring American Seafood Competitiveness. This order requests that the regional fishery management councils provide updates to their 2020 responses to EO 13921 to reduce burdens on domestic fishing and increase production.

NMFS has established a deadline of September 30, 2025, for councils to respond. The council briefly discussed items to include in response to the EO. Additionally, the council directed staff to produce informational material and to make available on the council's website for the public to provide input.

Also, the council requested the advisory panels to be convened to gather their recommendations, and staff will prepare a draft response for the council to review and finalize at the September meeting, and so some of those responses include removing the commercial snapper grouper two-for-one provision, removing species from the Snapper Grouper Fishery Management Plan that are not in need of federal management, consider actions councils can take to address shark depredation, consider shifting management of spawning lobster to the State of Florida, explore the use of exempted fishing permits to manage red snapper and black sea bass, continue to develop an amendment to allow access to a portion of the Oculina Habitat Area of Particular Concern to the rock shrimp fishery, and explore how the council can support improvements to habitat for managed species in Florida.

We also discussed research and monitoring plans. The council revises their research and monitoring plan every two years. The research and monitoring plan is used by the council and NOAA Fisheries staff to identify and prioritize research needs for the fisheries in the South Atlantic.

Council staff provided an overview of state research and monitoring projects addressing needs that were included in the council's 2023 to 2027 plan. Council staff also briefed the council on how the Southeast Fisheries Science Center has been addressing needs specified in the plan. Staff then introduced a revised research and monitoring plan covering needs from 2025 through 2029, which has been organized by FMP and includes recommendations from the SSC, the SEP, the Dolphin Wahoo, Habitat Protection and Ecosystem, Mackerel Cobia, and the Snapper Grouper Advisory Panels. Staff suggested that council members review the draft research and monitoring needs for their committees and prioritize them, so that the plan can be finalized at the September 2025 meeting.

We discussed for-hire electronic reporting, that amendment. Council staff introduced a decision document intended to facilitate the council's discussion on the amendment. However, the council recognized the need to spend time on preliminary prioritization of items on the current workplan, given ongoing issues with staff capacity and the recent mandates under various EOs. As a result, the council chose to move this amendment down on its priority list.

We also discussed preliminary workload prioritization, and so the council reviewed amendment items on the workplan and discussed their importance in scheduling, given recent changes in agency resources and direction. The council considered potential costs, whether actions were discretionary or statutory, regulatory or deregulatory, or consistent with the recent executive orders, and so the council staff have been directed to make following changes to the workplan.

Priority amendments will be the long-term red snapper and snapper grouper MSE; the black sea bass assessment response; yellowtail snapper and mutton snapper assessment response; dolphin size limit and recreational retention limits; Spanish mackerel assessment and port meetings response; the shrimp fishery access area in the Oculina HAPC for the northern extension, and that, again, is Coral 11 and Shrimp Amendment 12, which we just discussed; golden tile assessment response; blueline tile fish assessment response; evaluation of species within the fishery management unit; hogfish assessment response; black grouper assessment or MSE response; and the snapper grouper commercial fishery amendment, which is Amendment 60; and the sunseting of special management zones. I've got Jessica.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Yes, and can you scroll back up? I didn't think that we prioritized Spanish mackerel assessment and port meeting response, because, when we got to that next committee, we talked about waiting for the FES data.

MS. MURPHEY: So, Myra, can you address that?

MS. BROUWER: Would you like me to strike that from the list?

MS. MURPHEY: Let's discuss this. Do we want to strike this or not? I think there has been some discussion on trying to move forward with some things with the -- Based off the port meetings, and so I'll let Tom speak.

MR. ROLLER: I guess I was just curious if maybe we should discuss that during the Mackerel Committee report, potentially.

MS. MURPHEY: Yes, and so we are going to highlight that one in this particular report, and, after we discuss it in the Mackerel Committee meeting, we'll come back and either strike it or keep it.

MR. ROLLER: Can I just clarify something on that? I believe our idea in prioritizing it was just to pull it forward, right, from the current slot on the schedule, and so, just for clarity, I wasn't -- I understood waiting for FES was the idea, but I thought we were trying to just bring it farther up, wherever that was, right?

MS. MURPHEY: We'll discuss it tomorrow.

MR. ROLLER: Okay. We'll discuss it when we get there.

MS. MURPHEY: Okay. Let's just -- John.

MR. CARMICHAEL: So, to finalize this report, I think we just put the note that we'll discuss it more. We can give guidance, during the Mackerel Committee, as to what we want to do, and it can be reflected in the workplan.

MS. MURPHEY: Is everybody comfortable with that? Jessica, you comfortable with that?

MS. MCCAWLEY: I think so.

MS. MURPHEY: Okay. We were on lower priority and delayed amendments include the for-hire reporting improvement, for-hire limited entry, the private recreational permitting and education, and yellowtail snapper and mutton snapper management changes. Robert, have you got a question?

MR. SPOTTSWOOD: (Mr. Spottswood's comment is not audible on the recording.)

MS. MURPHEY: I've got direction to staff here, which is generally prioritize deregulatory amendments and move these amendments up in the workplan in December 2025 at a half-day agenda item, or longer, if required, and that will focus on recreational fishing data; include an update on Gulf Council, GARFO, and highly migratory species actions related to the for-hire reporting; preliminary results from red snapper exempted fishing permits; information on the MRIP-FES revisions; an update on state efforts related to potential state management of red snapper and other snapper grouper species; and discuss relevant measures that respond to recent executive orders and directives to increase state involvement in recreational data collection.

We'll also convene a recreational state and federal data subcommittee to help coordinate the council and state efforts to improve recreational data, and the goal of the committee is to ensure data collected across the South Atlantic states is as consistent and compatible across states as possible.

We then discussed the TORs for the gag assessment. The staff presented the terms of reference and changes suggested by the Scientific and Statistical Committee during the May 2025 meeting. The council requested this item be discussed during Snapper Grouper Committee, and we'll hear about that in the Snapper Grouper Committee report, and the following discussion of the MSY proxies.

The South Atlantic headboat report, in of June 2024, the council requested a report to prepare to examine headboat vessel limits for South Atlantic-managed species for discussion at the December 2024 meeting. The council requested additional information to begin discussing potential management changes that better reflect the needs of the headboat fishery.

The Southeast Fisheries Science Center developed a detailed report in response to the council request. Council staff presented highlights from the report, and the council requested that the Snapper Grouper Committee continue the discussion regarding the headboat sector and next steps. The Snapper Grouper Committee will continue the discussion on this topic at a future meeting,

and so I have here a draft motion for timing and tasks. Is there anyone who would like to make that motion? I've got Amy.

MS. DUKES: Thank you, Madam Chair. **I would like to make the motion to direct staff to do the following: send a letter to the National Sea Grant Office and South Atlantic Sea Grant directors expressing how valuable the Reef Fish Fellowship and collaboration has been for the council; prepare a summary of recent journal articles for dolphin for the September 2025 meeting; prepare a draft response to Executive Order 14276 to be finalized at the September 2025 meeting, including the initial list of items above, and produce informational material, documents, and recorded presentation to post to the council's website and solicit public input, as well as solicit feedback from the advisory panels; for the December 2025 agenda, add formation and charge of the Recreational State-Federal Data Subcommittee and plan to convene the subcommittee in conjunction with the March 2026 council meeting, if in-person, or sooner, if remote; add a half-day agenda item, or longer if required, that will focus on recreational fishing data and initial lists of topics above; and, lastly, pause development for the for-hire reporting improvement amendment.**

MS. MURPHEY: Do I have a second? Charlie. Any discussion? Andy.

MR. STRELCHECK: Yes, and I'm not disagreeing with the last bullet, but I did make a comment about the Gulf Council continuing to move forward with for-hire, and so I will keep the council updated on their progress and whether or not we would want to un-pause this at any point in time, based on what they're working on.

MS. MURPHEY: All right. That's great, Andy. Thank you. Any objections? Kerry.

MS. MARHEFKA: I just need a clarifying question, because I'm really having a hard time. Go back up to the list of like plans and amendments. These being divorced from actually looking at the workplan, and then knowing we're going to be discussing something in a different committee report is hurting my little mind, and so this is not -- These priority amendments, I understand why they're priority amendments, and I understand where that conversation came from. They're not in priority order, or they are in priority order, and we're going to -- How do we reconcile that with the workplan and then whatever is being planned with mackerel? I'm having a hard time with the disparate conversations around this.

MS. MURPHEY: John.

MR. CARMICHAEL: Yes, and this is definitely not the final word, or look, on it, because they're not in a priority order. They're just in the order in which we went through them. They're all on very different timelines. Some of them are not going to start for a year-and-a-half, some of the ones at the bottom, but we know that they're responding to an assessment that's going to be done soon, and so what happened with this is staff was able to look at these priorities, and within the context of the workplan, and factor this guidance into the overall workplan.

Now, what we will do is, as we normally do tomorrow, look at that workplan, and we may be faced still with some overload scenarios in the coming meetings, which may require you to make some of the finer-scale tweaks to this, which we normally do, and so this doesn't in any way supersede

any of that effort. This was just the first cut, so we would be a little more informed going into tomorrow's discussion.

MS. MURPHEY: Are you good, Kerry? Is that good? Okay. Any further discussion? Any objections? Andy, are you objecting?

MR. CARMICHAEL: I think he has a question.

MS. MURPHEY: Do you have a question?

MR. STRELCHECK: If we're at the end of the report, one correction, and so, up above, it said that Southeast Regional Office had lost eleven staff since the beginning of the year. I've had eleven retirees, and we've lost twenty employees, and so if you could just make that correction.

MS. MURPHEY: All right, and we're verifying that --

MR. CARMICHAEL Andy, the number was 20? Thank you. I'm glad you pointed that out, because I wanted to highlight that and ask you to verify it.

MS. MURPHEY: Yes, and thank you, Andy, and so that has been corrected, and so thanks. All right. **Any objections to this motion? The motion carries.** That is the end of the report, committee report, for Full Council I open session, and I think that's it for committee reports. We'll continue tomorrow, but did you want to talk about meetings, 2025 meetings?

MR. CARMICHAEL: If you want to, and we can call that up,

MS. MURPHEY: We've got five minutes. All right, and we're going to -- John is going to go over the South Atlantic Council meetings for 2025.

MR. CARMICHAEL: Primarily, that will be to direct you to our normal roster list of the meetings that are coming up over the next year. There's not too much in the summer, as usual. The September Council meeting is in North Charleston. A whole lot of AP and other meetings are planned in October, which is fairly normal. It's exciting to remind you that the Lines of Communication meetings are going to kick off the first week of November. Then we'll have the December council meeting, and so it will be exciting to hear a little feedback from how the Lines of Communication meetings went, actually, and the 2026 meetings are there just to help you mark your calendar.

MS. MURPHEY: Any questions for John on the meetings? All right. I'm not seeing any, and so I think we'll go ahead and adjourn for the day and meet up at 8:30 tomorrow morning.

(Whereupon, the meeting recessed on June 12, 2025.)

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JUNE 13, 2025

FRIDAY MORNING SESSION

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The Council Session II of the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council reconvened at the Radisson Resort at the Port, Cape Canaveral, Florida, on Friday, June 13, 2025, and was called to order by Chairman Trish Murphey.

MS. MURPHEY: All right. Good morning, everyone. We'll go ahead and reconvene Council II. We'll go ahead and start out with Tom and the Mackerel Cobia report.

MR. ROLLER: Thank you, Madam Chair. I'm going to go ahead and go over the Mackerel Cobia Committee report. The committee met on Tuesday, June 10, 2025, and the first order of business was the committee approved the minutes from the March 2025 meeting and the agenda for this meeting.

The first order of business was we heard the Mackerel Cobia Advisory Panel Report. The Mackerel Cobia Advisory Panel met in Charleston, South Carolina on March 31 and April 1, and our new Mackerel Cobia Advisory Panel Chair, Thomas Newman, provided a summary of the meeting discussions and recommendations.

The second item of business was the Gulf Council did a presentation on their coastal migratory pelagic stakeholder engagement effort. The Gulf Council held three public virtual seminars in the fall of 2024, which specifically addressed issues related to Spanish mackerel, king mackerel, and cobia. The engagement questions asked during the virtual seminars were also asked during the February 2024 CMP and December 2024 Reef Fish Advisory Panel meetings. The purpose of these engagement sessions was to gather feedback from industry stakeholders on the health and status of CMP stocks, as complementary efforts to the South Atlantic's mackerel port meetings. Emily Muehlstein, Gulf Council staff, provided a summary of this stakeholder feedback collected.

The next item of business was the mackerel port meetings. In 2024, at the urging of the Mackerel Cobia Advisory Panel, the council hosted a series of sixteen in-person and six virtual port meetings along the Atlantic coast. Port meeting attendees discussed the perspectives with other fisheries participants and local council members. In March 2025, council staff reviewed the draft report and high-level themes from this effort.

The council requested detailed information from port meetings on a suite of management options to be brought to the June 2025 meeting. Council staff presented this information, in addition to a refresher on the results of SEDAR 78, which is the latest Spanish mackerel.

The committee then provided the following directions to staff. First, postpone work on Framework Amendment 13 until the results of the FES pilot study are received, and work with the Southeast Fisheries Science Center to see if the next Atlantic Spanish mackerel assessment can occur sooner in the SEDAR schedule. The second direction to staff was consider recommendations from port meetings in conjunction with updated Atlantic Spanish mackerel stock assessment. The next item was direction to staff to begin to look at the potential port meeting response actions as regulatory, versus deregulatory, and bring this back to the committee once the FES pilot study is available.

Additionally, it was noted that the North Carolina Division of Marine Fisheries and Florida Fish and Wildlife Commission will continue to communicate and better coordinate the potential for yearly commercial quota transfers for the Atlantic Spanish mackerel between the north zone and southern zone.

We will have one thing I'm going to bring up for discussion, but, first, I'll go into Other Business, and, in Other Business, the committee acknowledged the Mackerel Cobia AP requested to discuss conversation and management needs for Atlantic benito. However, the committee felt that the South Atlantic Council may not be the ideal management body for Atlantic benito. Additionally, the committee noted that the council's limited resources is currently responding to several recent executive orders aimed at reducing burdens on domestic fishing and increasing production.

Before we get into the timing and tasks motion, I would like to bring something up for discussion. We had -- In the committee what we discussed was the order in which that we could bring things into an amendment, and so staff had a discussion, and, per some of our conversation, looked at removing some of the regulatory and non-regulatory issues from this --

When we looked at the report from the port meetings, we had a slate of recommendations, and staff pulled out the regulatory and non-regulatory ones, and had a tentative plan on which we could do multiple amendments. One looked at changes recommended by port meetings that don't deal with catch levels, and then do the Spanish mackerel, and then, later on, once the FES study comes, as well as a future king mackerel. We do have a document on that. I don't know if we want to bring it up, and just to have some discussion of what the council thinks about this.

MS. BROUWER: There is really not a document that we can put up.

MR. ROLLER: It's just notes then. Okay. Sorry.

MS. BROUWER: It's okay.

MR. ROLLER: So that's fine. It's fine. I'll go -- I'll pull it up here, and I'll go, I'll go over my notes. I apologize. The notes are so good, because Christina is so good at her job that it read like a document to me, but staff had a lot of discussion on this, per our committee meetings, and I just think it's worth having a discussion, because it really also gives us a look at what the direction could be as we approach this fishery, and so thank you, Christina.

MS. WIEGAND: I mean, I think Tom pretty much nailed it. The thought was that it might be helpful to sort of build on the momentum of mackerel port meetings, and keep these guys engaged in the management process, understanding that, based on the recommendation from the advisory panel, the council and the committee did not want to move forward with any actions that were related to catch levels until there was an updated stock assessment.

However, there are a number of recommendations from port meetings that are not at all related to catch levels, things like the goals and objectives of the FMP, the fishing season, commercial zones, and things of that nature that could be addressed now, keeping that momentum from port meetings going, keeping those individuals that participated in the process engaged.

That also then gets those actions out of the way, so that, once we do have updated stock assessments, and we have updated stock assessments coming for both king and Spanish mackerel in the coming years, we can then work through those amendments at a faster rate, because we'll have already addressed some other things upfront, which, especially for Spanish mackerel, may be helpful, given that those individuals have been waiting since 2018, or 2019, for an updated assessment, and so deal with some of these things up front, keep the mackerel guys engaged in the process, and then address the catch level stuff after an updated stock assessment, per the recommendation of the advisory panel.

MS. MURPHEY: All right. Thank you Christina. I saw Robert's hand.

MR. SPOTTSWOOD: That was going to be my question, is, from a timing perspective, is that the fastest way to get all of it done? You know, understanding if we kept to the catch levels as part of this, and then we got updated stock assessments, would that be a quicker path to getting all of it done at once, or is breaking it up -- So do you keep it in there and break it up? Okay.

MS. WIEGAND: Looking at some like rough timing, you guys could start work on an amendment now, dealing with the non-catch-level-related stuff, and that would move forward. The king mackerel assessment isn't scheduled to come until, at the earliest, June 2028. Spanish mackerel, if it moves up to where vermilion is, would come to you guys maybe in December 2027.

If it can't come earlier in the schedule, it wouldn't be until June 2029, and so there wouldn't necessarily be any overlap in these amendments. We wouldn't be doubling up and working on mackerel stuff at the same time, and so the likely faster way would be to deal with some of this upfront and then move the catch level stuff faster, once we have the stock assessments.

MS. MURPHEY: So, Robert, to that?

MR. SPOTTSWOOD: I apologize, and I don't know if it's in the notes, but should we detail what the non-catch level items are that this amendment is going to work on? Have you got that, Tom? Like is it possible that limited entry, or other things like that, get into this? That's not the intent, I don't think, but, Tom?

MR. ROLLER: So, Christina, do you mind if I go over some of the notes you made? So, in Christina's amazing little conversation piece, we had an email, which is a fine document, and so I'm just going to go over some of the preliminary port meetings response potential items that we could have in an amendment.

So, obviously, FMP goals and objectives, Spanish mackerel fishing seasons, which was a big part of our discussion, Spanish mackerel commercial zones, Spanish mackerel commercial zone allocations, Spanish mackerel and king mackerel limited entry, which is something that our stakeholders bring to us, and so we -- You know, we heard a lot about it in the port meetings, as well as AP, and so, you know, I do think we owe it to our stakeholders to at least discuss it. Tournament sales, and, with the exception of limited-entry tournament sales, this would be largely neutral, in terms of regulations, and these were the items that were discussed in port meetings and continues that kind of momentum from this really big undertaking that the council took.

MS. MURPHEY: Jessica.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thanks. That list helped me, and so I appreciate it. I appreciate the extra work on this. I just have some concerns. I do think, especially these couple things on Spanish mackerel, that it is tied to that new data. I think that people would want to see that information. That's why I was asking for that clarification in the committee report from the AP. I think they would want to see, you know, before they comment on the fishing season, more about are they going to get a cut, because of the new ACLs, you know, and now there's going to be a closed season, and that might change what the fishing year would be, et cetera.

I also felt like one of the big issues was the transfer of quota between the northern zone and the southern zone, and I feel like we talked about that in committee, and worked on that a little bit, and I don't consider limited entry deregulatory, and so I wouldn't have put that on the list.

The tournament sales, maybe that's deregulatory, but I kind of see these as some pretty, you know, significant changes, other than the goals and objectives to the FMP, that I agree have been hanging out there, but I, me, I would prefer to wait until after we get the new information, at least on Spanish, before moving forward with all of these changes. It's just premature, in my mind.

I do get that we did all this really cool work at these port meetings, but I also believe that kind of the environment has changed, with the new administration, and we stopped work on a lot of important things, that we had worked really hard on, and then we're now pausing them, and so, just for me, I would rather pause work on all of these things, instead of spending a lot of time and effort going back out, until we get the new data, because I'm concerned that it's going to change people's opinion of how we talk about these items, and so it might change people's opinion, especially in North Carolina and Florida, thinking, you know, after they see these numbers -- They're already concerned about the numbers from the first Spanish mackerel assessment, and concerned about FES, and so, yes, and I guess I would just like to wait.

MS. MURPHEY: I'm going to get to Tim, and then you, Tom.

MR. GRINER: Thank you for that, Jessica, because, you know, that's kind of what -- As I was trying to wrap my arms around this, you know, it's like the catch level stuff -- You know, the discussions around transferring from Florida and North Carolina were, you know, to me, were kind of where the rubber met the road there, and so -- I mean, I do think the rest of this is important, but, you know, at the end of the day, it's catch level advice is really, really, and truly what you're looking after, right, and, you know, whether they be discussions at the table or, you know, elsewhere, you know, but, really and truly, I think that's what you need to focus on.

MR. ROLLER: Thank you for that. I think, you know, everybody is, obviously, bringing up great points, but, when we go back to our discussion, I think that this is really helpful, because it really breaks down the possibilities, right, and I hope that, regardless of what, you know, the council decides, that this gives us an idea going forward.

I'll also point out that, during this whole process, which took a long time to plan, the FES pilot study, and that timing, has definitely changed things as well, and so -- But, yes, absolutely, but I think, for me, and I've got to thank staff for all their work at looking into this, and this really helps me clarify the different breakdowns of how we can proceed, no matter how we do it.

MS. MURPHEY: Charlie.

MR. PHILLIPS: Thank you, Madam Chair. We've already -- We're in a new place now, with limited resources, you know, and John's staff -- We were steady taking everything we could off of the table, to just get down to the most important parts, and not that this is not important, but I would like to try to do it all when we get the good information, and we can make the good decisions all at one time, instead of breaking it up, and having multiple amendments going through, and so that would just kind of be my thought. I have yet -- We've still got to go through the workplan, and so I would be inclined to want to not go forward this right now.

MS. MURPHEY: All right. Thank you, Charlie. Go ahead, John.

MR. CARMICHAEL: I think I agree with Charlie. We need to look at the workplan, and see where this fits in. I'm a little more comfortable with this motion, because you aren't saying a specific time to start, and so I could say you could -- If you pass this, you're expressing your intent for --

To me, that plan to do the non-catch stuff as soon as we can, and not to wait for the assessments to do anything on mackerel, and then I feel like that gives you, the Mackerel Committee, the suggestion that then, in Full Council, when we look at the spreadsheet, you can look at that and say, okay, now that we've seen the results of the prioritizing that we did earlier, and as well as this, and remember we had another motion suggested for an amendment in Snapper Grouper, and I think you could look at everything holistically, and maybe decide how you juggle it. If this had time sensitive, then I think, yes, we better not do this, because you're probably tying your hands a bit more than you want to.

MS. MURPHEY: All right. Thank you, John. Jessica.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Well, I was going to say something else, and I'll come back to my point, but, based on what John said, the thing that's hanging me up in this draft motion is the wording in that second line that says "in a timely manner", because, to me, that is somewhat conflicting with the previous motion, and this discussion, and so that was part of what is hanging me up here, is this "in a timely manner", because that makes it sound like ASAP, you know, like we're telling staff get to work on this, and so I was a little concerned about that.

I also want to say that I appreciate the format with which this information was presented to us, and that table which listed out the information from the port meetings by state, and then it had like a little summary on the far-right column, and so I really like that, and I think it's super helpful, and I would like to, you know, pick back up with that table, as soon as we get back to this, and so that was -- That summary table is super helpful.

MS. MURPHEY: Thanks, Jessica. John.

MR. CARMICHAEL: Jessica, I think, to that, instead of "in a timely manner", what if it said "without being dependent upon the stock assessment schedule"?

MS. MCCAWLEY: I'm still not okay with that. I mean, I just feel like, and we can talk about it more when we get to the workplan, but I just think that we should stop work on both these

amendments. I get that we're talking about separate amendments, but I would rather just pause work on these things, partly because, when I heard the list of the items that are in there, I still think they're ultimately tied to this, and/or they're not deregulatory, like limited entry, and so that's just expressing my opinion.

MS. MURPHEY: All right. Andy.

MR. STRELCHECK: I'm going to provide a little different perspective. We all know how long it takes to work on actions around this table, and so, to me, waiting until the assessment results, to me, is too late, right? I think we need to build in some time, work on some of these things in advance of the assessment results, whenever that happens.

I'm struggling with the motion, mostly because of the staff direction above, which I thought was going to be kind of accomplishing the same thing, which is bring back to us some guidance with regard to the port meeting response for, you know, kind of compartmentalizing the regulatory versus deregulatory response. I feel like that's the first step in this process. Let's see what we have, and let's see where we would categorize that, in terms of the executive order.

I think, if we're going to focus on a separate amendment, and I agree that I would like to keep the momentum going with the port meetings, and that that second amendment -- Or that that amendment is going to need to focus on deregulatory actions, right, or how we're going to enhance seafood competitiveness, right? We can't go down the path of regulatory actions that are just being suggested or proposed.

That might be a component of the catch limit amendment down the road, and so I would prefer to wait, and get that information when the FES pilot study is available, which I think will probably be by December, and we would have a more in-depth conversation of what then could go into an amendment, and decide, at that point, to proceed with an amendment and what could be built into that amendment.

MS. MURPHEY: Thank you, Andy. Jessica.

MS. MCCAWLEY: I think Andy was also kind of where I was coming from, but I think he said it better, because that direction to staff that's above does say once the FES pilot study is available, and so we've already determined the timing. That's why this other motion is odd to me, because I feel like we've already given this direction. I just -- I wouldn't pass this second motion, or wouldn't make this second motion. I would stick with the direction we already gave.

MS. MURPHEY: Any other comments, because I think I'm hearing that, you know, we want to just hold off. I think, Tom and Christina, I think this was good work, you know, trying to think about, you know, the port meetings, and the input on that, and how to move some things forward, but I think it does sound like the folks around the table here would like to at least wait until the FES information is available, but I do appreciate those thoughts in trying to, you know, think about your stakeholders, and so I appreciate that. Tom.

MR. ROLLER: I'm going to go to the timing and tasks motion, but the last thing I'll just add is that the way Christina and staff has presented this is so helpful that I think, when we do take up that amendment, I encourage you all to engage in it from how it was presented, because it is so

helpful to how we understand. Absolutely. For the committee report, the last thing we have is a timing and tasks motion, which you can see on the board. I'm looking to see if anyone would like to make that motion.

MS. MURPHEY: Charlie.

MR. PHILLIPS: Thank you. **I make the draft motion adopt the following time and tasks: 1) work with the SEFSC to see if the next Atlantic Spanish mackerel assessment can occur sooner than currently proposed in the SEDAR schedule; 2) look at the potential port meeting response actions to determine if they are regulatory, versus deregulatory, and bring this information to the Mackerel Committee once the FES pilot study is available.**

MS. MURPHEY: We've got Robert as a second?

MR. ROLLER: Thank you, Madam Chair. We have a second on the motion. Is there any discussion on this motion?

MR. SPOTTSWOOD: In the discussion, didn't we specifically talk about the species that was being dropped from the assessment schedule that we had thought about sliding this into? Am I confusing that? Like vermilion? It was vermilion?

MS. MCCAWLEY: Yes, and it was about Spanish mackerel, and so I think we talked to Chip about that, and said that, when the SEDAR information comes back, then we can try to pull it up in the schedule, but that committee didn't meet at this meeting. I think that's the answer.

MS. MURPHEY: Any more discussion?

MR. ROLLER: **Not seeing any discussion, is there any objection to the motion? Seeing no objection, the motion passes.**

MS. MURPHEY: All right. Thank you, Tom. So now we'll go ahead and move into the Habitat and Ecosystem Committee and Shrimp Committee report. The committee approved the Habitat and Ecosystem and Shrimp Committee minutes from the March 2025 meeting and the agenda for this meeting.

In discussion of Coral 11 and Shrimp Amendment 12, in 2021, the council submitted Coral Amendment 10, which proposed establishing a shrimp fishery access area within the northern extension of the Oculina Habitat Area of Particular Concern, where trawling for rock shrimp is currently prohibited.

In 2022, the council received a letter of disapproval. Among the reasons for disapproval, NMFS stated that the amendment did not include adequate analysis to ensure that the proposed action would minimize adverse effects of fishing on essential fish habitat and minimize bycatch. In September 2024, staff were directed to develop a joint amendment to the Coral and Shrimp FMPs to propose establishing a shrimp fishery access area within the northern extension of the habitat area of particular concern and incorporate updated information, including a recent mapping study.

Staff reviewed a decision document, including three alternatives, preliminary analysis, and the next steps. Staff also discussed the VMS ping rate requirement of one ping every five minutes that was established in Coral Amendment 8. The committees agree that maintaining the current ping rate for federally-permitted rock shrimp fishermen who use the proposed area is preferred, because it enhances the ability of the NOAA Office of Law Enforcement and the U.S. Coast Guard to track those vessels, and recommended that the IPT integrate language to clarify the required ping rate in the shrimp fishing access area.

The committees approved these motions. **The first motion was approve modifications to the purpose and need statements. On behalf of the committee, I so move.** Is there any discussion? **Any objections to this motion?** All right. **Motion approved.**

**The second motion was to approve the modifications to Alternative 2 and Alternative 3, and this was approved by the committee, and so, on behalf of the committee, I so move.** Any discussion? **Any objections?** **Motion approved.**

**Then Motion 3 was to select Alternative 2 as a preferred alternative for Action 1. On behalf of the committee, I so move.** Any discussion? **Any objections?** **Motion is approved.**

MS. MCCAWLEY: I know that we were going to quadruple check those points that were in Alternative 2. I was just going to see if we had time to do that, just to make sure. I see thumbs-up. Okay. Perfect. Thank you.

MS. MURPHEY: Staff says those have been quadruple checked, and so thank you for reminding us of that. The rationale was that shrimpers -- I'm sorry. **Motion 4 is approve Coral Amendment 11/Shrimp Amendment 12 for public hearings, and, on behalf of the committee, I so move.** Any discussion?

MS. MCCAWLEY: It's on there. It's in blue.

MS. MURPHEY: Any discussion? **Any objections?** Okay. **Motion approved.** Then direction to staff -- I'm sorry. Andy. I'm sorry.

MR. STRELCHECK: Can we go back to Motion 3, the rationale? I think we need to be very careful when we're developing rationale like this, and so, when we say shrimpers provided public comment and suggested choosing Alternative 2, that is true, right, but we also heard from the coral community that they don't want this. They provided public comment and suggested choosing Alternative 1, and so, to me, that's not rationale. That's public input in support of the alternative that we selected, and the rationale for choosing the alternative, obviously, needs to be borne out based on the amendment and further discussion of why opening this area to shrimping is important, and so I just wanted to emphasize that.

MS. MURPHEY: Do you want to make any suggested edits?

MR. STRELCHECK: I think what was just changed is important, and so "public input" is helpful there, rather than "rationale". The rest of it, there is certainly rationale as part of that as well.

MS. MURPHEY: All right. Well, thank you, Andy. Then Motion 4 was to approve Coral Amendment 11/Shrimp Amendment 12 for public hearings. On behalf of the committee, I so move. Any discussion? Did we do this already?

MS. MCCAWLEY: We already approved it, and then he asked to go back up.

MS. MURPHEY: Okay. I'm sorry. Andy, you messed me up, man.

MS. BROUWER: So, if it's okay with the committee, I would like to then add, so that this statement here doesn't seem to be so one-sided, to acknowledge that there was also public input, as Andy said, from the coral community. Is that okay? Thank you.

MS. MURPHEY: All right. Thank you. Okay, and so now we're down to direction to staff. The direction to staff was to have one online webinar meeting, and also one in-person meeting at Cape Canaveral. I do believe that staff had some discussion with some of the Shrimp AP members, who had also suggested Jacksonville, but I think the -- I think staff will figure out which area, but those were some -- Jacksonville was also suggested. Then timing and tasks, and who would like to make this motion? Jessica.

MS. MCCAWLEY: **I move to adopt the following timing and tasks: continue the development of Coral Amendment 11/Shrimp Amendment 12; host two public hearings between June and August 2025, one virtually and one in-person, and this says Cape Canaveral, but our direction above -- Maybe we just end it with one virtually and one in-person.**

MS. MURPHEY: Yes, and that will work. Do I have a second? Amy. Any discussion? **Any objections? Okay, and so the motion is approved.** That concludes the Shrimp Committee report, the Shrimp and Habitat Committee report, and so I think we'll go ahead and hand it over to Jessica for Snapper Grouper.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. The Snapper Grouper Committee met earlier this week and approved the minutes from the March 2025 meeting and the agenda. The committee received a presentation on information on the exempted fishing permit applications from the FWC to continue research investigating management impacts of aggregate bag limits and limited allowance of red snapper retention, and the committee expressed support for continuing this research.

The committee also received updates about amendments that have been approved by the council that were recently submitted for secretarial review and implementation, and they are listed there in the committee report. I'm not going to go over all of them.

NMFS updated the council on the final rule for Amendment 59, which was the secretarial amendment for red snapper, which had been submitted to the Federal Register, and the final rule implements three actions from the proposed rule, and the 2025 red snapper commercial season will begin on July 14 and will close on January 1, 2026, unless the commercial catch limit is met, or projected to be met, before that date, and the recreational sector will open for two days on July 11 and 12, 2025.

Then the committee went into some other business, which was the discussion of the innovation plan, and the committee provided a potential framework for future discussions, and it isn't listed here, but I think we talked about this coming back to the September council meeting.

Then we got a presentation from Dr. Luiz Barbieri, with the FWC's Fish and Wildlife Research Institute, on MSY proxies, their estimation, and how they're used in management, and then the Southeast Fisheries Science Center updated the council about ongoing efforts to provide guidance for developing SPR-based MSY proxies specific to stocks in the South Atlantic.

Council staff presented a summary of MSY and SPR-based benchmarks from stock assessments used for council-managed species, the relationship between steepness and associated SPR proxy values, guidance from the NS 1 tech memo, and recommendations following SCS 8 meetings and SSC review.

The committee had some discussion, throughout the presentation, about the applicability of MSY proxies specifically for South Atlantic snapper grouper species, and the committee continues to support species-specific evaluation of MSY proxies for snapper grouper species over application of general scientific principles primarily based on other species from other areas.

**Then the committee made Motion Number 1 to form a working group comprised of members of the Gulf and South Atlantic SSCs, council staff, and a council member from each council to collectively address the best practices for estimating steepness, and thus estimate MSY, for management advice, as well as the discussion of SPR proxy values, given a range of life history values among fish species, and, on behalf of the committee, I so move. Any more discussion on this? Any objection? All right. That motion carries.**

Then the committee got into the terms of reference for the gag stock assessment, and staff presented changes to the terms of reference for the gag stock assessment requested by the council during Full Council I, following the discussion of these MSY proxies, and the council approved the terms of reference, after minor additions and clarification.

Then the council went into black sea bass, Amendment 56. Staff presented changes to the terms of reference for the gag stock assessment requested by the council. I'm sorry. Presented the stock risk rating matrix from the ABC control rule for black sea bass and the preliminary scores and comments made by the advisory panel and the SSC. The council determined the stock risk rating of black sea bass to be high.

The Southeast Fisheries Science Center presented results of the SEDAR 76 update stock assessment for black sea bass, and this assessment indicated that the stock in the South Atlantic is overfished, and experiencing overfishing, and the SSC reviewed SEDAR 76, at their April and May meetings, and the SSC chair presented the SSC's comments on the assessment and recommendations for the OFL and the ABC.

The SSC's comments noted several uncertainties in the assessment used to develop catch level recommendations, and the committee agreed with these uncertainties, but also recognized the decline in abundance of black sea bass, necessitating more immediate management action. Therefore, the committee passed the following motion.

**Through Snapper Grouper Amendment 56, establish commercial and recreational annual catch targets that are equal to 50 percent of average landings from 2019 through 2023 for each sector. The recreational ACT would be calculated using landings in CHTS units. The council will reconsider ACTs and associated management measures two years after implementation. Direct the IPT to draft actions that would be expected to lead to landings that are below their respective sector ACTs. These actions could include making recreational and commercial size limits the same length, reducing the recreational bag limit, reducing commercial trip limits, and implementing a spawning season closure where harvest of black sea bass would be prohibited for both sectors, including January through April each year. At a minimum, the closure would cover the months of March and April. Consider spawning season alternatives in two-month waves. Request that the SSC reevaluate the MSY estimate and reconsider the F 40 percent SPR proxy recommended previously, in light of the uncertainties identified with the MSY estimates and the SSC recommendation to investigate the use of an SPR-based MSY proxy in a future assessment, because of the uncertainties in the stock-recruitment relationship and the potential for non-stationarity. Reconsider use of the high terminal F estimate (2023) in the estimation of the assumed fishing mortality rate for the interim years in the projection analysis. Reconsider ABC advice for 2027 and beyond and direct council staff to work with SSC leadership and the Southeast Fisheries Science Center to conduct additional peer review of the SEDAR 76 assessment update. On behalf of the committee, I so move.** Any additional discussion on this? I see lots of hands going up here. I see Kerry, I see Tim, and I saw Judd. Can we start with Judd, please?

DR. CURTIS: Just some clarification from the council on how immediate you would like the SSC to review these and the points in the direction to staff. The SSC is currently scheduled not to meet until our October meeting, and so then these recommendations would go to the council in December. If it needs to be sooner than that, at the September meeting, we would need to convene a webinar to address this.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thanks, Judd. Okay. Kerry, then Tim.

MS. MARHEFKA: I have two things. This one is directly to Judd's question. I've spoken to Marcel, and I've talked to other people. We believe it's paramount that this is an in-person SSC meeting, and so I don't know. Obviously, that is scheduled for October. If that timeline is palatable, then we can do that. If not -- I just don't want it to be a webinar. Then after, I have some other things.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thank you. Tim.

MR. GRINER: I just caution, or wanted to make sure, that you're not being too prescriptive here with the 40 percent. You're listed 40 percent, but is that -- You know, you need to be able to reconsider 30 percent, or whatever that number is, but just precautionary that you're actually -- Is that the only thing you're going to reconsider, is 40 percent?

MS. MCCAWLEY: John.

MR. CARMICHAEL: I mean, I think -- Yes, and I think where that comes from is because that's what they had recommended in the last assessment, and you still have 30 percent as what is the rule now, and so you would have to have a comparison of the two, at the very least, and it will

come to the council, and so, yes, and I think that's it, but that's why that's the 40 percent, but it doesn't mean that 30 percent just -- That you don't even look at it anymore.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. More discussion? Kerry, then Amy.

MS. MARHEFKA: Sorry, and I just wanted to go back to the original reason that I raised my hand, which is I'm trying to understand the timing, the direct IPT to draft actions for those bullets. We haven't given any -- In this motion, we've given no ranges, no indication, no anything, and so just trying to figure out how that goes.

MS. MCCAWLEY: So there's a little bit of that. If you look at the committee report, below that, there are some ranges and stuff in there, but there's some pieces that are highlighted in yellow that we need to fill out. Are you good with working on that after the motion?

MS. MARHEFKA: Yes, and I'm sorry, because this is my first time laying my hands on the report, and I didn't look ahead.

MS. MCCAWLEY: You're okay.

MS. MARHEFKA: So, yes, that is my concern.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Okay. Amy, did you have your hand up?

MS. DUKES: Yes, Madam Chair, but I think your response back to Kerry is going to kind of get where I was going, if we're going to continue to discuss this. I would just simply say, in addition to Kerry's comments about the vitalness of having an in-person SSC meeting, that there would be ample time added to their agenda, to ensure that they can have a complete conversation. They may need to extend the timeframe.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. Any other discussion on this motion? We're taking some notes there. **Any objection to this motion?** All right. **Motion carries.** Andy.

MR. STRELCHECK: If we've dispensed with it, I wanted to go to a couple other things. We're moving quickly through the report, and I wanted to go back to the MSY reference points. During committee, we had discussion about this coordination back and forth between the council and the SSC. I just want to make sure that that intent is understood, and reflected, and I don't know if that working group is going to be the place where that happens, but I just want to confirm that first.

MS. MCCAWLEY: That's a great point. In fact, we might have even given some direction to staff, and I didn't see it in there, and so I appreciate it. So, Myra, maybe you guys can go back and look. I think that there was some nice typed-up statements about this during the committee discussion. Andy.

MR. STRELCHECK: Yes, and so thank you for that. The second item is I don't see, anywhere in the report, Robert's motion about an aggregate bag limit, and I think we talked about that early on in this committee, and so I just wanted to confirm when that would be discussed, or where that would be discussed.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Yes, and we had identified that. I was working with Mike. I saw that too, and so I appreciate it. Myra, you guys can figure out how you want to discuss it, because I'm assuming we want to display the motion, but it isn't in the report.

MS. BROUWER: Okay. I'm sorry. I'm still stuck on this direction to staff regarding the workgroup. I'm not sure I captured that.

MS. MCCAWLEY: It wasn't about the workgroup. It was about how the council is going to talk about this afterwards. There was a whole discussion about, remember, this iterative process between the council and the SSC, et cetera, and then we took the word "iterative" out, but there was a nice statement about it, and so I think we're just saying can you go back and grab that statement and put it in here, and I don't think we need to recreate the wheel or anything. I would just go get this statement.

MR. CARMICHAEL: It's not direction. It's a descriptive statement of how this is supposed to work.

MS. MCCAWLEY: It's not exactly about the workgroup. It's about how, as a body, following this MSY proxy discussion, how, as a body, we want to operate, and we did spend a lot of time on that. I appreciate Andy catching it, since it wasn't pasted in here. All right. Are we good to move on? Okay.

Do we want to go back to black sea bass, and go back to the committee clarification, and so a little bit further down, Myra. Right in there. Okay, and so it looks like we need some more discussion on this.

The committee later clarified that the proposed actions from the above motion could be considered through a framework amendment and directed staff to develop this amendment as a framework rather than a plan amendment. The framework amendment will include actions to address annual catch targets, or annual catch limits, and this says clarify, for both sectors, recreational size limit and then consider alternatives from eleven to thirteen inches, by one-inch increments. Recreational bag limit, consider alternatives other than no action, ranging from one fish to four fish. Commercial trip limits, look at average trip harvest and clarify range of alternatives at Full Council. Consider different trip limits for different gears. Recreational spawning closure, consider alternatives from July through April, in two-month increments. Include an alternative that closes the recreational sector from February through March, and may develop as four alternatives, other than no action, one for each month, and the council can select which months to include. Let's have some more discussion on here. Over to Kerry.

MS. MARHEFKA: Yes, and so I'll start with the ACL/ACT discussion. Generally, our council has not used ACTs. Should we take a second right now and determine whether or not that is a tool we want to use in this, because, if we're not going to use it, there's no point in trying to figure it out. Then hopefully we'll have some more detailed discussion of the commercial trip limit, that I'm hoping these guys have more information.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. Thoughts on ACTs? Tim.

MR. GRINER: Yes, and thank you for that, Kerry. You know, we don't use ACTs, and I would just as soon that it come out of the discussion altogether, I mean, especially with -- You know, in light of the situation we have with the stock as it is. I mean, personally, I would just like to see that come out.

MS. BROUWER: Okay. Then we'll have to go back to the motion you just approved, which was for an ACT, and that was the discussion that was had in committee. My recollection was that that was an ACT, and, even though you haven't used them, that doesn't mean that you can't.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Andy, and then Kerry.

MR. STRELCHECK: The challenge with specifying an ACT is then we have to re-specify the accountability measures, because the accountability measures are all contingent on the catch limits.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Okay. Good call. Kerry.

MS. MARHEFKA: Okay, and so that's a con. I was trying to remember the pros, or think of why we had it in there in the first place, right, because the whole idea -- Like, if you think big picture, I think we said that we were going to -- Right now, in this plan, we're going to reduce the ACL by 50 percent, did we say?

So let's, just real quick, make sure we're thinking this through. If we reduce the ACL by 50 percent, then the ACT is only useful if that number is then reduced from the ACL, right, because why have an ACT, unless it's reduced from the ACL, and are we intending then to go down a little? I don't believe we are, and so it doesn't seem utilitarian for this.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Andy.

MR. STRELCHECK: Yes, and we're actually probably reducing far more than 50 percent from the ACL, because we're basing it off of recent average landings, right, and, like any amendment, we have to look at a reasonable range, and so we're going to have to also, I would expect, look at some alternatives to what we've recommended here in the motion.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Okay. Sorry, and I missed part of that discussion, because we were trying to figure out if we needed to redo this motion. Myra, or John, can you offer some thoughts here about the --

MR. CARMICHAEL: We were just trying to go back through the logic behind this, and it has to do with the fact that you have AMs tied to ACLs, and the thought was, given this is viewed as somewhat of a temporary item, knowing that there are other things coming on this, that if we just -- If you set it up so that you managed to an ACT, that has a lower level, you wouldn't get into the complexity of, you know, changing ACLs and AMs and everything else, and all that other stuff, within the black sea bass as it is, and so it's a way of bringing yourself down, in terms of what you target.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Okay. I think we're good here. Can we scroll down a little bit? Then did we -- The first yellow "clarify in Full Council", are we good on that one, Myra? Okay. Yes. All right. Then, you see the range of size limits and bag limits for recreational, down to the commercial

trip limit, and I don't know if we have that average harvest information and the range of alternatives here. I thought that we were waiting on some information that was going to come back at -- Go ahead, Andy.

MR. STRELCHECK: Well, I'm struggling still with the annual catch target, versus catch limit. So, John, based on what you just said, I still see this as problematic, because, the way the accountability measure reads, we set the season based on when we would expect the annual catch limit to be met, and so that means we're going to be open year-round, even if we set a catch target lower than that. We don't want to do that.

MR. CARMICHAEL: I agree. We don't want to do that, and so if we need to clarify that it should actually be the annual catch limit for that purpose, then I think the council should probably do that. I mean, trying to think of the easiest way to do that, maybe you just make a motion, another motion, that you clarify your intent is annual catch limit, for the various things that you've discussed, and not the annual catch target, or maybe we proceed with what we have, and, when we come back in September, and everybody has time to work this out, from six different angles, and we tell you what we think is the actual appropriate thing, and, at that time, you could say, based on the information we received at this meeting, we think it's better to use the ACL.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Are you okay with that, Andy? Okay. All right. Myra, or Chip, are we looking at this average trip harvest?

MR. CARMICHAEL: Chip has got some information we're bringing up here that is hot off the presses.

DR. COLLIER: Well, this was the fishery overview that was provided. I can't remember when it was provided. It has data through 2022, and so, when you're thinking about trip limits, think about the number of trips, but also think about the pounds associated with those trips. There's two different ways to look at this.

This first -- This top graph I have for you is the number of pounds coming from different trips, and you can see, beginning in 2010, a lot of the trips were catching over a thousand pounds. However, in the more recent time period, a lot of the overall catch isn't necessarily coming from trips from a thousand pounds. It has really reduced over time, and then the number of trips -- We have that below. A lot of the trips were catching less than fifty pounds, and then it moves up from there, but, if you look at the most recent time period, many of the trips are catching less than 500 pounds.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Kerry.

MS. MARHEFKA: What if we consider -- Again, I feel pretty strongly that I would like to explore the idea of differential trip limits by gear, because what -- I assume, Chip, this is aggregated gear types, and that the few trips that are hitting a thousand pounds now are the pot guys, and they are making directed trips, and I don't want to affect that, because I'm sure there's some outlier out there, but, in my knowledge, the majority of the hook-and-line guys aren't making a trip on black sea bass.

They're not -- That is not going to make or break their day, and so I just want to make sure we're not hurting them, and so if we look at -- Jimmy and Charlie -- Charlie, do you have it worked out?

Do you want to say it? I'm just thinking like we have a range, for the trap guys, of their trip limit, and maybe we look, just because we need a full range, from 500 to 1,000, and then we have a different range for the hook-and-line guys, that's maybe one. I mean, seriously. I mean, not zero, but some small *de minimis*, you know, incidental amount, up to 250.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Charlie.

MR. PHILLIPS: Well, we've got some input from Chops, and he's still thinking thousand-pound trip limits, and, with the price of the fish -- Even at a thousand pounds, I think, from what I gather, he's only going when the price is up, because it just doesn't make sense, and so those -- As Kerry said, those dedicated pot fishermen, they need that thousand pounds, and so I wouldn't deviate far from that, if you had to make a range, but, again, to Kerry's point, hook-and-line, it's by catch.

We catch fifty pounds, ten pounds. If we had basically a trip limit, on hook-and-line, of fifty pounds to 250 pounds, I don't think it's going to matter, because they're not going to direct. We're not directed. It's just bycatch.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Okay, and so what I took from that, and it looks like Myra is trying to capture it, and so, for pots, it seems like we're talking about the thousand pounds still, but, the hook-and-line, I heard alternatives between fifty and 200, and so that's what I heard. Tim.

MR. GRINER: Yes, and, you know, I've spoken at length with Chops, you know, and those are the guys we're really trying to protect here, and work with here, and so I don't even know if you need to consider the hook-and-line or anything. If you just leave it -- If you just leave it at a thousand pounds for the pot guys, then that kind of takes care of the rest of us, right? I mean, you're not going to do a thousand pounds hook-and-line, right, and so what difference does it really matter? You don't even need the action, really. You just, you know, take care -- Make sure that the pot guys can do their thousand pounds and move on.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right, and so, Kerry.

MS. MARHEFKA: I just want to give rationale, for anyone, because we're going really fast, but just remember the commercial fishery -- You know, because we are reporting, and we're monitored, and our accountability comes in is when that fish has caught, the fishery is closed, and so changing the commercial trip limit does nothing other than we use it as more of an economic tool, to spread out the season, and to do things like that, but it does not serve a biological purpose. Trip limits do not in this fishery, and so it makes sense to just not even have an action, and let it be a thousand pounds, and let it ride, and reduce the workload.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Charlie.

MR. PHILLIPS: Yes, and I agree. We could set it, a hook-and-line, but we're really not doing anything. We're not doing anything at all, because we're not going to catch it, and so -- We just -- We don't need to be just doing extra work, but we could put in the rationale of why we didn't set a hook-and-line, is it's just a bycatch, and that might be helpful to the public.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right, and so Myra is typing there. Mike.

DR. SCHMIDTKE: I guess a clarifying question, just because this is going to have to move with a certain amount of speed, and so we need to make sure we have alternatives kind of fleshed out as we bring this back to you in September. Thinking about the commercial trip limits, would there still be -- I guess, thinking about how those landings are spread throughout the season, when you consider the reduction in the annual catch limit, and the fact that that is likely going to -- That is probably going to change how much of the annual catch is there. Is there any intent of changing the trip limit to even out the landings throughout the year, to be able to have that year-long fishery, or is it just kind of, once it's done, then the council is content for the season to be done, once the landings limit is hit?

MS. MCCAWLEY: Jimmy.

MR. HULL: To that discussion, in conversation with the remaining pot fishermen highliners, like Chops, they fully expect to have a closure, and, going through this amendment, if we had a spawning season closure in the beginning of the year, and, as long as the fishery opened back up by May, they play the market, and they play price.

He goes that I can certainly work -- As long as I have some fish to catch in May, and get some trips in, I'm good, and they fully expect this fishery to close, and are supportive of what we're trying to do to protect it and regrow it, and so I think he -- I think we settled that. He has to have the thousand pounds to make it, and, as far as changing the trip limit to make the season longer, it's not -- It just needs to open -- When it opens up, it's vital that it opens at that springtime, before, further north, the fishery starts getting fed with all this production, and the price drops, and so that was his comments to make.

MS. MCCAWLEY: John.

MR. CARMICHAEL: Jimmy, when you say springtime, like what month are you referring to, since we are talking about a closure?

MR. HULL: May. He says just like the shallow-water grouper opens back up, and he's fine with that. He says that's just right, and then, once it does close, then they will switch fisheries, and probably go, you know, to grouper.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Mike.

DR. SCHMIDTKE: Kind of leading into the next action that you'll talk about, within the committee, it was discussed, for a recreational spawning season closure, within the motion above, it was talked about for both sectors, and so I just wanted to make sure there's clarification on is it recreational only, or are both sectors included in that closure?

MS. MCCAWLEY: Okay. First, before we get to the closure part, are we good on the typed-up language there on commercial trip limits? Just check that out. Is everybody good with that? Are there any other comments on that? Okay. I don't see any hands. Then, that spawning season closure, first, it's listed there as recreational, even though the motion didn't have it listed that way. Do we really mean rec and commercial, and that we should clarify that here? Okay. I see some heads nodding yes, and so then let's -- I'm going to pass it to the chair. Maybe we have a break, and let people discuss some of these things, but over to Trish.

MS. MURPHEY: Yes, and let's go ahead and take a break. You all think about this stuff and come back in, what, ten minutes?

MS. MCCAWLEY: Sure.

MS. MURPHEY: Come back in ten minutes, and so thanks.

(Whereupon, a recess was taken.)

MS. MURPHEY: All right, everybody. Let's get back to the table, and I'll turn it back over to Jessica, and we'll finish up Snapper Grouper.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. First, I would like to start with what you're seeing on the screen there, the direction to staff that Andy was asking about, that had to do with the discussion about MSY proxy, and so we're just showing you that this has been added back into the committee report, and so just good to go here. All right.

Back into black sea bass. All right, and so, when we took a break, we were talking about the spawning closure. We were discussing whether it should be for both sectors. It seems like we are suggesting it should be for both sectors, and so just making sure.

All right, and so back to spawning closure, and so, when we broke, we talked about how the spawning closure would be considered for both sectors. Are we good with that? Okay. I see heads nodding yes. All right, and so then there's a note there, from staff, about may develop as four alternatives other than no action, one for each month, and the council can select which months to include. Are we okay with that? Mike.

DR. SCHMIDTKE: I guess is the intent of the council to have whatever timing of the closure, if it's -- You know, if it's not that full January through April timeframe, whatever closure happens for the commercial also happens at the same time for the recreational, and like no offset of any type of closure, and everything is happening for both sectors at the same time, correct?

MS. MCCAWLEY: Andy.

MR. STRELCHECK: For the most part, yes, I would generally agree with that, but I think, to provide flexibility to us, I would consider separating them, so that we could have offset, if we needed to consider that, based on public input.

DR. SCHMIDTKE: Okay, and so, in that case, just kind of letting you know what I'm thinking, going in, and what may come back to you is there may be an action that has -- I guess it would be a total of nine alternatives, or something like that, but there would be one for each month, and you would build whatever your spawning season closure is by selecting multiple alternatives, and so just know that that's what is coming back to you and, yes, there would be a large number, but it's not as complicated as it may look when it comes back.

MS. MCCAWLEY: I see heads nodding yes. All right. Before we leave black sea bass here, is there anything else? Do we need to go back to that commercial trip limit? I know that there was a lot of discussion at the break. Are we good on black sea bass? Okay. It looks like, yes, we are.

All right. Next up, we reviewed the Snapper Grouper Commercial Subcommittee, which met on June 9, and we reviewed the summary report from that meeting, and, based on the subcommittee's recommendation, the committee passed the following motion.

**Motion Number 3 is approve Amendment 60 for scoping. On behalf of the committee, I so move. Is there any discussion? Is there any objection? All right.** Then, in addition -- I'm sorry. Amy.

MS. DUKES: Thank you, Madam Chair. Not about the motion, but about the commercial subcommittee. During public comment at this council meeting, and at previous council meetings, we have heard, from commercial fishermen, about the inconsistencies in their reporting requirements amongst the different regions, and I was curious as if we could potentially ask the service to provide some additional update, at a future subcommittee meeting, regarding the one-stop initiative and if we can figure out better ways to make reporting efficiency better for the commercial fishermen.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Mike is trying to capture it, and so make sure what's going up there is what you intend. All right. Are we good with that? Okay. In addition to direction provided in the subcommittee summary report, the committee directed staff to include consideration of replacing gear onboard restrictions with stowage requirements among the actions being considered in this amendment, and the committee also directed staff to include consideration of multiday trip limits, potentially for a subset of snapper grouper species, and, finally, the committee directed staff to ask the public, through scoping, whether and when commercial fishing trips are being limited by current trip limits, as well as when fishermen begin to reduce directed effort on a trip to avoid exceeding trip limits. Andy.

MR. STRELCHECK: Just as clarification, that last statement, I think you're going to get a lot of public input of like, oh, well, because you said a trip limit, it's limiting me, right, and my intent was more catch limits that aren't being harvested, right? Are the trip limits set too low, and, by increasing them, we would allow for more opportunity to harvest that catch limit, and so I just wanted to provide that clarification.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Mike is adding some wording, and so make sure that captures your intent.

MR. STRELCHECK: Thanks.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Okay. Anything else on the commercial subcommittee? Tim.

MR. GRINER: Yes, and thank you for adding that, Andy. I mean, I just wanted to make -- To reiterate that that is, you know, kind of the intent there, is to not have a trip limit that is not being met, but not just to have a trip limit that doesn't really make any sense, because you can't even meet the -- You know, it's not like an unlimited trip limit.

MS. MCCAULEY: All right. Thank you. Anything else relative to the commercial subcommittee? Amy.

MS. DUKES: Thank you, Madam Chair. On a sidebar conversation that I had with Chip, we talked about the 90 percent of trips where the catch limit was being -- We were actually thinking about maybe reconsidering that number, and maybe just having it reduced a little bit, and so I was hoping we might be able to get that for the next subcommittee meeting. Cool. Thanks, Chip. That was a thumbs-up from Chip.

MS. MCCAULEY: I saw a thumbs-up from Chip. I'm not sure I understand what it was, but --

MS. DUKES: Chip had presented the number of commercial trips that had reached the trip limit for any particular species, but they were looking -- He was looking at about a 90 percent of the trip limit, and it was suggested that maybe we look a little bit below 90 percent. Fishermen often are worried about going over their trip limit, based on the gutted weight to whole weight ratio. They might be falling just short of that 90 percent, and I would like that number to come down a little bit to look at it.

MS. MCCAULEY: Do you have a suggested percentage, like 75 or 80 percent?

MS. DUKES: 75 to 80 sounds good, but I'll leave that to the discretion of Chip when he starts seeing those percentages go up.

MS. MCCAULEY: All right, and we're trying to capture that, because it does sound like we would have to look at that data a little bit differently, and, if we need it for the next meeting, we need to indicate that. Okay. That's being captured. Jimmy, then Tim.

MR. HULL: Thank you, Madam Chair. The one line here says ask in scoping for trip limits that are not being harvested, and is it because the trip limits are too low, and that doesn't make sense to me, for some reason. Ask if the trip limits are not being harvested -- Okay.

MS. MCCAULEY: Andy, are you okay with changing that to because the ACLs are too low? Okay.

MR. HULL: Yes, and the annual catch limit is not being harvested.

MR. STRELCHER: It's the opposite.

MR. CARMICHAEL: It's just trying to figure out if we have fisheries where the trip limits are too low.

MS. MCCAULEY: All right. We've got it now. All right, and so I had more hands up. Tim.

MR. GRINER: Yes, and so, to the next portion, about the analysis for a threshold lower than the 90 percent, I guess what I'm understanding you're asking is the difference between whole weight and gutted weight, Amy? I mean, I don't think you would need to go lower than 90 percent. I mean, I don't think -- I'm not sure that the difference between whole weight and gutted weight is

greater than 10 percent. I would think it would be closer to this 5 to 7 percent, but I would think that 90 -- I don't know any fish that has more than 10 percent of guts in it.

MS. MCCAWLEY: I have a lot of hands going up. John, then Charlie, then back to Amy.

MR. CARMICHAEL: I'm thinking, if I understand this, it's not just that. It's that they don't have all that precise information of exactly where they are, and so they try to stop short, to avoid going over, and how close are they pushing it, and they may make, first off, an adjustment on what they're even trying to get close to, based on whatever the typical whole gutted difference is.

Then they're also going to -- Let's say that's their ACL, and then they're actually setting a target on their trip that's a little bit short, so that they don't exceed that self-imposed ACL on that trip, to be there, and so maybe it's not 70, and maybe they're trying to get to 90, but they're stopping at 85, in terms of what their mental tabulation is of what they're catching. I think we could probably look at this by a frequency distribution of how -- The percentage of the trip limit that they're catching, and you may see an inflection, somewhere in the data, that you're like, oh, bingo, and that's what Amy was talking about.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Okay, so can we add, Mike, frequency distribution? All right, Charlie, then back to Amy.

MR. PHILLIPS: Thank you, Madam Chair. Yes, and John pretty much nailed it. On top of the fact that some guys just don't count so well. I mean, you're out there for five or six days, and you're getting a half basket, and a half basket, and two-thirds of a basket, and you're gutting down, and your crew tells you one thing, and your captain is inside cooking dinner or something, and so he writes down what the crew says, and I've lost count a number of times that, yes, I've got a thousand pounds of beeliners, and they packed 850 or something, and they're stopping, because they don't want to go over.

Then on the other hand, if our trip limits are too low, and I'll just kind of stretch out from here, and everybody is setting up, and, all right, I'm going to put ice on the boat for a thousand beeliners, and maybe a little of this, and a little of that. Then they set up their boats, and their fuel, and their trip for a certain amount of pounds.

If we do something like give them a 25 percent boost, it's only going to affect a few trips, because most trips aren't hitting limits anyway, but that little -- That 25 percent boost, on those few trips, is going to help get us closer to the ACL, and then, if we look at it halfway through the year, and it's doing more than we think, we adjust it. If it's not doing anything, then we can adjust it, and we can get much closer to the ACL like that, no matter which methodology we use to get there, but setting up the boat for what you're planning on bringing back is critical.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thank you. Tom.

MR. ROLLER: John, I just want to thank you for that clarification. You really explained it. I was trying to wrap my mind around it, but I want to consider this also in a greater context. I think that analysis, and not just to figure out how we increase productivity on trips, is going to be really helpful as to we look at some of these ACLs in future, because, in an environment of less resources,

and an environment of less data, analyzing catch levels, to see why they're not being met, may also help us indicate if there's a problem in the fishery before we can assess it.

MS. MCCAULEY: All right. Good discussion here, and so anything else relative to this commercial subcommittee? All right. I don't see any more hands. I'm moving on. Golden tilefish assessment update, during preparation of Abbreviated Framework 4 for analysis and further discussion, council staff identified some discrepancies between the stock assessment and the commercial landings, as monitored in-season relative to the ACL. Council staff will continue to work with the Southeast Fisheries Science Center, SERO, and data cooperators to identify the source of discrepancies and report back to the committee in September 2025.

All right. Then the committee went into the snapper grouper fishery management unit revision. In March, the council directed staff to compile information on seventeen species in the snapper grouper FMU to evaluate whether they continue to require conservation and management. The committee completed an online survey that included federal guidelines to facilitate a discussion of whether these species are in need of conservation and management.

The council staff reviewed the results of the survey, and the committee concluded that all seventeen species should be considered for either designation as ecosystem component species or removed from the FMU through an amendment.

Several committee members noted that they do not want most of this group of species to be completely unregulated, but also recognized the need for conservation and management of these species may not rise to the same level as others in the FMU. Committee members also noted that some state-level regulations for these species, particularly in North Carolina, South Carolina, and Georgia, are currently dependent on federal regulations. The committee also directed staff to investigate whether a federal permit could be required to commercially harvested ecosystem component or unmanaged species from federal waters.

**Then the committee passed the following motion, which is Motion Number 4, to initiate an amendment to consider removal from the fishery management unit or designation as ecosystem component species or third category for misty grouper, margate, sailor's choice, tomtate, white grunt, bar jack, jolthead porgy, knobbed porgy, saucereye porgy, scup, whitebone porgy, banded rudderfish, blackfin snapper, cubera snapper, queen snapper, Atlantic spadefish, and sand tilefish, and, on behalf of the committee, I so move. Any additional discussion here? All right. Any objections? All right. The motion carries.**

All right. Then we went into yellowtail and mutton snapper, which is Amendment 44. The council reviewed the results of SEDAR 79 for mutton snapper and SEDAR 96 for yellowtail snapper. The SSC chair then provided feedback from the joint Gulf and South Atlantic SSC meeting, and staff reviewed the proposed amendment process for both species, which would start with a joint Gulf and South Atlantic amendment, where the Gulf is the administrative lead. That would establish ABCs and the jurisdictional allocation for both species. Following this amendment, the South Atlantic would initiate an amendment that will update the ACL and sector allocations for both species.

**The committee then made Motion Number 5 to direct staff to resume work on joint Snapper Grouper Amendment 44/Reef Fish Amendment 55 for yellowtail snapper with the addition**

**of ABCs and jurisdictional allocation for mutton snapper, and, on behalf of the committee, I so move. Any discussion? Any objection? All right. The motion carries.**

The private recreational permit and education requirement, which was Amendment 46, due to scheduling and earlier discussions in the meeting in Full Council I, the council decided that discussion of this amendment would be postponed until a later meeting.

Atlantic blueline tilefish, in April and May of 2025, the SSC reviewed the blueline tilefish stock assessment and did not recommend the surplus production model for use in management. Instead, the SSC supported a data-limited approach, based on average catch, to establish the ABC for areas north and south of Cape Hatteras.

For the region north of Cape Hatteras, the SSC also recommended incorporating updated data from the South Atlantic Deepwater Longline Survey to inform the allocation of the ABC. This resulted in 70 percent of the northern ABC being allocated to the Mid-Atlantic and 30 percent to the South Atlantic. For the South Atlantic, this allocation equated to 193,800 pounds, which was added to the ABC recommendation of 133,000 pounds for the area south of Cape Hatteras. The total combined ABC recommended for the South Atlantic was 326,800 pounds whole weight.

Council staff also provided a fishery overview, which included blueline tilefish landings and related data. Notably, landings in some years significantly exceeded the recommended ABC, with recreational catches surpassing 800,000 pounds in certain instances.

The committee expressed concern on how the average catch models were resulting in potential reductions in catch for the South Atlantic region, and the committee decided that, since a management response was not immediately required by the stock status or ABC recommendation, timing and the substance of the management response would be considered later, after the council has considered prioritization and timing of other more immediate actions. Tim.

MR. GRINER: I mean, I'm really struggling with part of this. I don't understand why, or how, this apportionment, or how the SSC -- Or whoever decided that they were going to change the amount that went from the South Atlantic to the to the Mid-Atlantic. I mean, I don't understand how a stock assessment can trick -- Or how, without the involvement of two councils, you can automatically just start shifting percentages around during a stock assessment.

I think we need to have some more discussion about, regardless of where the habitat is, or where we think the habitat is, how do you automatically just start shifting allocation between two councils, without the involvement of the councils, and I feel like that's what has happened here, and so I would like to have some more discussion about that, or help me understand the rationale, or how that actually happened, because, just because there's more fish, it doesn't mean you change who gets more, or change the percentages, and, to me, that's what I feel like has happened here. I feel like the South Atlantic just gave up 15 percent of their fish.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Yes, and it's a great question. Are you intending for us to try to resolve that today, or are you wanting to provide direction to staff to bring back some additional information or something at a future meeting? Just help me understand.

MR. GRINER: Well, I mean, I think you've got to discuss it right away, because I think the -- I mean, if I was in the Mid-Atlantic -- If I was on the Mid-Atlantic, I'm rushing forward to get my amendment done, right, and so, you know, I mean, time is kind of of the essence with something like this, because, you know, you're kind of sitting on the outside looking in right now.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Andy.

MR. STRELCHECK: This is a question for staff, or council members that can recall, and how is the 56 percent/44 percent apportionment decided previously? Does anyone remember? Mike.

DR. SCHMIDTKE: The 56/44 was based on the tilefish pilot survey that was conducted, I think, in 2018. At the end of the last assessment, that was kind of the precursor pilot survey that eventually led to the South Atlantic Deepwater Longline Survey, and that was conducted for one year. It was conducted over a more limited area than what is covered by the SADL survey, and that came up with the 56/44, and that was used because that was the only information that we had to inform how many blueline tilefish would potentially be in the Mid-Atlantic region, particularly at that time, and have any type of comparison to what would be in that sliver region between Hatteras and the Virginia-North Carolina border.

The SADL information two years' worth of the SADL information was done in this round, and, again, it was in similar fashion of looking at what is in the sliver region, and what is north of the Virginia-North Carolina border, and, as it was noted in the meeting, kind of the way that the catches were within that survey.

In the sliver, you have a small area that is highly dense with blueline tilefish. In the Mid-Atlantic region, you have a less dense area, a less dense with fish area, but a larger area, and so, when you take the catches per area, and you expand across the areas, that's where you get the difference in the apportionments of the ABC, and so that's some brief summary of the discussions there.

I guess, to Tim's comment, the group that discussed this was a joint group, with members included from the South Atlantic SSC and the Mid-Atlantic SSC, and so that's who kind of discussed this apportionment, and they had a workshop, and they reviewed the results of the northern model, the North of Hatteras assessment model, as well as looking at the SADL information and kind of where the catches from that survey were distributed.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Tim.

MR. GRINER: Thank you for that, but, you know, I still go back to, you know, you can't pick and choose when two years' worth of data is appropriate and not appropriate, and, secondly, I don't really think that, whether it be a joint SSC or a single SSC, that starting to have the conversation about percentages and allocations is within the purview of any SSC, whether it's a single SSC or a combined SSC. That's the purview of these councils. That's what you guys are sitting around this table to do, and so, you know, two years of data is great.

That's great, but, you know, I think everybody can acknowledge that the density is exactly where you said it was, and that does not, in my mind, have any rationale for moving fish away from that density. To me, it's the exact opposite, and so I just want you guys to have that conversation and

not set the precedent that, you know, you're going to let two SSCs to start having management decisions among themselves, and that's exactly what I feel like has happened here.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Mike.

DR. SCHMIDTKE: So, in this discussion, what was -- The reason why the SADL information, and the fishery-independent surveys, were being used here was to identify their best estimate of where fish are located. That's what was happening here, and so they were trying to identify what portions of the acceptable biological catch, which is the SSCs purview, and to be able to see what portion of the acceptable biological catch is located in one region versus another.

A discussion about allocation, and how to manage a stock that crosses jurisdictional boundaries, and that seems to be something that Tim is alluding to more, that would need to be something that is a communication between the councils, but that wouldn't be an apportionment of the ABC. That would be a recognition of a collective ABC for an entire region, and then the councils negotiate which areas should be having which portions of fish, and that may or may not necessarily be reflective of the biological areas where those fish exist.

That's something that this council has kind of set up with the Gulf Council, for a couple of the species that you all jointly manage with them, and that's not something that is set up currently for blueline tilefish with the Mid-Atlantic. There are two separate FMPs, and not a joint plan, that's there, and so any type of allocation discussions would take a bit more of process, from the management end, to set up that relationship between the two councils.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Tim.

MR. GRINER: Yes, and I guess my main takeaway from this is you're basing this on two years' worth of SADL, that you're picking and choosing when you think that date is applicable and not applicable, right, and, you know, you're trying to broadcast that over a wide swath of ocean, that, you know, yes, it has a line there for us, but it doesn't have a line there for the fish, right, and so, you know, the fish themselves are -- They're densely aggregated around that sliver for a reason, you know, and that doesn't necessarily mean that they're all over the Mid-Atlantic, right?

I'm just cautioning you, cautioning this council, about allowing a very small amount of data to be used for one purpose and not for another purpose, right, and so, you know, at the end of the day, it's a good thing for this council, because it's -- You know, at the end of the day, blueline tile is going to get a bump up in quota, but I'm just saying, you know, I don't know that there's any real true rationale for that bump up to be 15 percent less than it should be.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Andy, and then Kerry.

MR. STRELCHECK: I appreciate your comments, Tim. I mean, I think all of us agree that, if there was more data available, we would like to have more data, and the next assessment for blueline will have more years of SADL data, to be able to partition between the two regions. You know, to move this along, I think it probably would be beneficial to kind of come back to this topic in September. I would be interested in kind of understanding the landings between the two regions.

I mean, often, we partition harvest between the South Atlantic and Gulf Councils based on some, you know, history of landings data. Based on, obviously, what Mike shared, I certainly understand why the percentage, or ratio, would change based on the expansion of the survey, understanding that there's more blueline in the Mid-Atlantic, but I hear, obviously, Tim, that we also want to make sure that this is representative of both regions and that -- You know, my main concern is, if we don't apportion it correctly, right, and if we apportion too much to one region or other, you could essentially result in too much fishing mortality on the stock in one area and too light fishing mortality in the stock for another area, and so balancing that is really critical.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Kerry.

MS. MARHEFKA: Has there ever been discussion about it going from doing it this way to doing a joint plan?

MR. CARMICHAEL: What's that?

MS. MCCAWLEY: So Kerry is asking if we can do a joint plan with the Mid-Atlantic, like we do a joint plan with the Gulf Council.

DR. SCHMIDTKE: Myra is whispering in my ear the clarification of a joint amendment, and not a joint plan.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thank you. A joint amendment.

DR. SCHMIDTKE: But that's something that -- I guess I'm looking at John, or Myra, and like that's something that we could potentially communicate with the Mid-Atlantic on, and I'm not sure.

MR. CARMICHAEL: I think it's something that we could. I would reflect back upon our earlier discussion about committee representation, and, you know, I expect the Mid-Atlantic -- I wouldn't be surprised if they would be like, well, gee, you know, and -- But, to that I would say let's consider that we also said can we provide more clarity and the information we would like from a neighboring council, and so can we -- Can we come up with some sort of letter, or text, that we want to convey to the Mid-Atlantic and express what our issues are and what we would like to do?

Do we want to have some sort of sub-council committee meeting, with them and us together, and talk about this, because I don't think it's very efficient for us to talk, and them to talk, and us to talk, and them to talk. We were successful in getting SSCs together. Maybe we can be successful in getting a couple of committee council members from each council together, who are interested and engaged and on up on the blueline tilefish issues that could sort of talk about this, because we're talking about where fish exist.

We're not talking about where fishermen go, and fishermen can go from one area to another, and I bet a lot of these fishermen have permits to fish in either area, in either jurisdiction, and can kind of go wherever something is open, and so, to me that's another other whole wildcard in this whole thing, is what the fishermen themselves are going to do, and sometimes, when you start dividing stuff up from one area to another area, all you do is force fishermen to go fish in one area and bring their fish back and sell them to another area.

You know, to me there's a lot of moving parts in here, and I don't know, and I'm struggling to get my arms around it, like I think Tim is in a lot of cases too, but just something doesn't seem right here, and it seems like we got an awful lot of unknowns, that we're not fully understanding, and we're concerned about, yes, changing the allocation based on where fish happen to be, but we're not thinking about the fishery, and where fishermen go, and how they're going to interact under these changes in allocations.

Are we just driving fishermen to fish somewhere else, where fish are less dense, to still catch the fish, but spend more time and energy and money doing it? Well that wouldn't be very good and so I have a lot of questions about maybe we need to start thinking about what are specific questions, and can we reach out to the Mid-Atlantic and say, hey, can we get together in some way, and, Sonny, I don't want put you on the spot, because I doubt you guys have talked about, you know, that opportunity at all, but you're -- I'm trying to think of when like your next meeting is, in August or something, and so, if we were to try to reach out to you guys, say in writing, with some questions, and maybe a request, when would we need to have that?

MS. MCCAWLEY: Sonny.

MR. GWIN: So the question is when we would get a letter questioning these quota? Well, I could I would say as soon as possible. I mean, that's -- I mean, in my opinion, and, I mean, that's up to the council, to your council, and, then once we got the letter, then we could make the time to address the letter, the council could.

MR. CARMICHAEL: When is your next meeting?

MR. GWIN: In August.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Okay. I've got a I got a number of hands up, but, Mike, or whoever is over there on the computer, can you type up some direction of our intent here, that we intend to communicate with the Mid-Atlantic, through a letter, and that we would be requesting some type of meeting, and you can start typing while I'm still taking hands here, so all right. Kerry, Tom, and then Tim. All right. Tom.

MR. ROLLER: This is a complicated, right, a complicated solution, and a complicated problem, but it also requires very specific knowledge to a specific fishery, and so the just the small point, that I want to go back to the committee membership, is, when we talk about committee membership, I don't think that this would be a good problem that would be solved by simply having a committee member.

If we're going to approach an amendment like this, this is going to be more along the lines of, I think, councils convening a couple of our expert committee members together to discuss some sort of joint amendment, or other sort of activity, and so my point is, just to committee membership, I think that this is another way in which to work with committees that don't actually -- That doesn't just resolve around having one stationary committee member from another council.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Okay. Tim.

MR. GRINER: Yes, and thanks for that, Tom, but, without getting too sidetracked here, I don't -- I'm not sure I'm I know where we are, or where we were headed with a with a plan to go -- Or what we wanted to do in the interim, but I don't want to lose sight of the fact that, whatever you do, it's got to be in the interim, and it's got to be a little bit more than just accepting a new catch level advice, I mean, because this increase, and it is an increase for the South Atlantic, needs to also have, as a component to go with it, a very hard look at an increase in commercial trip limits, right, and so, you know, that's one of the constraining things that, you know, we're we need to get our arms around as well.

I mean, with this new increase, we need to look at an increase in trip limits, or at least a, you know, a range of actions, whether they be 400, 450, or 500 pounds of trip, but, you know, the whole goal here is to, you know, increase efficiency, which is part of these trip limits as well as an increase in the ABC, and so, you know, I know, you know, originally, it seemed like it was just an action to accept this new ABC advice, but I think it needs to have more consideration than just that.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. We captured some points there about what we intend to do. The first point, the communicate through a letter, does that need to have a timing component on it, that it says something like as soon as possible, or immediately, with the intent of getting it to them before their August meeting? John.

MR. CARMICHAEL: Yes, and their August meeting is like the second week. They start around the 11<sup>th</sup>, and so they'll be doing their Federal Register and stuff, and, if we want to get this on their agenda, so they can talk about it officially, we should get it to them, I would say by -- Certainly by the end of June, and I can let Chris know that this is potentially coming, and we would like to, you know, ask that they have some discussion of it.

You know, I think, to Tom's point, I hope this is a good way to say that, despite that earlier thing, you know, we discussed some other ways like this, and we put this forward as, you know, we think this is the real better way to deal with these kind of issues, because it is very specialized, and we do need to get the right people together.

I think the letter would suggest like maybe some sort of subset of council members that could potentially gather, who are well-versed in this issue, and try to figure out how we handle it, and maybe talk some about process, so that we don't get all tangled up like this in the future as well in dealing with blue line.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thank you for that clarification. Charlie.

MR. PHILLIPS: Thank you, Madam Chair, and, just looking at this from a very high level, 20,000 feet or whatever, you know we've already got shrimp landings up in the Chesapeake area, and we know we've got red snapper moving north. This might be an opportunity for us to kind of set the template on the other species that we're going to be dealing with after blue line tile, and so it gives us an opportunity to start, you know, laying some groundwork, and maybe some policies, on how we're going to do some of these other species that we will be dealing with.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. This has been a good discussion. I think we've captured all this, and I'm going to go back to the committee report. All right, and so, for the AP report for topics not covered on the agenda, the Snapper Grouper AP met April 2 through 3, and the topics for this

meeting were largely addressed in this meeting, or planned to be addressed at the next council meeting. The committee had an opportunity to ask any clarifying questions of the acting AP chair, but no further discussion was had.

Then the management strategy evaluation update, and Blue Matter Science was selected to continue its work on the snapper grouper MSE. As part of this effort, they will develop scenarios to evaluate aggregate bag limits (Amendment 59) and additional management scenarios informed by the ongoing angler attitudes and perception research led by the University of Florida. The final MSE products are expected to be presented to the council in September 2026, coinciding with the conclusion of the Blue Matter contract.

We had some other business, and this is where we put the aggregate bag limit. This was actually discussed early in the committee. The committee discussed an aggregate recreational bag limit for the snapper grouper fishery and made Motion Number 6 to decouple the action to implement a recreational aggregate bag limit from the management strategy evaluation amendment and direct staff to report to the council in September 2025 on ways to develop this amendment. On behalf of this uh the committee, I so move. I'm assuming we want some discussion on this, based on the amount of discussion we had earlier. Does anybody want to have additional discussion? Andy.

MR. STRELCHECK: Yes, and, I mean, I'll start. I mean, I voted for this in committee. I'm still concerned about it being premature, and putting the cart before the horse, with the ongoing FWC exempted fishing permits ongoing, and not having, obviously, the results of that, and so it's, to me, hard to proceed with an amendment without having the full picture of the details of those studies and how we could effectively implement them.

I also felt like there was more clarity needed with regard to what we're actually considering with the aggregate bag limit, and I asked this question in committee, because it was not just simply like how many fish are we going to include in the aggregate bag limit, and there's a lot of details, in my view, in terms of how you implement an aggregate bag limit process like this, and what at least was said in committee is that we're not necessarily considering reporting, or some of the components that the FWC has considered, in terms of how they're allocating out these trips for aggregate bag limits, and so, to me, that kind of points to, once again, I think there's more information that needs to inform this process.

I'm supporting it simply because I want to -- I want change, and I want us to be doing something to help with red snapper harvest, but I still question whether or not this is going to take longer, just simply because of the timing of this motion.

MS. MCCAWLEY: I saw some other hands. Just to add a little bit to what Andy said, I guess I'm concerned, and I know NOAA can't tell us, but I'm concerned that maybe NOAA doesn't approve the three FWC EPSs, because this is being started, and I don't know. Kerry.

MS. MARHEFKA: Andy, you said a lot of what I was thinking, and the other thing I just want to add to it is, on its surface, I do feel like it it's logical, and it makes sense, and I think a lot of the reason that it feels so logical is because we're looking at what's happening in Florida, and I don't think we've -- Like you can take into account how different that is going to be applied in other states, the different fish we're talking about, the fish in other states that are interacted with, that, if

you land on that fish, and you take five gag grouper, what a huge issue that becomes, and so I think it is much, much more complicated.

We are only going to have EFP data out of Florida. I mean, ideally, I would like to see other states implement EFPs, so we can see the differentiation of how this works in practice in very different ecosystems, and that's probably not going to happen, but, at the very least, you know, waiting for the final information out of Florida would be really important to me.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Tom.

MR. ROLLER: I thought I was further down the list. You know, I'm certainly supportive of this idea. I think it's really innovative, and I think that it's something that we need to consider for the future, but my concerns, and issues, and, again, I would speak to somewhat of what Andy said, and what Kerry said, is that there are so many questions that I have here, so many questions not just about the makeup of what the aggregate would look like, but all the regional differences, and how we interact with our fisheries differently.

Like I go back to my joke about it's simply going to be a ten or fifteen tomtate limit for fishermen in North Carolina, right, and so I think that we have -- I have so many questions about this, that that's why I've been uncomfortable with the timing of it, and specifically when we look at the context of our discussions around what we're going to do with some of these fish from the FMU, right, and like -- I think like, if we're going to remove those, or make them make another aggregate, I think that I would be more apt to support this once we have an idea, once we kind of tier out this fishery section, this fisheries unit, a little bit differently.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thank you. I've got other hands going up, and so Robert, John, Mike, Jimmy, Charlie.

MR. SPOTTSWOOD: I feel like everybody is thinking of what the downside of this could be, and just saying we don't want to start it because of what that could be, and, I mean, the direction here is direct staff to report to the council in September on ways to develop this amendment. I mean, that -- I think there's a lot of questions that we've got to ask. I am not --

Every question that everybody has raised is a good question, but, until we start putting this thing together, and I'll remind the council that I think there's been amendments that have been worked on for ten years, and so this is not something that's going to happen fast, but, if we keep kicking this can, we're going to run out of road, and it's too late, and we've gone too far.

We need to start this work, and, you know, Jessica, your point about does NOAA not approve the Florida EFPs because of this, I mean, what is that, retaliation or something, or like -- That's just ridiculous, to me, and, if we get to that point, I think we'll find some help in D.C. on that, with the new EO and other things that we're looking at, and so I would urge this council -- We talked about it, and I wish we would have had, you know, unanimous approval on this to move forward, because I think, if we all get aligned, and everybody puts their heads together, we're going to ask the right questions.

We're going to vet this the right way, and we're going to have a way better result, but we've talked about it. Everybody acknowledges we need that we need something like this, and we need to move it, but we're scared to get started, and I think we need to -- I think we need to let the ball roll.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. I have John.

MR. CARMICHAEL: When I think about this, and what's manageable from a staff perspective, this is a very simple action. It's an aggregate limit on top of everything else that you have, and it doesn't let somebody suddenly go catch, if it were twenty, twenty of something that now has a one-fish limit, you know, and so you wouldn't -- You wouldn't have to worry about -- It wouldn't create anything that would enable that sort of running away and superseding all the other species-specific bag limits, et cetera, you have.

Right now, we do have, on a number of species -- They're under a twenty aggregate limit, for a whole mixture of species, and so it's not unprecedented that we would do an aggregate limit. We would just -- In this case, it would be applying to the entire number of snapper grouper that you put in your fish box, or cooler, could only be this many, period, and, you know, there's lots of other things that Florida did, for lots of other reasons. Those are complicated, and would take a lot of time. If you decided that the only way you see this working is if you address all those other things, this doesn't happen quickly, and within the resources that we have right now.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. Mike.

DR. SCHMIDTKE: We can ultimately come back to me, after the council has a decision on this motion, but, if the motion is passed, I would like to have a little bit more conversation on the direction to staff of what we'll be bringing back in September.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thank you. Jimmy.

MR. HULL: Thank you. I think, with all the information that we really need to have, I don't like the idea of stopping a MSE that could possibly give us that information. You know, we're going to decouple the action to implement a recreational aggregate bag limit from the management strategy evaluation, and, you know, is there -- Is that a wise move? I don't know. I think that the MSE information could be very valuable, especially because it would not just center on Florida, but all the other states, I would assume, and we could get a lot better information, and so, you know, it's not happy with all that, and we may want to reconsider that.

MS. MCCAWLEY: I think there's some confusion, Jimmy. This wouldn't stop work on the MSE, and we just talked about the update on that. It's just that, when we discussed this motion at the last council meeting, at Full Council II, it got paired, I guess maybe during the workplan discussion, with the MSE, which is a further out timeline, and so that's why Robert brought this up, is, instead of continuing to kick the can on the aggregate bag limit, let's decouple this, and continue with the management strategy evaluation, that is going to take some time, and move this recreational aggregate bag limit forward, you know, forward in time to sooner, so that we can start seeing some information on it. Robert, does that -- I saw you had your hand up for clarification as well.

MR. SPOTTSWOOD: Yes, and, Jimmy, I agree with you that that would be great information, but I don't think this impacts that moving. In fact, it might make that process easier, because it's not bogged down with the aggregate bag limit portion.

MR. HULL: Okay, and so that answers my question. The MSE will continue addressing -- Okay. Thanks. I'm good with that.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. Charlie, then Kerry.

MR. PHILLIPS: Thank you, Madam Chair, and I'm concerned about the timing, like everybody else, and it's not the motion. It's the timing, and, to Tom's point of fifteen tomtates, you know, in your aggregate, what happens when we take tomtates out of the FMU? Then your aggregate is totally going to change in composition, and are you going to get fifteen tomtates plus fifteen other something else?

It is really going to just -- It's not even going to be the same calculation, and so, when we get your report in December, we'll be a lot -- We can make a lot more better decisions then, and can staff work on some options that we might have, kind of as general options in the meantime, and hopefully that will help us down the road some, but a lot of it is going to depend on what we do with these tomtates and this other stuff.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Yes, and it sounded like that's part of what staff would come back with, is information about how this dovetails with that, but I've got more hands going up. Kerry, then Robert.

MS. MARHEFKA: John had -- I have a dumb question. John had said that the other limits would still apply, right, and so you're -- That's not changing. Explain to me then how that is reducing dead discards, because, if you're only allowed to keep one gag -- You know where I'm going?

MS. MCCAWLEY: Yes, and so this is what's being tested in the exempted fishing permit, and so, ultimately, you're thinking about angler behavior, and so, in order to get to discards, you're saying, okay, you have this aggregate limit, whatever that number is, and, once you get to that aggregate -- Because, if you look at the EFP, we have a nice table in there.

Right now, depending on the time of the year, and what's open and what's closed, and what the other existing limits are, an individual angler could take up to forty-four, forty-seven, or forty-eight snapper grouper species, and so this is why the EFP went in and is testing a fifteen-fish aggregate, meaning like one gag and one black within fifteen fish, and so what happens when you get to that aggregate, and then your behavior has to change.

So we're saying then you have to stop bottom fishing, and you've got to go do something else, and so, instead of saying you can keep bottom fishing, while all the anglers on the vessel are trying to get to say forty-seven snapper grouper species each, because that's all the individual bag limits combined, based on everything that's open in each season, you're saying, instead, that we're setting a smaller number, and that the bag limit could be made up of different species that are open, and might have individual limits in your region, and so, you know, you might be catching yellowtail in south Florida, but you might be catching tomtates in North Carolina, and that helps contribute to this overall limit, and then you're stopping bottom fishing.

That's how it gets to discards, and that's what is being tested, is how to change angler behavior. That's what's being tested in the EFP, and the EFP is also looking at how the interaction with red snapper is combined with this whole aggregate snapper grouper bag limit, and how does angler behavior change, and how does their thought process change in how they fish relative to red snapper and the aggregate, and so just I hope that helps explain.

MS. MARHEFKA: So, to that point, I think that's one of the reasons why -- You know, I'm not saying don't move forward with this. Like everyone else, it's a timing thing, but I think it will be paramount to figure out how that plays out in other areas, because you're thinking about a place where you go and you're getting eaten up by one kind of fish, and there are absolutely places where that is not happening, and it does shift the dynamic of fish that are being caught.

MS. MURPHEY: Listen, and hey, everyone. I think checkout was at 11:00, or is at 11:00, and is everybody good on their checkouts? Do you -- Can we wrap up and try to go, or, Tom, if you just need to go, and I mean -- Okay. Anyway, I just wanted to make everybody aware that checkout is at 11:00 and take care of it.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. Back to Robert, and then over to Mike.

MR. SPOTTSWOOD: I also wanted to point out that, under Other Business, we talk about the committee also discussed an aggregate recreational limit for the snapper grouper fishery, but, when we made the motion, we specifically did not pin all fifty-five species to that, and so, to your point, Kerry, like this may be a subset. It may be the fish that have high discards, that are a problem, that maybe this aggregate bag limit won't impact some of the northern states at all, but it will get to the heart of the issue, which is the dead discards and, what I hear down the table all the time, reducing recreational fishing effort.

I think there's an alternative to reducing fishing effort, by turning discards into landings, and that that is the goal of this, and I totally acknowledge that I don't know you all's fishery as well as I know ours, and that's my hope, is that staff can be that bridge for us, and start putting the questions together, and figuring out how do we do this, and what species are appropriate, and is there a shallow-water, you know, portion of the complex that we put in a separate aggregate from the deepwater, and are there certain species that maintain -- Tomtates and others, keep their separate bag limits and size limits, and those are the discussions we've got to have, but we're -- It's a lot of information, very, very detailed, and it's going to take a lot of time, but we've got to get going.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Yes, and it really gets to angler behavior, because that's kind of the issue in the snapper grouper fishery, and it is very challenging. If you remember the struggles that have happened in freshwater fishing over time, it just -- It's really about angler behavior, and, as Robert is mentioning, changes in angler behavior takes time, and so it just takes a while, and so he's saying to get started now. Mike.

DR. SCHMIDTKE: I just also wanted to point out that, if this action is considered, that we will be having more information that can help inform some of the discussions from the angler attitudes and perceptions project that is being conducted by the University of Florida. That is expected to be completed by the end of this year, and so we'll be working with Kai and Susana about how to get those results, and have those brought to you for your information as well.

MS. MCCAWLEY: John.

MR. CARMICHAEL: You know, I think the first thing we would do to look at this, that I would want staff to do, is to look at the number of snapper grouper caught per trip in a frequency, and look at it by area, and that's the very first thing. We really don't know how many they're really doing, and we've never looked at this, and so I think getting started means our first step is to bring you some of that descriptive information on various things, and let you start to ponder it, and I do caution that, if we start parsing this out, and making it complicated, then we're probably on a timeline more akin to the MSE.

If we see this as a first aid action, where we're just going to put this cap across the board on the snapper grouper fishery, I think you can get this in quick. If we start dividing it up by area and different groups of species, and different aggregates and such, then, to me, it becomes a really complicated thing, and it will take longer, and so that's sort of, you know, the reality of the workload situation.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Tom.

MR. ROLLER: To John's point, I'm a little bit more supportive of it from approaching it from we need to -- I guess my issue is I need to see some sort of plan, and you're giving me some sort of plan, and I like the idea of not saying slow, but an initial start, and that's a little bit of an analysis, and, if we can get that analysis, maybe we can get a little bit more analysis, and, if that's the way we're going to approach this, I'm more supportive of it.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thank you for that. Any more clarification needed? Does everybody understand? Okay. I see heads are good. All right. I think we're ready to vote on this. **If you're in favor of this motion, please raise your hand. All right. I see seven in favor. Those opposed. Any abstentions?** I only have twelve. I voted yes. I had seven. Let's do -- Can we see the yes votes one more time, please on the hands? Tim, are you a yes or a no? **All right, and so I've got eight in favor, and five opposed. The motion passes.**

MS. MURPHEY: Does anybody else need to check out? Okay. Let's go ahead and take fifteen minutes get to checked out.

(Whereupon, a recess was taken.)

MS. MURPHEY: Okay, everybody. I think, since everyone is here, we'll go ahead and get back going. All right, Jessica, I'll hand it right back.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. I'm going to go ahead and get started, while we're waiting for staff to pull up the motion, or the document, and so, for state management, the committee discussed recent efforts to implement state agency management of snapper grouper species, specifically red snapper, in federal waters.

In September 2025, NMFS will present information about potential paths towards this type of management format, working with ASMFC to use some of the principles used in their management basis. Staff from the Gulf Council will also be asked to present as part of this discussion, and this

isn't in the report, because we didn't discuss this, but I'm also suggesting maybe FWC should give a presentation, so that you have another presentation from the state level, since we were involved in that, but I'll -- I'm going to stop there, in case there's more discussion, or questions, about this topic. Andy.

MR. STRELCHECK: Yes, and I'm supportive of what you just said, Jessica. I think it would be good if NMFS and the Gulf Council and -- Whether it's you or other state -- Just coordinate, so that we don't duplicate efforts, since all of us were involved in that process and different aspects.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Yes, and I agree, and so maybe we can write that we need to coordinate the presentations. The other thing I didn't see here is I think we talked about state agency folks getting together with each other, and then also getting together with NMFS about this, and so I didn't see that coordination discussed here.

MS. BROUWER: I think you may be referring to this bullet that we have under the timing and tasks, where we would request that state agency council reps compile information about how -- I'm sorry, and this is about the removal of species. Never mind.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Okay, and, no, I think we talked about this relative to state management. Kerry.

MS. MARHEFKA: I just want to ensure that, whether it's -- Whoever they choose from Gulf staff, if it's Carrie or whatever, and I think it's going to be paramount that we truly have representation from people who went through the process, the good and the bad in the Gulf, so that we truly understand, because there could be a lot of like memory lapses of what happened, and we would really like to learn from that, and so is that enough? Is a Gulf staff person enough for someone who has gone through the process, if that makes sense.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Are you suggesting that only the Gulf Council staffer, and not NMFS and not --

MS. MARHEFKA: No.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Okay. I'm just not understanding what you're saying.

MS. MARHEFKA: I'm sorry, and maybe it's because it's Friday, and I wouldn't limit it to this list. If there are people -- As we go forward with this process, the more people who were part of that process, who have who have experience with how that happened there, the better, and so I'm not limiting, and I'm almost expanding it, and just keep that mind, and it doesn't need to be written in there, but that will be important to me, because it has been a while, and this -- Everyone giving us information, were they truly involved in that process, and that's all I want to make sure, and so more and not less.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right, and it doesn't say FWC, and it just says others, and are we saying FWC and others? Robert.

MR. SPOTTSWOOD: I think what Kerry is getting to is it should say anybody who had actual experience with the process, right, and, I mean, I'm even thinking of congressional staffers, and

people that were involved that that dealt with the mechanics of this, and I understand some congressional members got involved, in order to make that move in the Gulf, and I assume we're going to have to have some similar support, and so I think this is a pretty broad effort, that is going to require, you know, understanding from multiple components of government and agencies.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Okay. John.

MR. CARMICHAEL: I think this should say "presentations" and I don't want a presentation. I think each entity should be giving their perspective. We don't want a big overall coordinated presentation. I would like to hear from the Gulf Council, and how did this go from a council activity perspective, and, from FWC, how was this from a state management agency perspective, that sort of thing. I think that's -- You know, we're early into this, and I think we need to hear from each entity's perspective, and how did it go from NMFS, and what are the avenues by which you even do this sort of thing, and what decisions does a council have to make to make that happen.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. The thing I still don't see up there, which is a separate thought, is about are we asking state agency people to start having discussions among themselves, as well as with NMFS, about this topic. Tom.

MR. ROLLER: I would -- I'm going to touch on three things, but, yes, I would hope so, right, because of the different natures of our state agencies, the different funding, and the different ways in which we can do things. I think we're going to have to have a conversation.

I agree with John that I want to see a considerable amount of presentations, right, and like I want to see a lot of different input, because, to go back to Robert's point, which I really appreciate, is this is no small undertaking. You know, it was no small undertaking in the Gulf. It took many years to get it right, and so, if we're going to look at this, and do this, we really have to understand it, and we also have to understand the resources that will go into it, and so I really appreciate your comments there, Robert, because that really does preface how much will have to go into it.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Robert.

MR. SPOTTSWOOD: Something else just dawned on me, and I think Martha, sitting in the back of the room, was probably really involved in this with the Gulf Council when it happened, and so maybe there's folks who are no longer with an agency, or government, that we also need to lean on, and so, Martha, I'm volunteering you for somebody to call you at some point.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. Additional discussions on this? Charlie.

MR. PHILLIPS: Thank you, Madam Chair, and are we talking about bringing in LA Creel people, so they can tell us how it was developed, if we wanted to follow that path?

MS. MCCAWLEY: I'm thinking, to me, LA Creel was developed outside of the council process. I don't know that you need an LA Creel person as part of this particular conversation. I think, if you're wanting to get information about state data collection efforts, that's when I think you would bring in LA Creel, but I can tell you that the state agency people have received presentations about LA Creel, when they were thinking about their state data collection programs. Okay. Anything else here? Myra.

MS. BROUWER: Just is there a time component to this? When would you want to have these presentations scheduled?

MS. MCCAWLEY: Well, the state management paragraph above what you just typed says that this will occur in September, and so I'm just trying to --

MR. CARMICHAEL: This is a priority, and so we may have to make some adjustments to the September meeting agenda, to make this happen, and so I'm just making sure this is a top priority.

MS. MCCAWLEY: I'm looking around the table. Is this the top priority for us, that it needs to be shoehorned into September? Amy.

MS. DUKES: Thanks, Madam Chair. Yes, I do think it is a priority, but I also think that, if it couldn't quite sneak into September, that December would also be appropriate, and that may allow the states to begin some of these conversations, as a prelude to some of these presentations as well.

MS. MCCAWLEY: John.

MR. CARMICHAEL: Do you think December is better to hear from all of the entities, to give them more lead time, and then, in September, we focus on the NMFS component, that's just about a much bigger picture overview, broad view, at this time, and, you know, in particular, what does it mean to the council to try and start going down this path, and then, in December, you follow-up and try to get more into the weeds from folks who have been through this before, and does that sound like that would work? You know, Andy is that something that that you guys could accommodate?

MR. STRELCHECK: I'm good with whatever the council wants to do.

MS. MCCAWLEY: I think you should have all the presentations at once, but that's just my opinion, having gone through all this, but I'm up for whatever the group wants to do here. Okay. Any more discussion on this? All right. Moving back to the committee report, we have a lengthy timing and tasks motion there, if someone would like to read the timing and tasks motion.

MS. MARHEFKA: I'll do it, and then I'm running out to see the launch, and I just want you to know, and so you guys talk about it. **Timing and tasks motion is direct the staff to do the following: form the MSY estimation best practices workgroup; use work from Amendment 56 to develop a framework amendment for council consideration for public hearing approval at the September 2025 meeting; conduct scoping for Amendment 60 and meet the Commercial Snapper Grouper Subcommittee at the beginning of the September council meeting, if time allows; continue working with the center and SERO and data operators to investigate differences between commercial landings included in SEDAR 89 and ACL monitoring for golden tilefish; request that the state agency council members compile information about how removal of federal snapper grouper regulations for the seventeen species evaluated for the ecosystem component designation would affect the states' abilities to manage these species and provide to staff ahead of the September 2025 meeting for inclusion on the agenda; begin development of the FMU revision amendment; resume work on the joint Snapper Grouper Amendment 44/Reef Fish Amendment 55 and add mutton**

**snapper to this amendment; work with Blue Matter Science to begin the second phase of the snapper grouper MSE; report to the council in September 2025 on ways to consider an action implementing an aggregate bag limit for the snapper grouper fishery; prepare material for continued discussion on an innovative approach to manage the snapper grouper fishery and bring to the September 2025 council meeting; schedule a meeting of the commercial subcommittee in conjunction with the September 2025 meeting, which I believe is redundant, and there's an earlier point, and this one is better, and, on behalf of the committee, I so move.**

MS. MCCAWLEY: Just clarifying that it wasn't a committee motion, and it's a new motion.

MS. MARHEFKA: Oh shoot. Well, I still move it.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Okay. Good. Got it. All right. Is there a second? All right. It's seconded by Carolyn. Any discussion? **Any objection?** All right. **The motion carries.** Is there any other business to come before the Snapper Grouper Committee? All right. Seeing none, I'll pass it back to you, Madam Chair.

MS. MURPHEY: All right. We're going to bring up the workplan, and get through what we can, and take a break for the launch. Okay, but let's get started on it. Let's get started on it. All right. We're going to get started on it, and then we can run out and watch it and come back and finish.

MR. CARMICHAEL: I emailed this to you earlier, and John made the further change to reflect the discussion in the Mackerel Committee, and a few of the new things are highlighted, and like you'll see the aggregate bag limit, and then some things down relative to say the recreational discussions that we added, and they are highlighted in the green.

MS. MURPHEY: What's the purple/pink? John.

MR. HADLEY: I'll just run down this really quick for you, and so, if you look at the, you know, kind of the overall structure, we have the amendments underway, and we have the plan amendments, and we have other council activities. Then, down here, you'll see the deprioritized amendments, and anticipated amendments, and so that's -- Deprioritized is the new -- Kind of one of the new additions.

Then, also with this version, we've added the SERO priority amendments, and so these are the -- Down here, these are the amendments that are undergoing rulemaking, and so this is to help track some of the, you know, the action items that happen after an amendment is submitted to the agency.

I'm going to go back up here to the top, and I highlighted, in that sort of magenta color, what moved this week, and so that's kind of what that represents. If an amendment is highlighted in blue, that means that it's not responding to a catch level recommendation, or a regulatory deadline, and so those are kind of the discretionary items, if you will, that can move around at the council's will a little bit easier.

Then, also, there's this SERO priority item here as well, and that's a new column with this version of the workplan, and it shows -- You know, if there's nothing there, it doesn't mean that work can't be done on it. This is intended to show, you know, this is sort of an all hands on deck, getting the

full IPT together to work on the amendment, and so that's what this is meant to show, and, you know, kind of where the full staff, both council and agency staff, can be directed.

I'll just go down the list here, really quickly, and highlight some of the changes. We have the long-term red snapper response MSE amendment, and this has changed a little bit. This is going to be sort of an iterative process back and forth, and so it's a little bit longer, or quite a bit longer, than a regular amendment, but the idea is to help build the ideas, build what you may want to do in that long-term assessment, and then that integrates -- It kind of goes alongside the MSE process, and so that's why that looks a little bit different.

We shortened the black sea bass-related amendment, with a target of approving that in December of 2025. Moving down the list, we added the evaluation of snapper grouper species within the FMU, and that was formerly the non-assessed species, and also moved that up, since that is a deregulatory amendment, and you wanted to move those up in the workplan.

We have the commercial fishery amendment, and that's on there. That was also moved up in the workplan. There's a space there for the aggregate recreational limit, and that was an addition, you know, as we just discussed, and the timeline really depends on how intricate that's going to be. If it's just, you know, looking at putting a simple cap on the total number of species, that would be - - That could be potentially a framework, or a fairly speedy amendment, and, if you're looking at having a more detailed discussion on that, it would probably lengthen.

Moving down, here's sort of the other non-FMP-amendment-related items. We have the EO. For September, we have the EO response, the snapper grouper subcommittee, and we added another discussion of headboat vessel limits. That discussion on setting allocations and catch levels, with the inclusion of discards, that was added for March of next year. The innovation plan for the snapper grouper fishery will be in March, and an update on golden tilefish landings. Additionally, there will be a review of the council research and monitoring plan.

Highlighted in green there are the items that were sort of added this week, including the large recreational data discussion in December, the recreational data subcommittee, and that would meet in March of next year, information on state and federal state management and federally-managed species, and that was added to September. Then we bumped the allocation review for species meeting the review trigger policy to March, and that would likely cover red snapper and -- Not red snapper. Sorry. Red grouper, and I believe it was vermilion. Those are the two species that would be included in that.

With that, we have a fairly full docket for September. It's a nine, and the target is an eight, and so, you know, we could probably fit it in there, but it's going to -- That's a fairly full schedule, and so, if there's anything that wanted that you wanted to bump, that would probably make that September schedule, and agenda, a little bit more manageable, and, with that, I'll turn it over to the council.

MS. MURPHEY: So let's --

MR. CARMICHAEL: Do you want to ponder it?

MS. MURPHEY: Let's ponder. Why don't we ponder and watch the -- Then we'll come back, okay?

(Whereupon, a recess was taken.)

MS. MURPHEY: All right, guys. Let's get back to the workplan. I think, for September, we're kind of overloaded, right, and we've got like a score of 9.5. I don't know if anybody has got some suggestions on what to drop. John, do you -- Do you have any suggestions to consider?

MR. CARMICHAEL: I mean, I have a few thoughts. I will say, the red snapper response there, the scoping and the discussion, there is -- We need some input to get the MSE to the next level, and so we kind of have to do that. I'll go down the rest of the list of them, and we need to do those things, and we certainly have got to do Oculina. We've got to continue work on the FMU, and that's fundamental.

You've got the commercial fishery amendment, which I think you want to talk about, and we have -- I guess we have that kind of taking time there, but also taking time down below with the subcommittee, because it's talked about at the Snapper Grouper Committee, as well as the subcommittee, and I'll throw this out there, and I know it's not what you want, but does the subcommittee meet via webinar before the meeting, potentially, and that frees up a bit of time.

The other thing down below that I'm looking at is the headboat vessel limit amendment discussion. That's another thing that you should consider, and then there's the liaison agency and staff reports. If you're comfortable just looking at written reports on that, we can trim those at the meetings, and I'll throw that out there, because I've heard that raised many times before by the council, and that may help get you to a more manageable place, and so that's a few things to start on.

MS. MURPHEY: Thanks. That's great. Jessica.

MS. MCCAWLEY: I've got two ideas, but what was the very last thing that John said? I missed that one.

MR. CARMICHAEL: Are you comfortable just receiving the liaison agency and staff reports just as written reports and not getting presentations on that?

MS. MCCAWLEY: Okay. I'm a yes on that. Also, we were having a short conversation, on this side of the table, about maybe the Snapper Grouper Commercial Subcommittee could meet on Sunday, since we're arriving on Sunday of the council meeting week, and maybe we could do it then.

MS. MURPHEY: So how does everyone feel about dropping those reports, and just reading them?

MR. CARMICHAEL: Let's do that. Do you agree on that?

MS. MURPHEY: Does everybody agree on that? Okay. No offense, liaisons. What was -- We were talking about -- Now we were talking about the subcommittee meeting, and so we're discussing whether it could meet Sunday, in the late afternoon.

MR. CARMICHAEL: It can, and we talked about doing training for the Lines of Communication meeting, for the first round of folks, trying to get that sometime while folks are in town as well,

and so, if you wanted to come in even earlier on Sunday, we could -- For at least those people from -- Is it North Carolina is the first round, or is it Georgia is the first round, and so Georgia could come in earlier on Sunday, and probably Charleston is not a terrible, hard drive, and then you could do that, and then do the commercial subcommittee on Sunday, but we may be starting, you know, certainly promptly at 12:00, or 12:30 or something, to get all that in, and I don't know. We'll have to think more about how much time you need, but that is a possibility.

MS. MURPHEY: Kerry.

MS. MARHEFKA: I mean, I'll leave it, obviously, to staff discussion, and I recognize that that is also asking -- It's one thing for us, and it's asking some -- You know, it's a thing for staff too, but I will just say I think we all feel, incredibly strongly, that a webinar is not appropriate for this, and so, however you want to tackle that, but keep it on track, because we absolutely have to meet in September.

I will dig my heels in on meeting in September, and meeting in-person, or meeting before September, and meeting in-person, and, if that means meeting as a committee as a whole, and we take up committee time, that's fine too, but I feel very, very strongly about those two points.

MS. MURPHEY: All right. Thank you, Kerry. Then I have Andy.

MR. STRELCHECK: I feel very strongly that, if we're going to be meeting on the weekend, right, that I would -- Well, first of all, I would not recommend meeting on the weekend for the subcommittee. I feel like we need to carve out time during the week for policy and regulatory discussions and cut out educational information, updates, things we're not making decisions on.

I haven't talked to John about this, but I going to share with him a suggestion email, after this meeting, and I watched a lot about kind of how we were interacting through different parts of the meeting, and there was a number of times where we were all given presentations, and there was no questions asked afterward, right, and so, to me, where I would look at cutting, to build in time for the subcommittee, would be, you know, a shorter best fishing practices update, and maybe not do the dolphin MSE feedback.

The headboat vessel limit, I know we want to work on that, but how do we work that into our workplan, and it's, right now, just we're going to present on it, but don't have a plan thereafter, and so those are the types of things where I really think we need to consider what's the next step, and when is it right to come to us for discussion.

MS. MURPHEY: All right. Thanks, Andy. John.

MR. CARMICHAEL: Yes, and, you know, we've -- I would say we've, without even hearing that, we've taken that to heart in this meeting, because, if you'll look, there's none of that sort of stuff on here, and we just agreed that we would do the update reports as written, and not as actually verbal reports on stuff, and so I feel like what's left there is all things that are requiring you to make regulatory decisions, and take actions, and so I think that still leaves us with a pretty tight crunch.

The only way to make it fit is to move that snapper grouper subcommittee to Sunday. I also think you should consider, as Andy mentioned, the headboat vessel limit discussion. If we're going to

make time for this state management information session, you probably need to consider if that gets pushed back to some other time and gets scrubbed from the agenda for September.

MS. MURPHEY: So you're suggesting push back on the -- Push back the headboat, and is that what you just suggested? I was actually thinking that myself. Myra.

MS. BROUWER: Thank you, and so we would suggest that, since the headboat vessel limit discussion now seems to be focused on three snapper grouper species, that that be an item that get discussed under the Snapper Grouper Committee at the March meeting, and so that would be our suggestion. It doesn't sound like there's a need to discuss vessel limits for dolphin, and what I heard, the other day, is that you were interested in looking at snowy, black grouper, and I believe gag.

MS. MURPHEY: Thanks, Myra. Kerry.

MS. MARHEFKA: I forgot that we narrowed it down to those three species, but I don't understand how the headboat discussion is not part and parcel of the recreational aggregate bag limit discussion, because there's interplaying effects there. I don't know how they go forward separate of each other, because, if you create an aggregate bag limit that's recreational, are you doing it for the headboats, too?

MS. MURPHEY: Jessica.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Well, while I don't disagree with that, but isn't September just coming back with like a plan to move forward on the snapper grouper aggregate, and so maybe that's part of the plan, is include headboat limits, and so then the discussion of the headboat limits could still move to a different meeting.

MS. MURPHEY: That makes sense, because that that was kind of my thought, was maybe push back the headboat. Robert.

MR. SPOTTSWOOD: No, and I agree with that, Kerry, because that is an important topic we want to touch on, but I do think that folds into that discussion, and so we'll have a discussion on it in September.

MS. MURPHEY: This is just a question, and, the commercial subcommittee, what -- I guess what would we be talking about there, the results of the scoping?

MS. MCCAWLEY: Yes.

MS. MURPHEY: Okay.

MS. MARHEFKA: Is it okay if I talk? I mean, we're -- It's time to move forward with this. We're in the this is happening phase, and so I suspect we're going to need to see this now at every meeting, because we are developing an amendment.

MS. MURPHEY: Yes, and, I mean, that's fine. I was just thinking that we would hear the scoping comments in the Snapper Grouper Committee meeting, but okay. All right. I just wanted to throw

that out there, that I kind of wondered if we could get away without that meeting, because we would hear those scoping results at --

MS. MARHEFKA: Yes, and the difference is does everyone want to sit there and be involved in the minutia, if we decide to put VMS or have stowage requirements, and, I mean, what we're trying to avoid is we're going to have to get into a lot of detail, that not everyone is going to have the experience or wherewithal to be able to contribute, and so the question is -- We can absolutely do it all within the Snapper Grouper Committee, but there's going to be a subsection of people sitting around the table whose time might be better used, and who aren't going -- It's like when we did wreckfish. People weren't able to contribute, because they had no knowledge, or expertise.

If it was just simple things that would be fine, but, again, to get into the technical stuff of stowage requirements, I don't think a lot of people are going to want to sit around for that entire discussion, but they're more than welcome to. I'm just trying to save people from having to do that.

MS. MURPHEY: Well, I just kind of wanted to get put that out there, but it feels like that's important, and so we'll stick with that. Any other suggestions? John.

MR. CARMICHAEL: So, like I was saying, I think the BFP can be a written update, to make time. The dolphin, maybe we do need to talk about a little bit, because where are we in needing to get feedback to keep the MSE moving along, and that would be the only reason to talk about that, and I don't know the answer to that question.

MS. MURPHEY: Are you suggest removing the best fishing practices update, and have that as a written --

MR. CARMICHAEL: Yes, and I think you have to, to balance the workload and to make time to have this state management discussion, which seems to be a higher priority.

MS. MURPHEY: All right. How do others feel? Is everybody in agreement with that?

MR. CARMICHAEL: I mean, it's possible that we can consult with the MSE team and see where we are on that, and how much time we really need to get that, and, if we have to get you -- If we need to give them feedback, to keep that moving ahead, then we try to fit it in there, because I think that sort of leaves it as the item on the bubble.

MS. MURPHEY: John, can you do the math, real quick? I think we're down, if we take the best fishing practices off, and make that just a written update, and we might be at your eight.

MR. HADLEY: Yes, and, if we -- Discussing some of the changes that were just made, zeroing-out the liaison reports and the BFP update, and it comes down to a 7.5, and so that seems manageable within a five-day meeting, I believe.

MS. MURPHEY: All right.

MR. CARMICHAEL: Then the other 0.5 would be the state management discussion, and then you're back up to eight.

MS. MURPHEY: Charlie.

MR. PHILLIPS: You know, I wouldn't mind having the state management in December, if we needed to, because then we're going to have an update from the EFP, and then we'll maybe we'll have an idea on whether these fifteen species are going to be in the FMP or not, and it wouldn't hurt my feelings to have state management in December, if we need the time, and, again, the commercial subcommittee needs to meet in-person, and I don't care if it's Sunday, but it might be an issue for the federal folks, but we need to meet in-person, and so --

MS. MURPHEY: All right. Thanks for that, Charlie. I think we're -- Sorry.

MR. CARMICHAEL: I overlooked the state management there, hiding in the green, and so, yes, we actually do have that already accounted for, and so we're at 7.5, preliminarily, with this plan, and so I think that gives us the guidance we need to try and hone-in on this and come up with a workable agenda.

MS. MURPHEY: I've got Amy.

MS. DUKES: Thank you, Madam Chair, and so, getting that back down, let's circle back to the in-person subcommittee, and does that now allot time for Monday morning for that to now occur, maybe?

MS. MURPHEY: I got the maybe answer, and so that's -- We'll shoot for that, but I guess we'll know soon enough if we've got to meet on Sunday, but it sounds like staff may shoot for us to have that on Monday morning. Amy, and then Gary.

MS. DUKES: To that point, Madam Chair, I'm just -- I'm thinking about the logistics of having a meeting on Sunday and getting the public to participate, at least be able to listen in, and I don't know. I'm just thinking that that might just a harder concept for folks, but I know it's more of an internal -- I'm just thinking about our constituents, and that's all.

MS. MURPHEY: I think that's well -- That's a good point. Gary.

MR. BORLAND: Everybody will probably hate me, but what about adding thirty minutes to the beginning of each day to cover some of this, and start at 8:00, instead of 8:30, instead of meeting on Sunday? We're all here, and so another thirty minutes --

MS. MURPHEY: Start meeting every morning at 8:00?

MR. BORLAND: That's --

MS. MURPHEY: Oh, heck, I can do that. I mean --

MR. BORLAND: I'm just saying to add some time into the calendar, bit I --

MS. MURPHEY: What do people think of that, meeting at 8:00, starting at 8:00? I see everybody going, heck yes, and okay. Is staff okay with meeting at 8:00? I want to check with staff, and so I need to check with staff.

MR. CARMICHAEL: I will say the September meeting is one where we're not staying in the hotel, and everybody is expected to be in a half-hour early, and so we are looking at staff, you know, not just walking from a hotel room, but getting there by 7:30, but we can accommodate that. I think we can do it. I think the message is loud and clear that we do not want to have the committee, subcommittee, meeting on Sunday, and I think that we can -- We can make that happen, or virtually, yes, and so I will say I feel like we've got good guidance here, and let's try to pull this off, and, if we need to start earlier, or go later, either one, we can do it.

MS. MURPHEY: Okay. I hear preference for earlier, but, you know, that is another option, to go later, and we've done that too, and we've survived, and so, if everybody is good with that, I guess we'll give it a try with an eight o'clock meet time, starting Monday morning. Carolyn.

DR. BELCHER: Maybe defer -- Maybe it will be better to defer to you all, because you know what the commute is like in the morning, and I don't know if eight o'clock is easier, or us going later, and I'm just trying to -- Again, I'm just -- I think we're pretty much captive, and so I don't really have a preference on eight o'clock or going to six o'clock. It's all and the same.

MR. CARMICHAEL: Yes, and we can work it out. We'll figure out what works best. I mean, actually, it's hard to get anywhere in Charleston at 8:30 anyway, and so, you know, you're usually going to be there planning early, just to avoid the craziness around that, around that neck of the woods anyhow, and so it may not be a big deal, but I think we understand what the end goal is, which is the most important part.

MS. MURPHEY: All right. Thank you, John. Anything more on the workplan? I think we whittled that down, and John is happy, and so, with that, any other business? All right. Well, then I will adjourn this meeting of the South Atlantic Council June meeting.

(Whereupon, the meeting adjourned on June 13, 2025.)

- - -

Certified By: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Transcribed By  
Amanda Thomas  
August 4, 2025

FCZ  
Thursday  
6/12/25

SOUTH ATLANTIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL  
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6/12/25

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6/12/25

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FC 2  
Fri 6/13

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2025 COUNCIL MEMBERS

FC Z  
Fri 6/13

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Representative  
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Moreel Reichert  
Monica Smit-Brunelle - web

## SAFMC June 2025

### Attendee Report: Council Meeting

Report Generated:

06/18/2025 10:26 AM EDT

**Webinar ID**

494-531-643

**Actual Start Date/Time**

06/12/2025 07:32 AM EDT

**Duration**

9 hours 24 minutes

### Staff Details

**Attended**

Yes

**Interest Rating**

Not applicable for staff

**Last Name**

Council

**Last Name**

Alnes

Allen

Barbieri

Barger

Barile

Barrows

Bell

Bianchi

Blough

Bonura

Borland

Brantley

Brouwer

Bruger

Buntin

Bunting

Byrd

Cermak

Christiansen

Coleman

Curtis

DARDEN

DeVictor

Dobbs

Downes

Dubniczki

Dukes

Emory

Finch

**First Name**

Alex

Shanae

Luiz

Jeff

peter

Katline

Mel

Alan

Heather

Vincent

Gary

William

Myra

Catherine

Jesse

Matthew

Julia

Bridget

Heather

Heather

Judd

TANYA

Rick

Jeffrey

Athena

Hayden

Amy

Meaghan

Margaret

Flowers	Jared
Floyd	Brad
Foss	Kristin
Gentner	BRAD
Gore	Karla
Guyas	Martha
Hadley	John
Hale	Robert
Harrison	Alana
Hart	Hannah
Helies	Frank
Helmey	Judy
Hemilright	Dewey
Hildreth	Delaine
Horton	Chris
Hudson	Joseph
Hull	Jimmy
Iberle	Allie
Ingram	Jamal
Iverson	Kim
Johnson	Brad
Kennedy	Todd
Keppler	Blaik
Kerns	Toni
Kimrey	Chris
Klasnick	01Kelly
Klibansky	Nikolai
Klibansky	Lara
Knowlton	Kathy
Larkin	Michael
Lazarre	Dominique
Lee	Jennifer
Levy	Mara
Lizama	Dellene
MCCLAIR	GENINE
Mackesey	Brendan
Malinowski	Richard
Marhefka	Kerry
Markwith	Anne
Masi	Michelle
Matter	Vivian
McCoy	Sherylanne
Mehta	Nikhil
Merck	Nicole

Merrifield	Jeanna
Meyers	S
Muffley	Brandon
Muller	Robert
Murphey	Trish
Newman	Thomas
OFarrell	Halie
Oliver	Ashley
Ott	Emily
Package-Ward	Christina
Parsons	Kristene
Peterson	Cassidy
Phillips	Charlie
Poholek	ariel
ROLLER	tom
Ramsay	Chloe
Records	David
Reed	John
Reichert	Marcel
Riley	Richard
SCHLICK	CJ
Sedberry	George
Seward	McLean
Silvennoinen	Jasmine
Sinkus	Wiley
Smart	Tracey
Smillie	Nick
Smit-Brunello	00Monica
Spottswood	Robert
Stephen	Jessica
Stephens	Haley
Swanson	Chris
Sweetman	CJ
Turley	Brendan
Walia	Matt
Walsh	Jason
Walter	John
Webb	Greyson
West	W
White	Geoff
Wiegand	Christina
Wilke	Kate
Williams	Travis
Williams	Erik

Withers  
Zapf  
alexander  
banks  
collier  
griner  
gwin  
laks  
marinko  
moss  
reynolds  
sandorf  
thomas  
vara  
vincent  
zales

Meg  
Daniel  
calvin  
kesley  
chip  
tim  
sonny  
Ira  
Jeff  
david  
kris  
Scott  
suz  
mary  
matthew  
bob

## Attendee Report: Council Meeting

Report Generated:

06/18/2025 10:29 AM EDT

**Webinar ID**

494-531-643

**Actual Start Date/Time**

06/13/2025 07:49 AM EDT

**Duration**

4 hours 2 minutes

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Barger

Barrows

Batsavage

Beal

Bianchi

Blough

Bonura

Borland

Bruger

Buntin

Bunting

Byrd

Cermak

Coleman

Curtis

DeVictor

Dubniczki

Dukes

Dyar

Finch

Flowers

Foss

Fredrickson

Gore

Guyas

Hadley

**First Name**

Shanae

Adam

Luiz

Jeff

Katline

Chris

Bob

Alan

Heather

Vincent

Gary

Catherine

Jesse

Matthew

Julia

Bridget

Heather

Judd

Rick

Hayden

Amy

Ben

Margaret

Jared

Kristin

Ivy

Karla

Martha

John

Harrison	Alana
Hart	Hannah
Helies	Frank
Helmey	Judy
Hemilright	Dewey
Hildreth	Delaine
Horton	Chris
Hudson	Joseph
Hull	Jimmy
Iberle	Allie
Iverson	Kim
Kennedy	Todd
Keppler	Blaik
Klasnick	01Kelly
Klibansky	Nikolai
Klibansky	Lara
Knowlton	Kathy
Larkin	Michael
Lazarre	Dominique
Levy	Mara
Lloyd	Victor
MCCLAIR	GENINE
Malinowski	Richard
Marhefka	Kerry
Matter	Vivian
McCoy	Sherylanne
Mehta	Nikhil
Mercado	Maven
Merck	Nicole
Merrifield	Jeanna
Muffley	Brandon
Muller	Robert
Murphey	Trish
Newman	Thomas
OFarrell	Halie
Oliver	Ashley
Ott	Emily
Package-Ward	Christina
Phillips	Charlie
Poholek	ariel
ROLLER	tom
Ramsay	Chloe
Records	David
Reichert	Marcel

Schmidtke	Michael
Silvennoinen	Jasmine
Sinkus	Wiley
Smit-Brunello	00Monica
Spottswood	Robert
Spurgin	Kali
Starbeck	Haley
Stephen	Jessica
Stephens	Haley
Sweetman	CJ
Talton	Trista
Turley	Brendan
Walsh	Jason
Walter	John
Wamer	David
Webb	Greyson
West	W
White	Geoff
Wiegand	Christina
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griner	tim
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vara	mary
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