

SOUTH ATLANTIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

FULL COUNCIL SESSION

**Jekyll Island Club Hotel
Jekyll Island, GA**

March 7, 2008

SUMMARY MINUTES

Council Members:

George Geiger, Chairman
Robert H. Boyles, Jr.
Wilson Laney
David Cupka
Anthony Iarocci
Lt. Brian Sullivan
John Wallace

Duane Harris, Vice Chair
Dr. Brian Chevront
Dr. Roy Crabtree
Mac Currin
Rita Merritt
Susan Shipman
Tom Swatzel

Council Staff:

Bob Mahood
Mike Collins
Rick DeVictor
Kim Iverson
Julie O'Dell
Kate Quigley

Gregg Waugh
John Carmichael
Andi Stephens
Myra Brouwer
Roger Pugliese

Observers/Participants:

Monica Smit-Brunello
Doug Rader
Tom Jamir
Bonnie Ponwith
Dave Allison
Buffy Baumann
Bobby Cardin
Matt Ruby
Eileen Dougherty
Milton Brelsford

Jack McGovern
Scott Zimmerman
Otha Easley
Tom McIlwain
James Reeves
Sera Harold
Margot Stiles
Tony DeFalco
Whitney Robinson
Joe Kimmel

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The South Atlantic Fishery Management Council convened in the Club Ballroom of the Jekyll Island Club Hotel, Jekyll Island, Georgia, Friday morning, March 7, 2008, and was called to order at 8:00 o'clock a.m. by Chairman George Geiger.

Mr. Geiger: I would like to call to order the meeting of the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council and before we get started with our adoption of the agenda, I would like to recognize a couple of new members at the table here, Otha Easley. Otha comes to us from the California region and he's our new Southeast Regional Special Agent in Charge of Law Enforcement. Welcome, Otha. We're happy to have you here and Wilson Laney from the Fish and Wildlife Service. Wilson, you've been a participant at this council in a number of different capacities in the past and we're certainly thrilled to have you back to sit at the table.

The first order of business is Adoption of the Agenda. I would ask that we adopt the agenda and give me some latitude to make some changes. We've had some requests, based on travel arrangements, and so if I can get an adoption of the agenda. Without exception then, the agenda will be approved with changes as needed. Let's go around the table and have a roll call for Joe, please. Otha, we'll start with you. We just identify ourselves and our affiliation and move on.

Mr. Easley: Otha Easley, NOAA Law Enforcement, Southeast Division.

Dr. Ponwith: Bonnie Ponwith, Southeast Fisheries Science Center, NOAA.

Mr. Steele: Phil Steele, NOAA Fisheries.

Ms. Smit-Brunello: Monica Smit-Brunello, NOAA General Counsel.

Dr. Crabtree: Roy Crabtree, NOAA Fisheries.

Dr. Chevront: Brian Chevront, North Carolina Division of Marine Fisheries.

Dr. McIlwain: Tom McIlwain, Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council.

Mr. Swatzel: Tom Swatzel, council member, South Carolina.

Mr. Robson: Mark Robson, Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission.

Mr. Geiger: George Geiger, council member, Florida.

Mr. Mahood: Bob Mahood, council staff.

Mr. Currin: Mac Currin, North Carolina.

Mr. Harris: Duane Harris, Georgia.

Mr. Wallace: John Wallace, Georgia.

Ms. Merritt: Rita Merritt, North Carolina.

Mr. Cupka: David Cupka, council member, South Carolina.

Ms. Shipman: Susan Shipman, council member, Georgia.

Mr. Boyles: Robert Boyles, South Carolina Department of Natural Resources.

Lt. Sullivan: Brian Sullivan, United States Coast Guard.

Dr. Laney: Wilson Laney, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

Mr. Geiger: Thank you and again, as usual, I forgot somebody in mentioning our special guests, but he just fills in so seamlessly and he's at so many meetings that we've kind of included you as part of the family, Tom. Tom McIlwain, Chairman of the Gulf Council, who is the liaison here from the Gulf Council. Tom, thank you and we appreciate your input during the course of our committee meetings.

Dr. McIlwain: George, I, again, thank you all for your hospitality. I do feel very comfortable here and it's nice to see that you all have problems just like we do.

Mr. Geiger: Well, we're working on them steady, trying to fix them. The other thing I would like to do is certainly thank the Georgia delegation for the outstanding feed we had the other night.

Mr. Wallace: I'll pass this on to all the people that actually did the work. Thank you.

Mr. Geiger: The interesting thing was an opportunity for a lot of people to taste royal red shrimp for the first time. That was a unique experience and so we certainly appreciate all that work, John, and please convey to the people that put that on our appreciation for an outstanding -- They've raised the bar now, I guess. Thank you very much.

The next order of business is the Approval of the December 2007 Minutes. Everybody has had a chance to read those minutes. Are there any changes or corrections to the minutes? Any objection? Seeing no changes, the minutes are approved.

The first order of business, we're going to make a little bit of a change to the agenda, as I said. We're going to start off with the SSC Report. Mark, are you ready?

Mr. Robson: Yes, Mr. Chairman. The SSC Selection Committee met yesterday and there were a couple of things that we took up. First, looking at the make-up of the SSC, the committee reviewed attendance records of the current SSC members and responses by them to an information request that was distributed at the end of last year to solicit their interest in continuing to serve on the SSC.

The committee agreed to convene a new SSC, composed of anywhere from twelve to eighteen

members, and we looked at the existing members that wished to continue to serve and also a series of new applicants. I'll go ahead and discuss the motions related to that work.

The first motion, which you see up on the screen, was to invite Sherry Larkin, John Whitehead, and Scott Crosson to join the new SSC. On behalf of the committee, I so move. Any discussion? Hearing none, any objection? Hearing none, the motion passes.

Following that, we looked at additional membership of the SSC, looking at existing members and also new applicants, and the committee made the following motion, to invite Carolyn Belcher, Jeff Buckle, Doug Gregory, Erik Williams, Luiz Barbieri, Alex Chester, Pat Harris, Ken Pollock, Christine Burgess, Anne Lange, Marcel Reichert, Yan Jiao, and Andy Cooper to join the new South Atlantic Fishery Management Council SSC. On behalf of the SSC Committee, I so move. Is there any discussion? Any objection to the motion? Hearing none, the motion passes.

In addition to that, the SSC Committee looked into the adoption or creation of technical committees. This is something that the committee supports and is directing staff to continue working on this. The proposed technical committee process would be a means of utilizing all of the expertise that's out there to support the work of the SSC and also the council as a whole.

These technical committees would be available to address SEDAR responsibilities, in terms of review, SAFE report production, and other general technical advice. The technical committees would report to the SSC and members will be appointed by the SSC Selection Committee. We're going to look at the possible make-up of different committees and consider the appointments for these at the next meeting. We'll send out a reminder on that in late March.

We did consider convening a dedicated social and economic committee in addition to the species or management plan-related technical committees and we decided that social and economic advisory needs would be best met by including social and economic scientists in the SSC membership and those are reflected in the members that have been appointed.

We also looked at a number of different SSC procedures. Unless there's specific requests to review those procedures -- We looked at just things like public participation, how the meetings should be run as far as rules of order and noticing motions and that sort of thing. The committee gave direction to staff, but there were no specific motions related to those. Mr. Chairman that completes my report.

Mr. Geiger: Thank you, Mark. I think that was a very productive meeting and we certainly have our SSC off and running on new legs. Are there any comments or questions from the council in regard to the SSC selection process?

Mr. Boyles: Just a matter of clarification. Those of us that go back and are asked about the SSC selection, are we embargoing this information until that letter comes from you?

Mr. Geiger: No, it's now public and so I think we're free to discuss it and, of course, one of the things that we will do, we will send a letter of thanks and appreciation for the people who did

apply and certainly the people who were on the SSC who we're now considering looking at, because of their past work, looking at technical committee participation, et cetera.

Mr. Robson: I would be remiss if I didn't thank John Carmichael for assisting in working with all of the SSC members and helping the committee to go through its process.

Mr. Geiger: That's a good comment, because I know John went far afield and basically went international, I guess, in looking for participants to -- We got a darned good response from very, very qualified people and so thanks for that and very good. The next order of business is Snapper Grouper. Mr. Chairman, are you ready?

Mr. Currin: As usual, George, as ready as I'll ever be. Good morning and thank you and first off, thanks very much to the yeoman's job that the staff and the team did, again, in preparation for this meeting. They continue to amaze me and I'm sure all of you are impressed by both the volume and quality of the work that we receive, particularly in snapper grouper, but everywhere, every meeting.

We talked about three current snapper grouper amendments. Amendment 16 first was discussed, led by Gregg Waugh. Dr. Jack McGovern also presented us some comments that he had received from the Snapper Grouper AP regarding how closures might affect their behavior and impact post-quota bycatch mortality estimates and the committee designated a preferred fishing behavior scenario to estimate those PQBMs.

We refined some options and chose preferred alternatives for measures to end overfishing of gag and vermilion snapper for Amendment 16. A preferred alternative was chosen for an action requiring the use of venting and dehooking tools and the use of non-offset and non-stainless steel circle hooks when using natural bait to fish for any snapper grouper species.

The committee also developed options where adjustments would be made to the vermilion snapper management measures based on the outcome of the new benchmark assessment, which we expect in the fall, I believe.

We approved the amendment for public hearing and discussed and set locations and dates for those public hearings, two of those in Florida, Homestead and Cape Canaveral. It's on May 7 for Homestead and May 9 for Cape Canaveral. May 12 is in Brunswick, Georgia and May 13 in North Charleston, South Carolina and May 15 in New Bern, North Carolina. I think we directed the staff to use their judgment to slide those a day or two either way, if they needed to. All of those meetings will be held from 3:00 until 7:00 P.M.

Rick DeVictor then led us into and through Amendment 15B. He summarized the comments we had received from the public hearing process and presented some changes to the amendment that had been made since our December meeting.

The committee recognized the uncertainty in using weights for estimating recreational allocation, particularly with regards to snowy grouper. They recommended that the recreational allocation be converted to numbers, using a conversion factor to be supplied by the Southeast Science

Center.

We directed the team to alter the language of the alternatives specifying snowy grouper allocations in the recreational fishery to reflect that the allocation be tracked in numbers, based on the best available information on snowies at that time, as far as weight and number conversions.

We were provided with a recent analysis from the State of North Carolina trip ticket program outlining landings and revenues, revenue information, from fishermen, commercial fishermen, in North Carolina who did not hold federal snapper grouper permits. It's pretty impressive, when you look at those numbers, the number of people and the amount of landings associated with that.

The team is developing a similar analysis using data from the States of Florida, South Carolina, and Georgia. This information will be available for the June council meeting. NMFS indicated that their economist will complete the analysis of the economic and social effects of these actions to modify the sales provision at the June council meeting. We decided to delay the approval of the amendment for submission to the Secretary until after the June meeting, when that action will be fully analyzed.

We then went into Amendment 17. Rick led us through there as well. He presented the committee with a summary of the comments that we received during the recent scoping process and we reviewed the options paper for Amendment 17.

The committee moved some various actions either to future amendments or to the considered but rejected alternatives in Appendix A, in order to focus the amendment, as exclusively as we could, on annual catch limits and accountability measures for snapper grouper species undergoing overfishing. We also kept that alternative to extend the council's regulations in for most of the snapper grouper species into the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council's area of jurisdiction.

The schedule is to approve the amendment for public hearings at the September council meeting. In terms of ACLs, the SSC will provide overfishing level recommendations and ABCs at their June meeting, in conjunction with our meeting. The committee would like the SSC to develop overfishing levels and ABCs for the species undergoing overfishing on an individual basis, as well as two groups, one for shallow-water groupers and the other for a deepwater grouper unit, which are defined.

In terms of accountability measures, the committee directed the team to develop some alternatives similar to the ones outlined in the Gulf of Mexico Council's proposed rule for Amendment 30A in their reef fish plan. We had a good discussion of that. Dr. Crabtree did a great job, I think, helping us understand exactly that approach and I think it seemed very reasonable to the members of the committee.

The committee was provided with a summary report for the red snapper assessment. It's not a pretty picture. The results indicate that the stock is undergoing overfishing and is overfished.

The SSC will review the assessment results at their June meeting.

The committee decided to move any actions pertaining to red snapper out of Amendment 17 and into a separate amendment. There was a lot of discussion about the best way to handle that and I think everybody finally settled on that approach as the best approach. We directed the staff to schedule additional scoping meetings on those red snapper measures.

We had a presentation from Becky Shortland at Gray's Reef, who updated the committee on their efforts toward establishing a research area at Gray's Reef and also, they are developing a measure, I guess, to consider prohibiting spearfishing, all spearfishing, at Gray's Reef. She will come back to the council or Gray's Reef will come back to the council in the future with a proposal, perhaps, to ban spearfishing in Gray's Reef.

A number of motions from the committee and I will go through those. They are outlined in your summary minutes from the committee and I will not read those unless there's some questions as we go through.

On Amendment 16, there was a motion to adopt Alternatives 2, 3, and 5A as the preferred and on behalf of the committee, I so move. Any discussion? Any objection? Seeing none, that motion is approved.

There was a motion to change Alternative 4 to indicate quotas will be tracked by dealer reporting and remove state trip ticket and logbook tracking. On behalf of the committee, I so move. Is there discussion? Is there any objection to the motion? Seeing none, that motion is approved.

On behalf of the committee, I move to adopt Alternative 2 as the preferred in Amendment 16. Any discussion? Any objection? Seeing none, that motion is approved. Also, a motion to adopt Alternative 3A as the preferred in Amendment 16. Is there any discussion? Any objection to that motion? Seeing none, that motion is approved.

Also, a motion to adopt Alternative 4D, but extend the closure indicated in that measure through May 15. It will give us just a little bit more reduction in the fishery. That as a preferred and on behalf of the committee, I so move. Any discussion?

Mr. Swatzel: I believe this is the motion where we dealt with the recreational size and bag limits and I just wanted to go on record opposed to that motion at the committee level, because I feel like we should have larger size and bag limits and obviously to be consistent, we'll dissent on the vote here. Thank you.

Mr. Currin: Any further discussion?

Mr. Robson: I know this is straining at gnats, but I was just looking at the -- I'm going to go back to the gag grouper thing and just look at the language. I know we all understand what it means, but when you read it, somebody might not be clear.

Mr. Currin: Which action are you talking about?

Mr. Robson: I'm talking about the aggregate bag limit. I just want to make sure that we all understand that we're talking about going from two to one gag or one black within the aggregate bag limit and not one of --

Mr. Currin: Right, it's not one of each. It's one of either. I hope that's clear. It will be clear when the regulation is written. Is there other discussion on this motion? **Are there objections to the motion? With one objection, the motion is approved.**

Another motion from the committee is to adopt Alternative 5C as the preferred. Is there discussion of this motion? **Is there any objection to that motion? Seeing none, that motion is approved.**

Another motion from the committee is to approve Amendment 16 for public hearing. Is there discussion of that motion? **Is there any objection to that motion? Seeing none, that motion is approved.**

Regarding Amendment 17, there was a motion from the committee to retain Alternatives 5A through 5D in Amendment 17. Is there discussion of this motion? **Is there any objection to the motion? Seeing none, that motion is approved.**

Also, a motion from the committee to remove Alternative 5A from Amendment 17. Discussion of that motion? **Any objection to the motion? Seeing none, that motion is approved.**

Also, another motion to exclude Sub-Alternative 5D from Amendment 17. Is there any discussion of that motion? **Any objection to that motion? Seeing none, that motion is also approved.**

Another motion under Amendment 17 was to delete Alternative 4 in its entirety. That was the one, if you remember, regarding black sea bass pot tags and limits. The idea from the committee is not to quit considering that in total, but to sometime in the near future get back into that. We think it's something important. **On behalf of the committee, I so move.** Is there any discussion? **Is there any objection? Seeing none, that motion is approved.**

Another motion from the committee was to move red snapper actions from Amendment 17 into another yet to be named amendment and to also hold scoping meetings in conjunction with public hearings for Amendment 16. Is there discussion of that motion? **Any objection to that motion? Seeing none, that motion is approved.**

Also, a motion from the committee to remove the measures under Section 2.2.2.3 from Amendment 17. These are measures to monitor progress of the fishery and reduce the chance of exceeding ACLs. These were handled by another method in a previous action. Is there any discussion of that motion? **Any objection to that motion? Seeing none, that motion is approved.**

Another motion was to move the action intended to remove species from the fisheries management unit to the second ACL document. On behalf of the committee, I so move. Is there any discussion of that motion? Is there any objection to that motion? Seeing none, that motion is also approved.

In addition, the committee provided guidance to the staff and/or made the following requests. Regarding Amendment 16, the committee provided guidance to the team in terms of preferred alternatives and ranges of alternatives. Under Amendment 15B, the committee believes that the recreational allocation for snowy grouper should be converted to numbers and instructed the team to add analysis associated with those, as indicated by those motions, previous motions.

Under Amendment 17, the committee wants the action to limit the number of black sea bass pots distributed annually and/or modify the attendance requirements to be included in a future amendment, also as indicated in the previous motion. Mr. Chairman, unless there are questions, that ends my report.

Mr. Geiger: Thank you, Mac. Again, another great job. I don't know what we would do without you. Any comments or questions? Thank you. Rick, thank you again for all your work and Jack McGovern. Thanks, Jack. We know you guys are working as hard as you possibly can and we appreciate it. We're going to again deviate from the published agenda.

Mr. Mahood: Just for the public here, the first item we had under Snapper Grouper was public comment on Amendment 15B. Since we are not moving ahead with 15B and making any final decisions at this meeting, we will not hold that public comment. If you want to have public comment on 15B when the council decides what final action they are going to take, we'll see you in Orlando.

Mr. Geiger: We're going to deviate a bit here and do a liaison report. Brian, law enforcement liaison.

Lt. Sullivan: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Good morning, everybody. A couple of main things that we have for the Coast Guard in the past quarter. We've done a couple of Oculina Bank operations, using Coast Guard Auxiliary aircraft and eighty-seven-foot patrol boats from Jacksonville.

One thing we've noticed is that the last two operations we had, there's been only four boats in the area and none of them have been doing any illegal activity and so that's pretty good and the good thing about using the Auxiliary aircraft is that they don't have any Coast Guard markings on them and so it's not like somebody in the area can see the aircraft and notify other people that might be in the area. That's why we try to use the Coast Guard Auxiliary for operations like that. That's turning out to be real productive.

Also, I have cutters coming down from Portsmouth, the 270-foot Coast Guard cutters. I have them patrol the area and there's been no illegal activity in that area and so that seems to be pretty productive.

In the past quarter, we've had no significant violations on the South Atlantic side and so it seems to be a -- The LMR program seems to be doing pretty good in that aspect. Also, I know Otha is going to talk about a joint case that we had with FWC and NMFS that came out to be a good joint operation. I'll let him talk about that, but if there's any other questions that you might have for me about Coast Guard activity -- Also, we've done a couple of -- Sector Charleston has done a couple of operations out on the Charleston Bump and I haven't got any results from that yet. Any questions?

Mr. Geiger: Any questions for Brian? We've got, again, a rather extensive and complete NMFS Law Enforcement Activity Report that was submitted. In addition to the Southeast Division, there's also an Oculina Bank Habitat Area of Particular Concern report that talks about the specific activities in the Oculina area. Thank you, guys, for those complete reports. We appreciate it. Any questions for Brian?

Ms. Merritt: Brian, can you give us any kind of an update on the status of the new requirement regarding the ladders for boarding? Do you know what I'm talking about?

Lt. Sullivan: Yes, I know what you're talking about, but I don't have any update as of now. As soon as I get one, I can forward it to the council staff and then they can forward it out to you, if you would like. It is ongoing, but nothing to update yet on where they are with it.

Mr. Geiger: Any other questions? Otha, I don't want to put you on the spot, but Tracy came to me and indicated he had to leave on official business. There was an activity that he said he would mention, but it was not that significant. I don't want to put you on the spot, knowing you're brand new in the area, but you could comment if you so choose or you can pass and, again, welcome.

Mr. Easley: Thank you, Mr. Chair. No, I didn't have a whole lot to comment on that project, that operation that Brian mentioned, but if you want to, you can go ahead and present that.

Lt. Sullivan: We had the press release out in the back. It was a joint operation and from what I understand, the gentleman has been sentenced to four months in jail for throwing over the lobster tails when the Coast Guard was pursuing him. It does show and I do know that in my area, just getting around with the fishermen, when I've been in the area, that that is a good productive thing, when somebody actually does get put in jail, for even two months or four months or whatever it was.

The main thing was that joint operations with the Coast Guard and the state agencies do work and I feel that that is real critical for the success of any kind of law enforcement activities or LMR program.

Mr. Geiger: I think we all agree with that. We've seen more and more of those joint activities and certainly they're the best way to go. I also had an opportunity here, over lunch, to go out and look at a new piece of equipment that the Florida Fish and Wildlife Service has put into play. We have these fixed-wing, twin-engine observation aircraft that have about an eight-hour time

on station and they've incorporated now a forward-looking infrared radar, which is that black ball that you see on the front of sheriffs department helicopters and they have the ability to do infrared and night detection and also do very close-up monitoring during daylight hours.

They now have six hours with that equipment deployed, but it will be a big boon to patrolling offshore areas, a capability that we have not been able to employ in the past. We look forward to more and more of these joint operations with improving equipment, purchased under the JEA, by the way.

Lt. Sullivan: Yes, Mr. Chair. Also, the Coast Guard has had the FLIR on a lot of their aircrafts now for -- Since I was in aviation, which has been over ten years. We do use it. The great thing about Florida's new equipment is they're able to download to a computer, to somebody on land, and so more people can get -- You can get more eyes on the situation, which is a really unique thing. We're looking forward to working with them on that.

Mr. Geiger: Thank you, Brian and Otha. Keep up the good work and be safe out there, please. Rita, are you ready, ma'am?

Ms. Merritt: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The Limited Access Privilege Program Committee met jointly with the Limited Access Privilege Program Exploratory Workgroup on March 3rd and as a committee on March 4th.

The workgroup received presentations from Ben Hartig, the chair of the LAPP Program Exploratory Workgroup, and Kate Quigley of council staff in a presentation of the LAPP Workgroup working document. In the presentation, Kate Quigley provided the LAPP Committee with the results of an anonymous survey to the workgroup and voting members of the workgroup. They gave their rationale for their preferences expressed through the survey.

Kate Quigley also presented the workgroup with a summary of comments and letters submitted during the scoping for Amendment 18. The committee discussed addressing four high priority questions the LAPP workgroup stated they needed answered before they could fully support a LAPP program.

The questions they wanted answered included: details on possible enforcement regulations implemented under a LAPP; secondly, details regarding funding for possible video monitoring of the fleet under a LAPP; third, a commitment from the council to establish hard allocations for both the commercial and recreational fishery, with accountability measures imposed on the recreational fishery; and finally, the ability for permit owners to obtain the catch history associated with their permits without having to obtain currently required signatures from former permit owners.

The committee made the following motions, to develop an outreach program on limited access privilege programs and encourage fishermen to submit LAP program ideas for consideration. On behalf of the committee, I so move. Is there any discussion?

Dr. Chevront: One of the things I wanted to make sure that we got into the record is really what

we meant by outreach. If I recall from our discussion, George was talking about an experience that he had, I believe in Rhode Island, where they brought the fishermen together and they worked together on some scenarios and things. That's really kind of more of what I believe the intention of this motion was, as opposed to just producing printed materials and handing them out to fishermen.

I think we need to be fairly directive in what we mean by this outreach and also, there was some discussion about working with Sea Grant to do this and then some representatives of Sea Grant were talking about their limited resources and things. I don't want to put the brakes on anything like this, but if any support or help that the council can offer to them, I want to make sure that we stand ready to do that. Thank you.

Mr. Geiger: I think that would be termed "active outreach" as opposed to "passive outreach". We want to have an active program, trying to put together information.

Ms. Merritt: Thank you, George. **On behalf of the committee I so move.** Is there any further discussion? **Is there any objection? Seeing none, that motion is approved.** The above motion on outreach was made due to the LAPP Committee's understanding that there was no clear mandate from the LAPP Workgroup or the scoping meeting comments to move forward with the amendment at this time.

Another motion was made to contact members of the golden tilefish fishery and explore the possibility of a limited access privilege program for that fishery. That motion was made based on the thought that the tile fishers may welcome discussion of limited access privileges, sector allocation, or other similar programs, due to the high probability that the fishery is experiencing a derby and that a new type of management might aid that fishery.

The committee directed the staff to contact members of the tilefish fishery to see if there is an interest in discussing the possibility of a LAPP program, sector allocation, regional LAPPs, or other similar program for the tilefish fishery that would help alleviate the problems associated with a derby fishery. **On behalf of the committee, I so move.** Is there any discussion?

Mr. Cupka: Here, I believe the intent was that staff would report back to us at our June meeting, so that we could make a decision on whether to proceed or not. Is that correct?

Ms. Merritt: Yes, I think so, David. Does anyone have another comment on that?

Dr. Crabtree: That would be the extent of what we would do between now and June and then if they do have interest in it, in June, what would we do? Would we form a tilefish LAPP AP or a working group of some sort at that point and then convene them sometime after the June meeting?

Ms. Merritt: I think that was the intent.

Mr. Geiger: I think we would get information back and then we would discuss it and determine what we want to do at the June meeting. One of the things we've got to consider -- We were in

our closed session yesterday and we went through staff hours and the availability of hours and staff time associated with this and looking at completion of statutory issues that we have to do as well. I think it will be a discussion at June.

Mr. Harris: I'm going to support the motion, but I would like for it to go farther. I would like to see us move down the road in a little bit more timely fashion towards doing LAPPs for all the snapper grouper fisheries. I think that's where we're going to go in the future and I would like to see us move there sooner rather than later, but I accept the fact that given the demands on Kate's time, with some other fishery management plans that we're dealing with at the present time, that it's virtually impossible for us to do what I would like to see us do. I support the motion and I would just like to see us go farther.

Ms. Merritt: Is there any other further discussion?

Dr. Crabtree: I think one thing is as we move over the next couple of meetings, we're going to get a good idea of where we're heading on vermilion snapper and I think what we ought to take a look at is tilefish is a good candidate, but if the new vermilion assessment comes out pretty close to the old one and we're looking at very low TACs there, I'm likely going to suggest we talk to some of the vermilion snapper folks and look at that.

Then maybe if we could get a couple of single species programs going, maybe that would help us with our outreach efforts and give us a better feeling for whether this is a good solution for the fishery. I think it probably is, but some of the fishermen obviously want more information before they come to a conclusion.

Ms. Merritt: Is there further discussion? **Is there any objection to the motion? Seeing none, that motion is approved.** I give a special thanks to Kate for all the extra effort she has put into this and, of course, to those members who -- They really sacrificed to attend all these meetings all year long and put a lot of work and wrestled with an awful lot of heavy decisions that they needed to make to develop what they did come up with. It's good to know that we have at least a basic structure that now we can build upon for a variety of fisheries. Thank you very much.

Mr. Geiger: Thank you, Rita. Good job. The next committee up is Joint Habitat and Ecosystem. Duane, are you ready, sir?

Mr. Harris: Yes, sir. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The Habitat and Ecosystem-Based Management Committees met jointly on March 5, 2008, in Jekyll Island, Georgia. The committees received presentations by Dr. Doug Rader, who is the Habitat and Environmental Protection Advisory Panel Chair, who reaffirmed the recommendations brought forth at the joint meeting of the Habitat AP and Coral AP on November 7 and 8, 2007, in Charleston.

These recommendations are included in the present public hearing draft of the Comprehensive Ecosystem Amendment and include boundaries and applicable management measures to establish deepwater coral habitat areas of particular concern.

Dr. Rader emphasized the commitment of the panels to working with the deepwater shrimp and

golden crab industries to facilitate a reasonable solution between all those involved. Bill Whipple provided recommendations from the Golden Crab Advisory Panel and reiterated that although the golden crab fishery is prosecuted in such a way as to avoid any coral habitat, it is primarily within the area defined by the present proposed boundaries of the Deepwater Coral HAPCs.

Bill clarified that after careful consideration, the AP is endorsing creating of allowable areas for golden crab fishing within the proposed Coral HAPC, versus moving the boundaries, and that they would voluntarily use VMS. The committee was provided a copy of the updated AP recommendations. These recommendations, including associated GIS position information, were provided in the public hearing draft of the Comprehensive Ecosystem Amendment.

Marilyn Solorzano presented the Deepwater Shrimp AP recommendations to the committee. She indicated the proposals to modify the western boundary of the Deepwater Coral HAPCs were developed primarily focusing on enforcement concerns. These recommendations, including associated GIS positions, were provided in the public hearing draft of the Comprehensive Ecosystem Amendment.

Gregg Waugh presented a review of the public hearing draft of the Comprehensive Ecosystem Amendment. Roger presented charts of the proposed Deepwater Coral HAPCs and proposals from the Deepwater Shrimp and Golden Crab Advisory Panels. He provided additional charts overlaying the proposals and detailed deepwater habitat information, including recent updated information provided by Coral Advisory Panel member John Reed.

Finally, Roger provided the VMS associated with potential royal red fishing operations provided by the NMFS Southeast Fisheries Science Center overlaid to detailed bathymetric charts. The staff overlay of VMS and detailed bathymetry indicates a very limited number of potential royal red interactions east of the 400-meter contour.

Roger and Myra provided an overview of the public hearing draft of the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council's Comprehensive Fishery Ecosystem Plan and acknowledged the array of documents and the level of input and commitment of the regional habitat and ecosystem partners that have resulted in the present comprehensive document.

Myra provided information on TRACES, the Trans-Atlantic Coral Ecosystem Study initiative. This initiative aims to bring together researchers from Canada, the United States, and the European Union to collaborate on studies of deepwater coral ecosystems in the North Atlantic. The council's deepwater coral research and monitoring plan will be incorporated, as appropriate, in the TRACES science plan, to ensure that council needs are addressed through this international initiative.

Roger reviewed a revised draft of the council's energy policy to address alternative energy development in the South Atlantic region. Revision to the current policy is being coordinated through the Habitat Advisory Panel and the National Marine Fisheries Service Habitat Conservation Division.

Roger also indicated that the Navy sonar testing DEIS was just released and is out for review. He will be providing it to the council and the Habitat Advisory Panel, considering a comment based on existing council habitat policies. **The committees approved the following motions and on behalf of the committee, I so move to add VMS requirements for the golden crab fishery.** Is there a comment on the motion?

Mr. Wallace: I was talking a little bit yesterday to Roger about maybe some acoustic monitoring for the golden crab industry. There could be some better monitoring system out there that could actually tell you where the traps are, along with where the boats are, and I would like to be able to ask Roger -- I know there's a lot of time constraints on what we're doing now, but maybe explore this acoustic monitoring as a possible monitoring system for golden crab.

Mr. Harris: Thank you, John. There has been a lot of discussion about that. The golden crab fishermen, from what I've been able to gather, would accept that, as long as they can find something that works reasonably well, and I think we'll continue to go down that road and research that area in the future. Is there further discussion on the motion? **Is there any objection to the motion? That motion is approved with objection.**

The second motion was to establish the proposed Coral Habitat Areas of Particular Concern to include all the alternative boundaries proposed by the Deepwater Shrimp AP and fishing areas proposed by the Golden Crab AP to take to public hearings. On behalf of the committee, I so move. Is there discussion on the motion?

Mr. Wallace: In this motion, I feel that the industry is taking a leap of faith that the council will do the right thing, concerning allowing them to fish and the operational needs that the industry will have surrounding their fishery. I hope this council will strive to achieve that goal.

Mr. Harris: Thank you, John. Further discussion of the motion? **Is there objection to the motion? One objection. That motion is approved with one objection. The third motion is to approve the Comprehensive Fishery Ecosystem Plan for public hearings. On behalf of the committee, I so move.** Is there discussion on the motion?

Dr. Crabtree: Just so we're clear, what we decided at committee was we would go out to a round of public hearings and then were we going to convene the AP, the Deepwater Crab and Golden Crab AP, between now and the June meeting and go through it with them? Was that what we decided?

Mr. Harris: I think it was either between now and the June meeting or after the June meeting and then have the second round of public hearings following the June meeting. Have the first round of public hearings and meet with the Deepwater Shrimp and Golden Crab APs and then have another round of public hearings and then bring it back to the council for consideration.

Mr. Geiger: I think that's right. Does anybody have any different recollection of that discussion? I think it would be almost impossible to have those people meet between now and June and our staff. I don't think we can do it.

Mr. Mahood: I think also that we will get some input from them during the public hearing process, because we are setting up -- We're also doing some scoping and so I think -- Not that issue, but there will be some time allowed for those folks and there may be some time to get with them during the course of those public hearings.

Mr. Waugh: When we get to the Executive/Finance Report, you'll see a revised timeline and it shows us approving for the second round of public hearings in September and so we will need to meet with them prior to September, but not necessarily prior to the June meeting.

Mr. Harris: Thank you, Gregg. Is there further discussion of the motion? **Is there objection to the motion? With one objection, that motion is approved.** There was one other motion, to include an enforcement buffer zone within the proposed Coral HAPCs for the royal red and golden crab fisheries. That motion was not approved by the committee.

In addition, the committee provided guidance and/or made the following requests: to provide the committees with a map showing MPAs as well as the proposed deepwater Coral HAPCs; provide more information on issues that may arise with other fisheries to identify potential impacts, or lack of impacts, such as wreckfish, recreational swordfish, and snapper grouper deep dropping; make sure that information in the FEP is consistent with existing habitat policies; update fishery data throughout Volume 3. The FEP document needs to be as up-to-date as possible before it is finalized with respect to that issue.

Include a discussion on freshwater flow needs into estuaries in the FEP. Dr. Wilson Laney committed to help staff update that section and add a section to energy policy dealing with offshore wind power. There would be similar effects of construction and operation, as there would be ocean current technology and other activities. Mr. Chairman that concludes my report.

Mr. Geiger: Thank you, sir. Good job. Just in the interests here, there's been a request to kind of expedite the meeting, if we possibly can, and so we're not going to take any formal breaks. If you have to get up and leave, do so, please, to check out and do whatever you need to.

Certainly I don't expect anybody to panic at this announcement, based on the workload we have in front of us in council business, but the area is under a tornado watch and that watch may be extended and even more severe later in the morning. We're going to press on and if you have to check out, just get up and go do it, if you have to. Next up will be Executive/Finance and Mr. Cupka.

Mr. Cupka: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The Executive and Finance Committees met in joint session the afternoon of March 4, 2008, in Jekyll Island, Georgia. The minutes from the December 2007 Finance Committee were approved. The committee received a number of presentations from Bob Mahood and Gregg Waugh.

The first was on the Final Calendar Year 2008 Budget. Bob provided information on the various categories of funding that will support the council's Calendar Year 2008 activities. These include the council line item, funds from LAPPs, NEPA, regulatory streamlining, SEDAR, and 2007 carry-forward funds, for a total of \$2,876,098.

The Calendar Year 2008 budget is an increase of approximately \$172,000 over the previous year's budget. The committee approved the CY2008 budget. **On behalf of the committee, I would like to make a motion that the council approve the CY2008 budget.** Any discussion on the motion? **Any objection? Seeing none, then that motion is approved.**

Gregg then led the committee through a review of the proposed timelines for completing Snapper Grouper Amendments 15A, 15B, 16, 17, and 18; Mackerel Amendment 18; Shrimp Amendment 7; the Comprehensive Allocation Amendment; the Spiny Lobster Import Amendment; and the Fishery Ecosystem Plan and Fishery Ecosystem Plan Comprehensive Amendment.

There were no proposed changes to the timelines during the committee meeting. However, subsequent to our committee meeting, there were a number of actions taken during other committee meetings that will require that the timeline be modified and since we don't have a committee motion on this, first, I'm going to ask Bob or one of the council staff to run through and tell us what those changes are, but then we will need a motion from the council to approve the timeline.

Mr. Mahood: As things progressed, Gregg and I got together and looked at the timelines and how we would fit the new amendment on red snapper in and the Phase 2 activities relative to the FEP Comprehensive Amendment and the FEP.

The areas marked in light blue up there indicate new activities that were not previously approved by the committee and the council. You can take a look at that. It kinds of lays out the timeline that Gregg and I have come up with and how we'll be able to fit it into our schedule as it's proposed there. Mr. Chairman, that's it and if anybody has any particular questions about the timing, just let Gregg or I know and we'll be glad to answer your question.

Mr. Cupka: Thank you, Bob. Are there any questions for Bob?

Mr. Waugh: I think it might just be helpful just to run through the red snapper timeline, so everybody understands it. We're approving it to go out to scoping at this meeting. We have approved it.

We will scope the issue of what to do with red snapper at the same time we do our public hearings for Snapper Grouper Amendment 16 and the first round of public hearings for the FEP and the FEP Comprehensive Amendment. Those are already scheduled for May 7 in Homestead, May 9 in Port Canaveral; May 12 in Brunswick, May 13 in Charleston, and May 15 in New Bern.

What we've done for red snapper is you all will be looking at developing options at the June, September, and December meeting and approving for public hearing in March of 2009 and then holding public hearings in May of 2009 and final review in June and then reviewing and approving to send to the Secretary in September of 2009.

Just briefly, to touch on the timing for the FEP, the first round of public hearings are going to be

done, as I indicated, in May, looking at options in June, and then at September, we would have a more complete document, with the DEIS together. We would be reviewing that and approving for public hearing in September and then the rough timeline is to have those public hearings in conjunction with the Comprehensive Allocation Amendment and Snapper Grouper Amendment 17 in November of this year and then looking at comments in December of this year.

Mr. Geiger: Certainly, Gregg, I think we all recognize the addition of this amendment and what it does to staff and again, I challenge the council members that we have the same type of issue. We need to bear down and buckle down and do the work that we have to do at each of these meetings and come prepared to make those tough decisions and provide staff guidance, as we always have. The future is tough.

Mr. Robson: If you could send the council members the latest version of the table or has it already been sent out?

Mr. Mahood: We'll get it to you. I don't know that it's been sent out. Remember that you had trouble converting mine and so I didn't send it to everybody else, but we'll get you a copy.

Mr. Cupka: Other comments?

Mr. Mahood: We are looking for volunteers for these tough public hearings.

Mr. Cupka: Further discussion? As I said, we will need a motion to approve.

Ms. Shipman: **I move approval of the adjusted workload analysis, timeline, whatever that thing is.**

Mr. Cupka: We have a motion by Ms. Shipman and a second by Mr. Boyles. Is there discussion on the motion? **Is there any objection to the motion? Seeing none, then that motion is approved.**

The committee reviewed the President's FY2009 budget. There is a small budget increased proposed for the fishery management councils and the marine fisheries commission. However, it is doubtful that the President's FY2009 budget will be approved before the change of administrations, at which time it will probably be modified significantly.

Bob made a presentation on the provisions of HR5425 and indicated how they related to the current Magnuson Act. Chairman Geiger explained to the committee members that he was soliciting the council's input as to whether or not he should sign a letter of support that the Council Coordinating Committee is proposing to send to Congressman Pallone.

The issue was discussed and it was noted that several of the states had responded independently. There was no consensus for support and the council should not take a position on HR5425. It was determined by consensus that Chairman Geiger should not sign the letter of support. I want to thank Bob and Gregg for their work and that, Mr. Chairman, will conclude my report.

Mr. Geiger: Thank you, sir. Next is Spiny Lobster and Mark.

Mr. Robson: The chairman of the Spiny Lobster committee I guess had to bug out, Tony Iarocci.

Mr. Geiger: Was that a pun?

Mr. Robson: If it was an intentional one, I'm not going to admit it. The Lobster Committee met and there was a lively discussion of a proposed amendment that's under consideration with the Caribbean Council in the lead on that, but to look at the import issues and providing for a minimum three-inch carapace length for import into the United States.

That is still under review by the Caribbean Council. The public hearing draft is pending approval and we are going to see that again in June. The follow along amendment, Amendment Y we're calling it for now, is further down the road. That will include issues related to annual catch limits and accountability measures.

There was some discussion of, among a few other things, things such as tailing permits and other issues related to keeping shorts. All of that in that amendment is still under development and there was also some discussion at the committee of a possible coordination or delegation with the State of Florida on spiny lobster management for the future.

We also heard a report from Tom Matthews, a member of our research staff at the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, on studies that they are doing to evaluate any impacts of traps or trap operations on coral or other habitat areas, particularly in the Florida Keys. Mr. Chairman, there were no motions from this committee and that completes my report.

Mr. Geiger: Thank you, sir. Mr. Cupka, are you ready with Shrimp?

Mr. Cupka: Yes. The Shrimp Committee met the morning of March 6 at Jekyll Island, Georgia. The minutes from the December 2007 Shrimp Committee were approved. The committee received presentations from staff on several items, including a summary of the scoping comments and actions proposed in Shrimp Amendment 7 by Myra Brouwer and Gregg Waugh gave an overview and discussion of Shrimp Amendment 7.

The committee discussed some requests brought up by the Deepwater Shrimp AP at their January 2008 meeting in Cape Canaveral, Florida. The AP requested that the council consider in the future reopening areas within the Oculina Bank HAPC that do not contain suitable substrate for coral to the rock shrimp fishery.

One committee member expressed opposition to considering this request and stated that such areas should be explored instead for restoration activities. The AP requested information from National Marine Fisheries Service law enforcement on how many cases have been made based on VMS data and how many of these have resulted in violations. This information was provided in a memo addressed to the council from Karen Raine.

Clarification was requested on whether the committee's intent was for the time period required to

fulfill the 15,000-pound landing requirement in four years was to restart upon an endorsement being transferred. The committee stated that it was not their intent. It was determined that this clarification would not be needed, however, if the landings requirement was removed in this amendment.

NOAA GC will offer clarification on language in the purpose and need section of the amendment regarding the public's confusion about the rock shrimp limited entry endorsement, as implemented in the final rule, versus the limited access permit, as specified in Shrimp Amendment 5.

The committee provided the following guidance to staff: 1) Management Objectives 10 through 12 were addressed through Amendment 5 and this amendment addresses the following management objective, to ensure that sufficient effort remains active to sustain the fishery and the infrastructure; 2) Shrimp Amendment 17 was given latitude to discuss and assess whether Alternative 2 under Action 4 is necessary for NEPA analysis; 3) to reconvene the Shrimp Review Panel to provide input on the current status of the pink shrimp stock and the Shrimp Review Panel will generate a report to be reviewed by the council's SSC in June, so the council may take appropriate and timely action.

The committee made a number of motions relative to Amendment 7. The first is in regards to Action 1. **The motion was to make Alternative 2 our preferred alternative.** That action is to remove the 15,000-pound rock shrimp landing requirement. **On behalf of the committee, I so move.** Is there any discussion on the motion? **Any objection? Seeing none, that motion is approved.**

Also, under Action 1, to move Alternatives 3 and 4 to Appendix A. On behalf of the committee, I would so move. Is there discussion on the motion? **Is there any objection to the motion? Seeing none, that motion passes.**

The next one, again under Action 1, was to move Old Alternative 4 to Appendix A, the Considered but Rejected Appendix. On behalf of the committee, I would so move. Is there any discussion on the motion? **Is there any objection? Seeing none, that motion is approved.**

The next one pertains to Action 2 in Amendment 7. We had a motion to move Alternative 2 to Appendix A and on behalf of the committee, I would so move. Is there any discussion on the motion? **Any objection? Seeing none, that motion is approved.**

The next one, again under Action 2, was to make Alternative 4 our preferred alternative. This is the one that would reinstate all endorsements lost due to not meeting the landing requirement of 15,000 pounds of rock shrimp in one of four consecutive calendar years. On behalf of the committee, I would so move. Is there any discussion on the motion? **Is there objection to the motion? Seeing none, that motion is approved.**

The next motion pertains to Action 3. The motion was to modify Alternative 2 and make it our preferred alternative. Alternative 2 would now read: to reinstate all endorsements for those who renewed their permit in the year in which they failed to renew their

endorsement. Require rock shrimpers eligible to have their endorsements reinstated to apply for a limited access endorsement within one year after the effective date of the final rule for this amendment. On behalf of the committee, I would so move. Is there any discussion? I will add also that they needed to have an endorsement at one time in order to do this. Is there any further discussion on the motion? **Is there any objection to the motion? Seeing none, then that motion is approved.**

The next motion pertains to Action 4 in the amendment. It was to make Alternative 3 our preferred alternative. This alternative requires all South Atlantic shrimp permit holders to provide economic data if selected to do so. **On behalf of the committee, I would so move.** Is there discussion on the motion? **Is there any objection to the motion? Seeing none, that motion is approved.**

There was one additional motion, which was to add a new Action 5 to clarify that there would be two types of permits. **Again, I think we need to work on the wording of these, but the motion said that a limited access permit would enable someone to fish throughout the range of the EEZ in the South Atlantic's area of jurisdiction and the open access permit, you could fish only in North Carolina to South Carolina and the vessel could only have one type of permit, either one or the other, but not both. On behalf of the committee, I would so move.** Is there any discussion on the motion? **Is there any objection to the motion?**

Mr. Mahood: When you said they could have one or the other, they have to be qualified to get the limited access part of it. It's not a choice thing.

Mr. Cupka: Right. I thought you were objecting to the motion. **Is there any objection to the motion? Seeing none, then that motion is approved.** I do want to thank Gregg and Myra for all their help and also recognize the Deepwater Shrimp AP for all their input and meeting with us. That concludes my report, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Geiger: Thank you, David. Duane, you had an addendum?

Mr. Harris: I need to amend my report to acknowledge that there was a presentation that Myra made about the designation of critical habitat and the 4(d) rule for Acropora, the staghorn and elkhorn corals. I inadvertently left that out of my report and so if you will so amend that and if that's without objection of the committee. Thank you.

Mr. Geiger: I had noted that, but I didn't want to say anything.

Ms. Shipman: Before David leaves Shrimp and maybe this is a question for Gregg or Bob, whoever has got that work schedule, but when are the public hearings on shrimp? I can't recall. I know we're not taking action on what comes out of public hearings, I don't think, until September, but just for planning purposes, can you all help me know when those are supposed to be?

Mr. Mahood: I think Gregg just sent everybody the schedule, but let me pull it up and I'll tell you.

Mr. Waugh: We approve for public hearing in June and they're scheduled for August.

Ms. Shipman: Is the hearing going to be in conjunction with the council? I know we had some discussion about that, but -- Orlando is sort of smack-dab in the center. You've got boats in the Gulf that could easily get there and you've got people from the Cape that could get there and so is that when the hearing would be?

Mr. Waugh: We've generally tried to move away from holding the final hearing at the council, because then it gives us time to compile all the comments and you all to react to them. We could hold one there if that's you all's desire, but just remember that we already have a comment period on 15B that will take some time, but we can talk with council members and if you all think that would be a good place and time, we can do one there.

Ms. Shipman: I think the industry is going to be pretty much lock in step with where we ended up, based on -- At least I think the AP, the leadership, will be. I can't certainly speak for the others, but I'm just trying to economize staff time and council time.

Mr. Geiger: I appreciate that, Susan, and thank you. Dr. Chevront and Allocation.

Dr. Chevront: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The Allocation Committee met on March 6, 2008, in Jekyll Island. The committee reviewed items from the February committee meeting. First, the alternatives being considered are as follows: Alternative 1, landings data from NMFS or the ACCSP, the Atlantic Coast Cooperative Statistics Program databases, the staff was directed to work with the ACCSP to get data for potential use in determining allocations; Alternative 2 is to use catch data used in SEDAR assessments, including discard mortality, and staff were directed to get catch and fishing mortality rate tables for potential use; Alternative 3 was to use the council's judgment, based on fairness and equity, and this approach would use landings data, social and economic values, demographic shifts, et cetera, combined with the council's view of what fisheries should look like into the future; Alternative 4 was to use detailed economic and social analysis and modeling.

The committee recommends moving this alternative to Appendix A. That is the alternatives that were considered but eliminated from detailed consideration. There are some data available; however, detailed economic and social data and analyses are not available at this time. The committee discussed these alternatives and requested that Alternative 4 be explored at the upcoming April 8 and 9, 2008 committee meeting, rather than move to Appendix A at this time.

The Southeast Fisheries Science Center will present a model and data available that could be used for the South Atlantic. No motions were made, but directions were provided to the staff. The committee provided the following guidance and/or made the following requests: first, develop a reference list of social projects and data collected or completed or planned for the South Atlantic; 2) develop an aggregate table with all the species combined and show recreational and commercial catch percentages over time; 3) develop a table or chart outlining previous council actions and how the reductions were applied to each sector and also try to determine how effective the reductions were; and 4) there were a number of items that staff were

previously directed to prepare for the upcoming April meeting. Mr. Chairman that concludes my report.

Mr. Geiger: Thank you, sir. Any discussion or questions? Seeing none, we'll move on to the SOPPs Committee. We really did not have a formal committee meeting. Bob gave us an update that NOAA Fisheries still has not reviewed the SOPPs that we submitted several months ago and it was a topic that was discussed at the CCC meeting.

I'll just kind of go into a report on the CCC meeting at this time and, of course, we did -- An awful lot of the discussions at those CCC meetings revolve around budget and budget discussions and this one was particularly contentious, because we were operating under a continuing rule and people were really jockeying, in an effort to try and get their share of the pie.

There was also a discussion of the pending annual catch limit rule and where we were in that process and, of course, that has not been released yet, but it will shortly. There was also a discussion in regard to the Jones Bill and as I said in Executive/Finance, there was some discussion from the Mid-Atlantic Council to pursue a letter from the councils demonstrating unanimous CCC support for that bill, which is why I came back to you all, in an effort to get a clarification of our position.

There was a presentation on five-year research plans from the Director of Science and Technology and there was also a presentation on MRIP, where we were in the process. They are making progress and they're working diligently. As a matter of fact, on March 17 through 19, they're going to have a listening session at St. Petersburg, at the Southeast Regional Office, and will be conducting some workshops with the Gulf constituents and receiving input from the South Atlantic and Caribbean Council in regard to data needs.

There was also a discussion, again, about development of a council report card, in regard to ending overfished and overfishing species. That will probably be a real topic of discussion at this upcoming CCC meeting in May and I believe we'll probably sit down and begin to flesh that out at this meeting. Bob, did I miss anything?

We did receive an update from Joe Uravitch on a status report of the MPA system and framework document, which I believe was supposed to be available within a couple of weeks. We saw a draft of that and we haven't seen it yet and there was a discussion about completing Magnuson-Stevens Reauthorization implementation items as necessary and under that, the primary focus, I think, again, was on annual catch rule limits and the requirements of actions by councils. Any questions about the CCC? We do have an upcoming meeting in May. We don't have an agenda yet. Duane, do you have a comment?

Mr. Harris: Just that we attended the retirement celebration for Dr. Bill Hogarth at the Golden Flame and if you all have never been to the Golden Flame, you need to go.

Mr. Geiger: It was almost like -- It went rather late into the evening and it was on the same night that American Idol was on TV and you didn't miss anything if you attended the retirement ceremony, because it was almost like an American Idol audition. It was pretty good. Talk to me

privately if you want to hear some of the particulars. There's some amazing musical talent within the agency and that musical talent was on display at Dr. Hogarth's retirement. I won't go on the record by name as to who did what, but it was very entertaining and very well done. He was sent off in a very appropriate fashion, I believe.

There was a demonstration of appreciation for his leadership and certainly he was very, very close to the people within the agency and they respected him and that was obvious by his sendoff that night. It was a good meeting.

We talked about SOPPs and we talked about CCC and any other discussion on the Allocation Report? Seeing none, thank you, Dr. Chevront. We look forward to that next meeting in April and I guess we'll move into our status reports and Dr. Crabtree.

Dr. Crabtree: I have several things I wanted to go over with you. I think in the briefing book you have the commercial landings and status with respect to the quota. Just a couple of things noteworthy about it are, one, the Gulf king mackerel, the eastern zone, which is off the east coast of Florida, was closed on February 21st, when their quota was caught. Remember that's a March fishing year, too, and so they were closed a little over a month before the end of the fishing year.

Also, as we talked about in the Snapper Grouper Committee meeting, the golden tilefish fishery is at 36 percent of their quota. A few regulatory actions have come out since our last meeting that affect the South Atlantic and one is the Spanish mackerel trip limit adjustment. The final rule for that published on February 11. Remember that was to adjust the trip limit so that it corresponded with the new fishing year. That's been fixed.

We also, at long last, published a final rule on the revisions to the BRD protocol. This is the bycatch reduction device protocol and there are a lot of things in that that have to do with the Gulf of Mexico, in terms of certifying some BRDs and things, but the changes to the testing protocol apply everywhere and the Gulf and the South Atlantic are all now working on the same testing criteria of 30 percent finfish reduction.

There were changes made to the way the shrimp industry has to test BRDs. There were changes made in the statistical processes that are used to evaluate the test and there's also a new feature that allows us to provisionally certify a BRD for two years if it can show that it can achieve 25 percent bycatch reduction by weight.

The thought behind that is some of those BRDs, if the industry could use them and work with them, they may be able to improve their performance a little bit, so that they could become certified. The problem we've had with the BRDs is none of them could pass the old certification protocol. There have been a lot of BRDs developed that could get close, but none of them were ever certified and I don't think we've certified a new BRD in either the South Atlantic or the Gulf since we put the protocol in place.

Our goal in the revisions to the protocol was to make it more flexible and make the statistical test more reasonable, so that we can get some new BRDs certified. My hope is that over the next year or so that we're going to see a number of new bycatch reduction devices certified into the

fishery.

We are still looking at Amendment 14. I know everyone is anxious to see that move. I think we're close to resolution on some of the issues and I'm hopeful that the Notice of Availability will be out on that in the short term, certainly before our next meeting.

My Protected Resources staff has a long list of things that they've given me to update you on. We've already talked about the coral listings, the 4(d) rule, and the critical habitat determinations at the Ecosystem Committee and so I'm not going to say any more about that, but we do have a number of other actions that may affect South Atlantic fishermen and my staff has asked that I request if we could have a meeting of the Protected Resources Committee, potentially, for around an hour at the next meeting. George, I'll let you figure out if we can fit that in.

A couple of things I wanted to address specifically were you recall in November of 2006 that we put a rule in place that expanded the U.S. restricted area for juvenile right whales and modified the gillnet requirements in that area and we've also published some additional regulations in October of 2007. All of these are intended to reduce the likelihood of mortalities of right whales, which all of you are aware how critical that is.

We have had some mortalities of right whales this year and one in particular that I wanted to give you a heads up on was one off of North Carolina. This was on March 31st of 2007. There was a twenty-five-foot male found floating off of Cape Hatteras and this was a calf from the 2006-2007 calving season.

Probably the animal was three to four months old and we're still working on the genetics and the necropsy reports on those and apparently they take a long time to go, but -- We didn't recover any fishing gear off of the animal, but we do know that it was entangled prior to its death. The entanglement was not gillnets, but it was rope, apparently. We don't know what the cause of death is and they're still looking at that.

Because the animal was only three to four months old, we know it became entangled in the Southeast area, in the calving season. That's one we're concerned about and continue to want to look at that and maybe we'll figure out some more detail as to what the rope was or what gear it was, but right now, we don't know.

I do think as we talk about black sea bass traps and looking at some of those issues that we need to bear this sort of thing in mind. We've had so far two right whale calf mortalities this year, in addition to the one I just spoke of, and neither of those, as far as we could tell, were a result of human interactions. We've also had four other right whales reported as either entangled in some fashion or injured, probably from ship strike or propeller damage. Those are some things that I wanted to bring to your attention and that's my report, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Harris: May I add something with respect to the right whales? This is the second year we're doing some acoustic work off the coasts of Georgia, looking at right whale vocalizations during the calving season. We have the results from last year's work, done by Cornell and paid for by some private developers in coastal Georgia.

We've put out the acoustic buoys again this year and then, with the assistance of the National Marine Fisheries Service, we've put out two active listening buoys. I think that's got some potential for allowing us to know where and when the whales are in an area, so we can get out notices to mariners and hopefully prevent ship strikes in the future.

Mr. Geiger: I think it's interesting to note, Roy, that the Gulf mackerel eastern zone was closed and the majority of the vessels that fish in that, Canaveral to Fort Pierce, have moved immediately up to Daytona Beach to fish on the Atlantic group king mackerel stock, which is already at 69 percent.

It's amazing that that fishery has become as transient or migratory as it could be, because a lot of these guys with thirty or thirty-five-foot boats have trailers now and are able to drag them up the highway, as opposed to running them. It's really interesting to watch that process.

Dr. Crabtree: That's been a feature of the Gulf fleet for some time. We've had complaints from folks in Louisiana about Florida gillnet boats that go to Louisiana when their quota was hit. That's encouraging, Duane, in terms of the right whales. This is becoming an increasingly difficult and serious issue for us and it's starting to affect a lot of things that you wouldn't think of.

I get calls from the generals in the Army Corps periodically to talk about port expansion projects and they're talking to me about what do you see as the issues and they're thinking dredging, filling, and marshes, but I'm telling them that your biggest issue is going to be right whales, because when you expand these ports, the expectation is there will be even more ship traffic and that's going to be the biggest issue you're going to have to deal with in these.

Ms. Shipman: To that end, Roy, what's the status of the ship speed rule that's been tied up?

Dr. Crabtree: The ship strike rule is still under review in Washington.

Ms. Shipman: As it has been, for what, a year?

Dr. Crabtree: I don't know exactly how long, but for quite a long while.

Ms. Shipman: A long time. The last I heard, there was contemplated congressional action to get that going and I don't know whether that has happened or not, but you're right that it's a huge issue and something has got to move on that one. Something has got to happen.

Dr. Laney: Roy, I had two questions for you. One, on Atlantic sturgeon, I was wondering if you could briefly tell us where the review of that status review is in headquarters and I'll just mention, tangential to the question, that ship strikes are also an issue for large, mature Atlantic sturgeon.

We documented that in the status review as a particular concern in the Delaware River system and some lesser concern in the Hudson River system, but also now we're getting more reports

from the James River system as well, of large sturgeon that appear to have been cut in half by propellers. That's an issue and should that species ultimately be listed, that will be another issue of concern, I would think, with regard to port expansions throughout the southeast.

I'll just go ahead and mention real quickly, Mr. Chairman that I do have a Fish and Wildlife Service report at some point in time, but I'll mention real quickly that we did catch, this year on the cooperative winter tagging cruise, the highest number of Atlantic sturgeon we've ever caught before.

We caught seventy-three, which is half the total number that we've caught in the past twenty year time series. I hope that means there's an increasing population out there, but what I think is more likely the case is we changed our fishing strategy, using the Oregon II this year, to repeatedly tow through the areas where we caught Atlantic sturgeon, which we haven't done in the past, and we caught four recaptures while we were doing that, one of which was an animal was tagged five years ago, seventeen-and-a-half miles up the Edisto River.

We are getting southern Atlantic sturgeon very clearly mixing with the northern Atlantic sturgeon, which our geneticist, Dr. Tim King with USGS, has been telling us was the case for quite some while now, but it's nice to get tagged animals to really nail down the fact that we are getting fish from the Hudson and from the Edisto that are commingling out there on the winter grounds off of North Carolina. That's the first question. I have one about red drum, too, but I'll let you answer that one first.

Dr. Crabtree: Wilson, I don't know exactly where that is right. The Northeast Region is lead on that status review and I don't have anything in my notes. That's something we could get an update on if we could have a meeting of the Protected Resources Committee at the next meeting or you're welcome to call my office and we can let you know.

Dr. Laney: Thank you, Roy. The second question is we had -- At least you had on here the status of the red drum transfer. I spoke briefly to Monica the other day about the fact that at the last State/Federal Board, meeting, at the ASMFC Annual Meeting, there was some indication on the part of headquarters personnel that it might be possible to retain essential fish habitat for red drum even after the responsibility for that species was transferred to ASMFC.

I just wondered if you all -- Monica had indicated she was going to try and follow up on that and I wondered if you all had any information on that. Mr. Sadler was there at the meeting and Mr. Myers, Steve Myers, from headquarters and Steve seemed to think it was a possibility. One possibility that was discussed, but we haven't pursued, was whether or not ASMFC might request the Secretary to keep EFH in place after red drum was transferred.

I think keeping it in place would be something Fish and Wildlife Service would certainly support and I think, from what I've heard, your Habitat Conservation Division folks would certainly appreciate having that tool retained in the toolbox.

Dr. Crabtree: The red drum rule is in headquarters now and I think that it will publish, I'm hopeful, in the next few weeks. I'll let Monica address the issue of the essential fish habitat.

Ms. Smit-Brunello: Wilson, as you and I discussed, essential fish habitat that is a creature of the Magnuson Act. Certainly there's a lot of habitat protections that ASMFC could ask to be instituted under the Atlantic Coastal Fishery Cooperative Management Act, but the consultation requirements and all those that go along with EFH as we know it is really a creature specific to the Magnuson Act, but I'll be glad to look into it further, although I think that's probably where it will end up.

Dr. Crabtree: Just one more thing, if I could, Mr. Chairman, real quick and just kind of as an interest thing, but it sort of underscores the seriousness of all of these protected resources issues. We completed a status review on the Caribbean monk seal and I signed it last week and many people aren't aware, but Caribbean monk seals used to be extremely common in the Caribbean and if you read back to the second voyage of Columbus over, they talk about killing seven of them for the meat.

The conclusion of the status review that I signed is that the Caribbean monk seal is extinct. The last one was seen in 1953 and most of the reports of seals in the Caribbean that have occurred since then are thought to be Arctic seals, usually hooded seals that are just out of their range. That's another one that we lost.

Mr. Geiger: Thank you. Susan, as a point of interest, you asked about Dr. Hogarth and I just wanted to say we did make a presentation from the council and, of course, you can imagine that he got fish stuff galore, but from our council, we gave him a very nice duck decoy. Bob made that presentation appropriate, that Bill was always very calm and -- He seemed calm and collected on the surface, but we all know underneath that he was just paddling like hell.

Dr. Crabtree: George, if I could, you know Bill's office now is less than a half-mile from mine and so I see Bill probably more often now than I used to see him in the past. He told me had something for me and my wife went by his office this week and told me I now have a bag with like a hundred fish ties in it.

Bill's doing well and he seems to be adjusting to the change and becoming progressively comfortable in his role as dean there, but he is this week in London, I believe. He's still serving on the International Whale Commission as chairman. He's over there dealing with whales and I'll also let you know that he is working closely with the Florida Marine Research Institute and they're working on putting together a collaborative program to do reef fish monitoring on the west coast of Florida. We're seeing Bill start to make some things happen in working with people over there and I think we're going to see some more fisheries work coming out of USF.

Mr. Geiger: I hope there's no truth to the rumor that he's trying to recruit you to go into the university system kind of as his protégé.

Dr. Crabtree: Not that I'm aware of, George.

Mr. Mahood: One might wonder how we ended up giving him a duck decoy. I was pounding the back streets of Charleston looking for something appropriately fishing from our many -- I

didn't realize we had so many art galleries in Charleston and I just couldn't find anything and I called George on my cell phone and said, George, I'm worn out and have you got any ideas? I won't tell you what some of George's ideas were, but eventually he said, let's just get him something that we would like to get.

Then he said you remember when we were down there shopping one day we saw that place that had all those nice decoys and I said yes. He said, you would like to get a decoy wouldn't you? I said yes and he said, well, I would too and let's give him a decoy.

Mr. Geiger: Science Center and Dr. Ponwith or Dr. Jamir.

Dr. Jamir: It will be another tag team between myself and Dr. Ponwith. What I have here is a quick update of some of the research that you specifically asked the Science Center to give you regular sort of updates, as well as the specific species that you want. Of the species that you mentioned, we were not able to complete the Spanish mackerel, as well as the accompanying mackerel, because they're still currently being worked on by our stock assessment people for the SEDAR assessments, but for the rest, it's basically here.

Mr. Geiger: While we're waiting for that to come up, Dr. Crabtree, do you want to do the Experimental Fishing Request? Go ahead, Tom, when you're ready, but I just thought maybe I would fill in here.

Dr. Ponwith: If you're looking for something to fill in, I do have a personnel change that I wanted to report to the council in the Southeast Fisheries Science Center, in the Miami Lab. We've got a Sustainable Fisheries Division that is ably led by Dr. Victor Restrepo and in the interest of balancing the workload and being more attentive to that very important component of the work that we do at the Center, I've decided to split the leadership of that shop between two chiefs.

Victor Restrepo will continue to work on highly migratory species assessments and we created a new position for the coastal assessments and that position has been successfully competed for by Dr. Clay Porch. I'm happy to announce that Dr. Clay Porch is now a division chief.

Mr. Geiger: Offer our congratulations to Clay. That's a great acquisition and a good guy.

Dr. Crabtree: If you look in the briefing book, it's listed as Ex Fish Burgess, it looks like on what I have, if everyone can find that. We've had an application from Tom Burgess for an EFP. The title is a pilot survey of deepwater reef fishes off of North Carolina using a two-stage adaptive design. Part 2 is the use of chevron trapping.

As I understand it, he wants to use fishery independent monitoring technique to determine the relative abundance and species composition of deepwater reef fish complex. He would do work inside and adjacent to the Snowy Wreck Marine Protected Area off of North Carolina.

The goals are to demonstrate the effectiveness of a sampling technique that can be used to census deepwater reef fish anywhere in the U.S. South Atlantic, using an alternative gear type, trapping,

and to incorporate the first stage of a before and after control type sampling design to compare information on relative abundance and composition of fishes inside and outside of the MPA before it's closed to reef fish fishing.

The only comment I'll make to you on it is the timing of this is a little difficult, because I suspect by the time -- If we decided to issue the EFP, by the time he would get really started on this, in all likelihood, the rule on 14 would be happening and then the MPA would be closed long and about those times. He might be able to sample outside of and inside of the MPA and make that comparison, but I'm not sure there's going to be enough time, really, to do the sampling in the MPA before it's closed.

I certainly don't think he could get in a full year of sampling. He may could get in a little bit, depending on the timing of the various rules, but that's essentially the project. In the briefing book, there's a several page, it looks like about six pages, document and there's a budget and some other information on it. The other participants in the project are a Paul Rudershausen and a Dr. Jeffrey Buckel, Warren Mitchell, Elliott Hazen, and Erik Williams, who is at the Beaufort Lab.

Mr. Mahood: I'm not sure about the timing, Roy, but it certainly would provide us some good additional data from that area, where we're not getting samples now. I'm not sure how North Carolina views it. I do know that Jeff Buckel is one of our SSC members and I think it's very responsive to some of the needs we have expressed relative to snowy grouper and some of the deepwater species.

Dr. Chevront: Roy, have you all talked to them about the timing problems with the potential closure of the MPA prior to them being able to collect a full year's worth of data?

Dr. Crabtree: Yes, I think we have. Joe, if you want to comment on that.

Dr. Powers: Yes, we did let him know that there would be a possible timing problem, but he asked us to go ahead and pursue the EFP nonetheless.

Mr. Mahood: The other thing I think that's interesting and important in this is this project is being funded by the State of North Carolina, through their cooperative research program with fishermen, very similar to the federal program running out of the Center. Personally, I don't see a whole lot of downside to it and I think we might get some good information and it's certainly what we want to encourage and Tom is one of our AP members that we work very closely with and has always been a very big participant in our activities. I'm not a council member and I don't get to vote, but it just seems like it would be a good project to recommend that the Regional Administrator approve.

Mr. Boyles: **If it's appropriate, I'll make the motion to approve this, recommend approval for this.**

Mr. Geiger: We've got a motion to recommend approval of the experimental fishing permit from North Carolina and seconded by Mr. Currin. Is there discussion?

Mr. Currin: Just one comment. I think the value of the project goes beyond the intent to get some before and after data in the MPAs. I think the investigations that they're doing into developing some methodology and calibration for some fishery independent survey work is, in and of itself, to me, valuable.

Mr. Geiger: Any other discussion? **Is there any opposition to recommending approval of that experimental fishing permit? Seeing none, the motion carries.** Thank you. Dr. Tom, are you ready? While we're getting that material up, in the interest of time, let's go around the table and see if we have another Agency and Liaison Reports. North Carolina?

Dr. Chevront: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I've got just a couple of things from North Carolina that I wanted to mention. First off, many of you knew Mike Street, who has since retired from the Division of Marine Fisheries. He was very involved in our habitat efforts. He's been replaced by Ann Deaton, who has worked with him for many years on those efforts.

Our draft of a revised red drum management plan is now out for public hearing and some of you have been following what North Carolina has been doing in pursuing LAPPs at a state level. At our last commission meeting, they received a presentation on how LAPPs might work in striped bass, southern flounder, and the king mackerel fisheries by Scott Crosson.

The MFC decided that they didn't want to pursue any specific LAPP program at this time, partially because of lack of overwhelming support by commercial fishermen, but there was some discussion that there may be some issues, for example, in a striped bass fishery, where something similar to a LAPP could be set up.

Also, I had reported that last summer's state legislature session gave the Division of Marine Fisheries \$20 million for a waterfront access and marine industries fund and proposals have been received. We're in the process now of finalizing who is going to get those awards and those announcements should be made by April 1.

The last thing is on March 18, the North Carolina Marine Fisheries Commission is going to be bringing its advisors from its various committees to New Bern to have roundtable discussions about fisheries issues affecting North Carolina. That ends my report.

Mr. Geiger: Thank you, Brian. Dr. McIlwain, do you have anything? As a point of interest, we talked about MARFIN and we've received that very excellent research report on spiny lobster traps and for those of you who don't know, Dr. McIlwain was one of the original authors and developers of the MARFIN program, which has reaped countless benefits. That's a living legacy, Tom. Congratulations on that.

Dr. McIlwain: Thank you. That has been a good program and it's moved from the Gulf to the South Atlantic and I think on up the coast as well. I guess the one item of interest is the Gulf continues to work on its aquaculture amendment. At the last meeting, we received the GC comments. The Center and the council staff continues to work and try to respond to those.

We have had one hearing in the Keys, in Islamorada. It was attended by about twenty-five or thirty people and we got some good comment. We had proposed -- Tony wanted to have an additional hearing in the Keys and we had tentatively set that up for April 14th, which is a week after our next meeting, but we've delayed that until we can get the changes incorporated in and get the document back up to snuff with all the new changes in it, but it's our intention to have an additional hearing in the Keys, at Key West, sometime later in the year. Other than that, we continue to work on grouper and that's an interesting issue in the Gulf as well.

Mr. Geiger: Thank you, sir. Georgia?

Ms. Shipman: As most of you know from observing my frenetic behavior this week, our legislature is in session and it's sort of a wild and woolly ride there about -- They've got ten days left to go, as of this coming Tuesday, and so things are really speeding up. We have a blue crab fishery bill in the legislature that would authorize the department to manage that fishery in a manner similar to what we do with shrimp and finfish and shellfish.

For whatever reason, the legislature, through the years, has sort of retained that authority for blue crab and I think they're tired of us bringing blue crab bills to them on almost an annual basis. It seems as if they're ready to delegate that authority and so we're working on that and our plan would be to continue our sponge crab harvest prohibition under that authority. That prohibition would sunset at the end of June, unless we continue that.

We also -- John actually knows more about this than I, but there's reportedly a bill introduced yesterday on country of origin labeling and he may be able to tell you a little bit more about that. I don't know much about it.

Mr. Wallace: No, I don't know a whole lot more myself. It wasn't anything that we had anything to do with, but I think the Department of Agriculture was looking at some of the species substitution issues that's been going down and wanted to try to figure out some way of doing it and I think it turned into some type of origin bill, but I haven't seen the bill itself and so I'm not sure.

Ms. Shipman: As with most legislatures, in the waning days, you never know really what is in a bill until generally after it's over. Anyway, we have that going on. Water is a huge issue for the state, even though we're going to get three to four inches today. We're still so far behind, particularly in the Atlanta area, and I'm sure you hear a lot about that on the news.

There has been a commission formed in the legislature to examine and investigate moving our state boundary north into Tennessee and taking the Tennessee River, which is a real popular idea outside of the State of Georgia.

Mr. Geiger: Are you looking for volunteers?

Ms. Shipman: No, but we are working very closely with the Corps and with the Fish and Wildlife Service and with our sister divisions on water issues for the Savannah River and Lake Hartwell and releases out of Lake Hartwell and streamflow in the Savannah River. It really is a

habitat issue for the Savannah River and that basin is not facing nearly the constraints that some of the other basins are facing, but nonetheless, Hartwell is down and we're working with South Carolina as well. We're working on that.

We have some fishing access projects going on. Our legislature wasn't nearly as generous as North Carolina's. We only got about \$1.4 million and that's really to work on enhancing existing fishing access and so we're working on that as well and that's about it. It's been good to see everybody this week. I'm glad to have you here in our backyard.

Mr. Geiger: Thank you, Susan. Mark?

Mr. Robson: We're making plans right now, while Georgia's attention is diverted towards Tennessee, to take over the entire St. Marys River Basin, so we can sell more licenses to Georgia residents. Keep us apprised of how that's going.

Just real briefly, we do have a finalized research and monitoring plan in place now for the Tortugas Research Natural Area that's about half of Tortugas National Park. That was a project that was collaboratively put in place with folks from the park itself and other fishery experts, as well as our own research institute and management staff. We're looking forward to trying to collect some good information on the status of that research natural area, as it's now set up, over the next few years.

Also, most of you are aware of the related issues with MRIP and the federal registry that's been put in place under Magnuson-Stevens and Florida has -- We've been advised at this point that because we have a shoreline exemption for recreational angling in Florida that that may be a big enough hole in our user database that state residents would be required to get the federal registration to fish in the EEZ when that is kicked in.

We are trying to work through that process. We are not making any headway this year again with the legislature on eliminating the shoreline exemption and so I don't know where that's all going to end up, but I don't right now see a favorable atmosphere for the State of Florida eliminating that current exemption and so we're going to have to look for some creative ways to get the angler information that NOAA Fisheries is going to be looking for. That concludes my report, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Geiger: Thank you, Mark. Robert and South Carolina?

Mr. Boyles: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Let me echo the comments that Mark made about MRIP. We have been waiting for formal guidance from the Fisheries Service to ascertain what changes in our licensing program would be necessary in order to gain exempted status for our anglers as well.

We have been given preliminary indication that we, like Florida, have a shore-based angling exemption. We've drafted some legislation, but we're really waiting. We only want to go to the legislature once on these things and we think we may have enough to go on. We received some informal guidance, in the form of a letter from Gordon Colvin several weeks ago. We are

probably going to get that bill in front of our general assembly next week, or the week thereafter. A couple of other things that --

Mr. Geiger: Before you go on there, there's a listening session, as I indicated, in mid-March and this seems like information we need to get from the states, from the council perspective, into the process. Tell me again, kind of in more specific terms, what is the guidance you're looking for.

Mr. Boyles: Quite frankly, what I was waiting for was formal guidance, in the form of a Federal Register notice, that these are the requirements that state licensing programs would need in order to have their anglers exempt from the federal registry, from participating in the federal registry.

To date -- The last I had heard, that guidance had not left NOAA and was still going to OMB. Of course, the timing constraint we've got is our general assembly -- Much like Georgia -- They're not going to go home as quickly as the Georgia General Assembly, but they're very quickly wrapping up their work this election year. What we do have, what the Fisheries Service staff has been able to provide, has given us enough to go on, but we still don't know exactly what the prescription will be that we need to change our licensing program.

Of course, you know our interest here is improving recreational data collection. That's first and foremost in front of everybody's mind, but we know that we've got work that we've got to do with the South Carolina license program and so we're trying to wait for a prescription of what exactly we need to do.

The second thing is I wanted to publicly acknowledge Roger's leadership as chairman of the South Atlantic SEAMAP Committee. When the FY2008 budget was finalized, the SEAMAP program received quite a large bump in its appropriation. As a result of Roger's leadership, we are going to be able to expand a lot of fishery independent sampling, with traps and bottom longlines, for instance, in the South Atlantic for a number of different species. Roger, thank you for that leadership. That's going to go a long way to helping bolster our fishery independent sampling for species that this council is very concerned about.

Bonnie mentioned earlier in the week the progress that our staff had been making in partnership with the Science Center staff on reading vermilion slides and processing those. I've been very pleased with that collaboration and very proud of our staff and the partnership we've got, Bonnie. Thank you for that. Lastly, our general assembly is in session and yesterday, the state senate passed a bill that would establish cobia as a game fish in South Carolina. That concludes my report, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Geiger: Thank you, Robert. Dr. Laney?

Dr. Laney: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have a number of things I'll mention that I think would be of interest to the council. First, let me just say once again how excited I am to be here and be able to give you a report and to hopefully keep the Fish and Wildlife Service well integrated in the council process.

On a sad note, some of you may know Dr. Bill Hassler from N.C. State University. He was a

professor emeritus and was heavily involved in striped bass research for many, many, many years and also longline research in the Caribbean and lots of other things and was the academic father of Dr. Hogarth and Pres Pate and Dr. Manooch and quite a few of the rest of us.

He wasn't my advisor, but I did take Fishery Science and Ichthyology under him. He passed away several weeks ago quite suddenly and there will be a memorial service for him, I understand from the family, the weekend after Easter. I'll try and keep everyone informed about that.

Talking about fishery independent sampling, my office is responsible for conducting the annual cooperative winter tagging cruise and we successfully did that in January, the last two weeks of January. I'll just mention a few highlights from that. I have a very short PowerPoint presentation. If you all wanted to see it at some point in time, that's fine. I know we're kind of trying to go at warp speed today. I do have it on my computer and it's pulled up and ready to go. If you want to see it, I can do that later.

We did tag this year 1,033 striped bass, which is below our long-term average. We had some problems with the trawl winch on the Oregon II, in that we couldn't operate the starboard side for about two-thirds of the trip. Still, that was much better than last year's total, when the fish were up in the Mid-Atlantic Council's region, as opposed to the South Atlantic Council's region. This year, they were a little bit further south.

I've already mentioned the Atlantic sturgeon numbers that we got. We measured and determined gender on close to 9,000 spiny dogfish. We tagged horseshoe crabs again, as usual. We didn't catch any red drum this year. Normally, we tag those, if we get them, and we tagged our first ever juvenile thresher shark.

We're working with the ASMFC Coastal Shark Technical Committee to try and provide them information on nursery area use by juvenile coastal sharks. We continue to be very much involved, as Susan pointed out, in the water issues. The Service is very concerned, in particular, about freshwater mussels and there may be populations now, because the water levels have been so low in some of the smaller headwater tributaries, where we've actually lost populations. We won't know until we go back in there and re-survey those streams, after they have water in them again.

We're working through my office, again, on the re-licensing of the Gaston and Roanoke Dams, the first two dams, the gateway dams, on the Roanoke River. They required a provision for American eel passage at that structure. Many of you probably know that American eels have an introduced Japanese nematode air bladder parasite in them and so there's an ecological issue here, in that if you pass the eels upstream, you're passing the parasite upstream.

We weren't originally concerned about, because of the fact that striper fishermen upstream, in the reservoirs, are using live, wild-caught American eels for bait and so the likelihood is the parasite is already there, but some scientists in Virginia raised the concern once again, even after the license was finalized.

In an effort to try and assure ourselves and the scientific community that we're being responsible, even though there are other programs that are already passing parasitized eels without consideration to the ecological impacts, we are asking the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission American Eel Technical Committee to review what we're doing on the Roanoke and give us an up or down on that and provide some feedback to us with regard to what we're proposing to do.

We continue to work to re-license dams throughout the Southeast and during the course of that to try and secure appropriate flows. One item I'll mention there is that there was a settlement agreement I guess between the states of North and South Carolina and Progress Energy for the first two dams on the Yadkin and Pee Dee system.

We didn't go along with that for several reasons, one of which was we don't think that the flows that are proposed for release for Tillery, which is the second dam on the system, are sufficient to provide habitat in the future, when we start passing anadromous species and trying to rebuild those stocks upstream, into that reach at Tillery.

American Rivers and the City of Rockingham and I'm not sure who the third part is have all appealed the decision of the FERC to allow Progress Energy to release flows lower than we think are appropriate. They have requested that Fish and Wildlife Service employees be allowed to testify in those proceedings and I don't know whether we will or not, but we certainly support them in their pursuing higher flow releases from Tillery.

Then finally, Mr. Chairman, the Service has started a couple of initiatives internally here that I think the council may be interested in having briefings on in the future. One of those is what we're calling a strategic habitat conservation process for us, as far as trying to maintain sustainable federal trust species that are under our jurisdiction.

It entails a lot more biological planning, conservation design, conservation delivery and adaptive management follow-up provision. One of the ecosystems teams of which I'm a part of doing is we have a post-doc, Dr. Ashton Drew, who is located at N.C. State University, where I'm housed, who will be developing, beginning in April, a habitat model for blueback herring.

We're working very closely with North Carolina, with Ms. Sarah Winslow and other North Carolina DMF staff on this, with a view towards applying that first to the North Carolina part of the range and then hopefully it will have a broader application than that, with a view towards trying to estimate the capability of the habitat to provide support for blueback herring and alewife in that system, which if you remember, used to be the epicenter of the river herring fishery on the east coast of the U.S.

Then, finally, our Regional Director, Sam Hamilton has established a regional climate change committee. A lot of people are talking about now. There is potential for a good bit of funding associated with climate change and how it affects fish and wildlife resources and again, we'll work very closely to keep the council's Habitat and Ecosystem Committee apprised of all this and to the extent that we can integrate our efforts with those of the council, we'll be sure to do so. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Geiger: Thank you, Wilson. If it's okay with the rest of the council, I would ask that maybe you could put your PowerPoint up after and those of us that are interested -- I would certainly like to watch it and I'm sure others would also. Dr. Tom, I apologize for the lengthy delay, but to maintain some semblance of flow here, we just kept going.

Dr. Jamir: This update is always a collaboration between the state agencies as well as the different Southeast Fisheries Science Center units, more specifically the Panama City Lab, the Miami Lab, as well as the Beaufort Lab. I forgot to incorporate the name of Jennifer Potts. She should be in that list of preparers.

The status of data collection program with respect to the king mackerel, Dr. Will Patterson's program is continuing to collect the fish under the CRP grant, which should be able to provide another winter's estimate of mixing rates, from either elemental analysis or stable isotope analysis or both.

There will be some research recommendations regarding the future sampling design and coverage that came out of the recent SEDAR data workshop, but they are not finalized yet. I'll give you an update on those at the next council meeting.

Jennifer Potts decided to give us a historical overview of where the otolith sampling program has been and is continuing to proceed and I summarized that in a chart provided, which shows how the different states have participated and also included a summary of where the otolith samples are at the NMFS Beaufort Lab, in terms of the numbers that are collected so far. This one is for vermilion snapper.

Mr. Geiger: That's just on collections. They have not all been sectioned yet, correct?

Dr. Jamir: No, not yet. This is just a summary, if you're interested, to get a summary, sort of a blow-by-blow account, for the different sectors of the fishery, as well as subdivided by state agencies. Now for the red porgy, the samples that we have so far are only this, because the rest have been used in previous assessments. This is what is left at the Beaufort Lab.

For the black sea bass, these are the samples that are still held at the NMFS Beaufort Lab and it's interesting to note that there's a lot more that we have in recent years, which improves a lot of our stock assessment estimates. This is the summary of the number of otoliths that are at the NMFS Beaufort Lab for the different states by species, through the years 1995 through the present. You will see a steady increase, an exponential increase, in recent years, especially with interest in having more accurate assessments in support of the different data intensive models that we have developed.

A quick update on the headboat survey program, the headboat survey has replaced the previous annual summary program, in order to improve or increase the efficiency for generating annual landings. A headboat survey representative also participated in the SEDAR-16 data workshop for king mackerel and they're also preparing some of their recommendations with regards to this.

The NOAA General Counsel has approved a draft letter to be sent to the headboat owners in the Atlantic and the Gulf of Mexico. This letter states the logbook reporting requirements and encourages owners and captains to comply. I think this is what you were waiting for since two meetings ago and as far as what Ken Brennan gave in this update, it's already approved by the General Counsel. A headboat survey representative will also participate in the SEDAR-17 data workshop for the Spanish mackerel and the vermilion snapper that's coming up soon.

With regards to the black sea bass, these are the recreational statistics summary and update, as of the latest one that we have processed, which is 2006. This is for the black sea bass. As you can see, the trends are, in this case, primarily derived from the private recreational fishery, with very minimal participation or contribution from the shore-based fishery. This is just a summary of everything in tabular format. This is an additional --

I asked our statistics group as to when the next update would be processed. They're receiving the information still and they said that the earliest will be around May of this year, when they will receive the 2007 data.

Mr. Waugh: Tom, are those calendar year or does that track the fishing year?

Dr. Jamir: Fishing year.

Mr. Waugh: When you look at say 2006, that's the 2006/2007 fishing year?

Dr. Jamir: Yes.

Mr. Geiger: I heard a comment from the table here about the shore number and that was an interesting number to me, that the shore landings are so high. Do you have any indication about where they come from or --

Dr. Jamir: I don't have the exact indication as to how they derive the shore estimates, but I can provide you that information next time.

Mr. Geiger: Does anybody else have any questions about that?

Dr. Jamir: This one was one of the recent additions to the list of species, which is the dolphin recreational statistics. This is the trend from 1996 to 2006 that we have so far and this will be the summary table for that. I'll let you look at that for a while. I took off -- There should be a column for the shore-based samples, but there's no entry on any of them and so this one is just an abbreviated version of the table.

This is the update for the greater amberjack recreational statistics and, again, it covers the 1996 through 2006 fishing year and here is the summary table for you to look at. This one is for the red porgy recreational statistics, again, the ten-year trend. These are the data that supports that.

For snowy grouper, this is what we have so far and here is the table where it was derived and I will check on the shore-based fishery sampling, to give you a better idea as to how they derive

those estimates, on the next update that I'll give. Tilefish is another species that you added for this update and our stock assessment people started compiling the data and this is what they get as the ten-year trend for the landings statistics for tilefish and these are the data that supports that.

Mr. Mahood: That's all tilefish? They're not separated into just golden tiles or --

Dr. Jamir: When the request was given to us, it was I think golden tilefish and when we looked at the database for the species designation, what you requested wasn't in the database and the nearest that we can get this tilefish -- What we ended up doing is looking at the original amendments and look at the species, the genus and the species, and we reconciled it to -- This is your golden tilefish, what you requested, based on the listings.

Mr. Geiger: Gregg, is this fulfilling the request that we had? Is this helping?

Mr. Waugh: My suggestion was going to be is on the figures, to start showing what our recreational allocations are, so that you can see where these catches are with respect to the allocation, but we're going to have to figure out how to track recreational golden tilefish landings.

Dr. Jamir: With respect to the allocation, the Science Center doesn't provide allocation. It's the Regional Office and so we need to get what your statistics are in terms of the allocation that you require and we can incorporate that as part of the figures.

Dr. Crabtree: When you look at those numbers up there, this is another one where I think we ought to recreationally not monitor it with pounds and monitor it in numbers of fish, because you look at that 2005 number, it jumps from 25,000 to 240,000. I haven't looked at it, but I suspect that the numbers are not as much like that. We ought to look at that, Tom, and see if the numbers are more consistent.

Dr. Jamir: I'll pass that on to the statistics group at the Center. That, Mr. Chairman, concludes my report.

Mr. Geiger: Gregg, any comments or --

Mr. Waugh: I know Tom and the Center have been very responsive to providing this information and we're going to be meeting with Gordon Colvin to talk about how we track the recreational catches once we move into ACLs. It's going to be what the timing is going to be and so I don't know how, within the agency, who is going to be charged with that, but we are going to need to look at each wave of data as quickly as we can after the end of the wave and see where we are with respect to our recreational quotas, just like we do on the commercial side, and track that within the season.

Certainly we've got some alternatives in Amendment 17 that would not always track it that closely, but that's certainly one of the options and we're going to want to watch what that recreational harvest is.

Mr. Geiger: Certainly, thank you, Tom, for doing this. It was something we haven't had before and it's a good first shot and we'll try to keep refining, I guess, as we move along. That completes the Agency Liaison Reports. Are there any agencies or liaisons that I missed?

Dr. McIlwain: Could I add one postscript to my report?

Mr. Geiger: Sure.

Dr. McIlwain: All of you know that Wayne Swingle is retiring as Executive Director from the Gulf Council. He's been there since 1976 and so my question was, why on my watch? Anyway, we have advertised the position and we would encourage you all to distribute it. I think it's coming up and we're also in the preparation of a retirement party for Wayne, to be held at the April meeting in Baton Rouge.

We would encourage anybody who can make it over to Baton Rouge. It will be Monday, April 7th, beginning at 6:30, on the LSU campus. We're going to miss Wayne. We just figured he was always going to be there, but he has chosen to retire.

Mr. Geiger: He's certainly been a fixture and I think he celebrated two years ago his 200th meeting, Gulf Council meeting. I don't even know what it is now, 210 or 212 or something like that. It's pretty significant. Bob, any Upcoming Meetings?

Mr. Mahood: Yes, we've got a few coming up. As you all know, June 8 through the 13, starting with the SSC and then the council. We will be meeting in Orlando, Florida. September 15 through 19, we'll be meeting at the Marriott in Charleston and November 30 through December 5, again starting with the SSC first, we'll be at the Hilton on the Riverfront in Wilmington, North Carolina.

Then in March, we've been trying to find something in Savannah, to maybe move to another part of the state, but Cindy is having a very difficult time. They really would like us to come back here again and so I don't know -- If the council is not dead set on meeting somewhere else, we could probably arrange to meet back here next year. Mr. Chairman, I'll kind of let you give me a consensus or an opinion or whatever on that.

Mr. Geiger: I would certainly defer to the Georgia delegation, but I will say the breakfast pastries are better here than anyplace I've ever been.

Ms. Shipman: We're working with Mike on that. There's one other possibility in Savannah, but if that doesn't pan out, I would suggest we come back to this area, either St. Simons or here, and -- Three of us, you all don't have to cover lodging for us, if we're back in this area. There are some savings.

Mr. Geiger: One of the nice things is if you come back to the same places, you get comfortable. You know where to go and it's not a big hunt and search and you're much more comfortable coming into a known location.

Mr. Harris: Mr. Chairman, I will tell you all that they are getting ready to pretty dramatically expand this hotel and triple the meeting space that exists here now. This same group of investors that owns this hotel is building a new hotel down where the Holiday Inn was, on the beach, on the south end of the island. That hotel is expected to open in the next sixteen to eighteen months. It will be a Hampton Suites Hotel. In the future, there will be more options, on this island at least.

Mr. Geiger: Bob, did you have any more meeting --

Mr. Mahood: We're trying to find something in Jacksonville, Florida in June of 2009. We are back in Charleston in September of 2009 and Atlantic Beach, North Carolina in December of 2009.

Mr. Geiger: In that same vein, in regard to meetings, I would implore council members who have not participated in the SEDAR process to please look at the SEDAR schedule and become active. I think it's extremely important that we all know how this process works and you get a feel for it and participate. Enough said.

Any other business to come before the council? I would certainly like to acknowledge the public who was here this week. We had a very large public attendance, I think, and they were very active. I appreciate it when the public is here and provides input and pays attention to what we're doing. Thank you to all the members, even those who have had to leave early, for their participation this week.

Ms. Shipman: Just one weather announcement. We're under a tornado warning and there's a very severe cell coming in from the west. Please do be very careful.

Mr. Geiger: With a report like that and the thunder behind you, you could go on TV.

Ms. Shipman: I could. I'll consider that for my retirement plans. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Geiger: Any other business? Seeing none, we're adjourned.

(Whereupon, the meeting recessed at 10:30 o'clock a.m., March 7, 2008.)

Certified By: _____ Date: _____

Transcribed By: Graham Transcriptions, Inc.
March, 2008

SOUTH ATLANTIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

FULL COUNCIL SESSION

**Jekyll Island Club Hotel
Jekyll Island, GA**

March 7, 2008

SUMMARY MOTIONS

PAGE 5: Motion to invite Sherry Larkin, John Whitehead, and Scott Crosson to join the new SSC. The motion carried on page 5.

PAGE 5: Motion to invite Carolyn Belcher, Jeff Buckle, Doug Gregory, Erik Williams, Luiz Barbieri, Alex Chester, Pat Harris, Ken Pollock, Christine Burgess, Anne Lange, Marcel Reichert, Yan Jiao, and Andy Cooper to join the new South Atlantic Fishery Management Council SSC. The motion carried on page 5.

PAGE 8: Motion to adopt Alternatives 2, 3, and 5A as the preferred alternatives. The motion carried on page 8.

PAGE 8: Motion to change Alternative 4 to indicate quotas will be tracked by dealer reporting and remove state trip ticket and logbook tracking. The motion carried on page 8.

PAGE 8: Motion to adopt Alternative 2 as the preferred in Amendment 16. The motion carried on page 8.

PAGE 8: Motion to adopt Alternative 3A as the preferred in Amendment 16. The motion carried on page 8.

PAGE 8: Motion to adopt Alternative 4D as the preferred, but extend the closure indicated in that measure through May 15. The motion carried on page 9.

PAGE 9: Motion to adopt Alternative 5C as the preferred alternative. The motion carried on page 9.

PAGE 9: Motion to approve Amendment 16 for public hearing. The motion carried on page 9.

PAGE 9: Motion to retain Alternatives 5A through 5D in Amendment 17. The motion carried on page 9.

PAGE 9: Motion to remove Alternative 5A from Amendment 17. The motion carried on page 9.

PAGE 9: Motion to exclude Sub-Alternative 5D from Amendment 17. The motion carried on page 9.

PAGE 9: Motion to delete Alternative 4 from Action 17. The motion carried on page 9.

PAGE 9: Motion to move red snapper actions from Amendment 17 into another yet to be named amendment and to also hold scoping meetings in conjunction with public hearings for Amendment 16. The motion carried on page 9.

PAGE 9: Motion to remove the measures under Section 2.2.2.3 from Amendment 17. The motion carried on page 9.

PAGE 10: Motion to move the action intended to remove species from the fisheries management unit to the second ACL document. The motion carried on page 10.

PAGE 12: Motion to develop an outreach program on limited access privilege programs and encourage fishermen to submit LAP program ideas for consideration. The motion carried on page 13.

PAGE 13: Motion to contact members of the golden tilefish fishery and explore the possibility of a limited access privilege program for that fishery. The motion carried on page 14.

PAGE 16: Motion to add VMS requirements for the golden crab fishery. The motion carried on page 16.

PAGE 16: Motion to establish the proposed Coral Habitat Areas of Particular Concern to include all the alternative boundaries proposed by the Deepwater Shrimp AP and fishing areas proposed by the Golden Crab AP to take to public hearings. The motion carried on page 16.

PAGE 16: Motion to approve the Comprehensive Fishery Ecosystem Plan for public hearings. The motion carried on page 17.

PAGE 18: Motion that the council approve the CY2008 budget. The motion carried on page 18.

PAGE 19: Motion to approve the revised council activities schedule. The motion carried on page 19.

PAGE 21: Motion to make Alternative 2 the preferred alternative in Action 1 of Shrimp Amendment 7. The motion carried on page 19.

PAGE 21: Motion to move Alternatives 3 and 4 in Action 1 to Appendix A. The motion carried on page 21.

PAGE 21: Motion to move Old Alternative 4 in Action 1 to Appendix A, the Considered but Rejected Appendix. The motion carried on page 21.

PAGE 21: Motion to move Alternative 2 in Action 2 to Appendix A. The motion carried on page 21.

PAGE 21: Motion to make Alternative 4 in Action 2 the preferred alternative. The motion carried on page 21.

PAGE 21: Motion to modify Alternative 2 in Action 3 and make it the preferred alternative. Alternative 2 would now read: to reinstate all endorsements for those who renewed their permit in the year in which they failed to renew their endorsement. Require rock shrimpers eligible to have their endorsements reinstated to apply for a limited access endorsement within one year after the effective date of the final rule for this amendment. The motion carried on page 22.

PAGE 22: Motion to make Alternative 3 the preferred alternative in Action 4. The motion carried on page 22.

PAGE 22: Motion that a limited access permit would enable someone to fish throughout the range of the EEZ in the South Atlantic's area of jurisdiction. With the open access permit, a vessel could fish only in North Carolina to South Carolina and the vessel could only have one type of permit, either one or the other, but not both. The motion carried on page 22.

PAGE 31: Motion to recommend approval of the experimental fishing permit requested by Tom Burgess. The motion carried on page 32.

South Atlantic Fishery Management Council
2007- 2008 Council Membership

COUNCIL CHAIRMAN:

George J. Geiger
566 Ponoka Street
Sebastian, FL 32958
772/388-3183 (ph)
georgejgeiger@bellsouth.net

COUNCIL VICE-CHAIRMAN

Charles Duane Harris
105 Demere Retreat Lane
St. Simons Island, GA 31522
912/638-9430 (ph)
seageorg@bellsouth.net

Deirdre Warner-Kramer
Office of Marine Conservation
OES/OMC
2201 C Street, N.W.
Department of State, Room 5806
Washington, DC 20520
202/647-3228 (ph); 202/736-7350 (f)
Warner-KramerDM@state.gov

Robert H. Boyles, Jr.
S.C. Dept. of Natural Resources
Marine Resources Division
P.O. Box 12559
(217 Ft. Johnson Road)
Charleston, SC 29422-2559
843/953-9304 (ph)
843/953-9159 (fax)
boylesr@dnr.sc.gov

Representative Wilson Laney
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Dr. Brian Chevront
N.C. Division of Marine Fisheries
P.O. Box 769 (3441 Arendell St.)
Morehead City, NC 28557
252/726-7021 Ext. 8015 (ph)
252/726-6187
brian.chevront@ncmail.net

Dr. Roy Crabtree
Regional Administrator
NOAA Fisheries, Southeast Region
263 13th Avenue South
St. Petersburg, FL 33701
727/824-5301 (ph); 727/824-5320 (f)
roy.crabtree@noaa.gov

David M. Cupka
P.O. Box 12753
Charleston, SC 29422
843/795-8591 (hm)
843/870-5495 (cell)
dkcupka@bellsouth.net

Benjamin M. "Mac" Currin
801 Westwood Drive
Raleigh, NC 27607
919/881-0049 (ph)
mcurrin1@bellsouth.net

Anthony L. Iarocci
236 Guava Avenue
Grassy Key, FL 33050
305/743-7162 (ph); 305/743-2697(f)

Rita G. Merritt
38 Pelican Drive
Wrightsville Beach, NC 28480
910/256-3197 (ph); 910/256-3689 (f)
miridon@ec.rr.com

John V. O'Shea
Executive Director
Atlantic States Marine Fisheries
Commission
1444 Eye Street, N.W., 6th Floor
Washington, D.C. 20005
202/289-6400 (ph); 202/289-6051 (f)
voshea@asmfc.org

Lt. Brian Sullivan
U.S. Coast Guard
Brickell Plaza Federal Building
909 S.E. First Avenue
Room 876/ DRE
Miami, FL 33131-3050
305/415-6781 (ph)
305/415-6791 (f)
Brian.A.Sullivan@uscg.mil

Mark Robson
Director, Division of Marine Fisheries
Florida Fish and Wildlife
Conservation Commission
620 S. Meridian Street
Tallahassee, FL 32399
850/487-0554 (ph); 850/487-4847(f)
mark.robson@myfwc.com

Susan Shipman
Director, Coastal Resources Division
GA Dept. of Natural Resources
One Conservation Way, Suite 300
Brunswick, GA 31520-8687
912/264-7218 (ph); 912/262-2318 (f)
sshipman@dnr.state.ga.us

Tom Swatzel
P.O. Box 1311
Murrells Inlet, SC 29576
(C/O Capt. Dick's Marina
4123 Hwy 17 Business,
Murrells Inlet, SC 29576)
843/357-1673 (ph)
tom@capticks.com

John A. Wallace
5 Buddy Beckham Road
P.O. Box 88
Meridian, GA 31319
912/437-6797 (ph); 912/437-3635 (f)
Ga_shrimp@darientel.net

DOUG RADER
SCOTT ZIMMERMAN
MARGOT STILES
JOE KEMMEL
JACK MCGOVEREN
TOM SAMIR
OTHA EASLEY
BONNIE PONWITH
MONICA SMIT-BRUNEHO
TOM MCELWAIN
DAVE AULSON
BOBBY CARDIN

South Atlantic Fishery Management Council Staff

Executive Director

Robert K. Mahood
robert.mahood@safmc.net ✓

Deputy Executive Director

Gregg T. Waugh
gregg.waugh@safmc.net ✓

Public Information Officer

Kim Iverson
kim.iverson@safmc.net ✓

Senior Fishery Biologist

Roger Pugliese
roger.pugliese@safmc.net ✓

Staff Economist

Kathryn (Kate) Quigley
kate.quigley@safmc.net ✓

Cultural Anthropologist

Open Position

Environmental Impact Scientist

Rick DeVictor
richard.devictor@safmc.net ✓

Science and Statistics Program Manager

John Carmichael
john.carmichael@safmc.net ✓

SEDAR Coordinators

Julie Neer - Julie.Neer@safmc.net
Dale Theiling - Dale.Theiling@safmc.net

Fishery Biologist

Andi Stephens
Andi.Stephens@safmc.net ✓

Coral Reef Biologist

Myra Brouwer
myra.brouwer@safmc.net ✓

Administrative Officer

Mike Collins
mike.collins@safmc.net ✓

Financial Secretary

Debra Buscher
deb.buscher@safmc.net

Admin. Secretary /Travel Coordinator

Cindy Chaya
cindy.chaya@safmc.net

Purchasing/Adm. Assistant

Julie O'Dell
julie.odell@safmc.net ✓

SEDAR/ Staff Administrative Assistant

Rachael Lindsay
rachael.lindsay@safmc.net



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE

Southeast Regional Office
263 13th Avenue South
St. Petersburg, Florida 33701
(727) 824-5305; FAX (727) 824-5308
<http://sero.nmfs.noaa.gov>

FEB 28 2008

F/SER2:BT

MEMORANDUM FOR: Robert Mahood, Executive Director
South Atlantic Fishery Management Council

FROM: Roy E. Crabtree, Ph.D.
Regional Administrator

SUBJECT: Preliminary 2007-2008 Commercial Landings

The Southeast Fisheries Science Center has provided the following **preliminary landings estimates** for species in the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council's area of jurisdiction subject to quota management through January 31, 2008.

Species	Fishing Year	Current Landings (lb)	Quota (lb)	Quota (%)
Atlantic Group king mackerel	03/01/07 - 02/28/08	2,560,362 ^a	3,710,000	69.01
Atlantic Group Spanish mackerel	03/01/07 - 02/28/08	2,525,351 ^a	3,870,000	69.76 ^b
Gulf king mackerel - Eastern Zone-East Coast subzone	11/01/07 - 03/31/08	1,028,925 ^c	1,040,625	98.90
Snowy grouper	01/01/08 - 12/31/08	3,049	84,000	3.63
Golden tilefish	01/01/08 - 12/31/08	107,672	295,000	36.50
Greater amberjack	05/01/07 - 04/30/08	385,353	1,169,931	32.93
Black sea bass	06/01/07 - 05/31/08	166,697	423,000	39.40
Vermilion snapper	01/01/08 - 12/31/08	82,510	1,100,000	7.50
Red porgy	01/01/08 - 12/31/08	2,635	127,000	2.07
Wreckfish	04/16/07 - 04/15/08	^d	2,000,000	^d
Dolphin	01/01/07 - 12/31/07	936,497	1,500,000 ^e	62.43
Octocoral	01/01/06 - 12/31/06	48,271 ^f	50,000	96.5

- Atlantic king and Spanish mackerel data includes preliminary landings through February 19, 2008.
- Atlantic Spanish mackerel Quota (%) is based on the adjusted quota of 3,620,000.
- Gulf king mackerel - East Coast subzone closed on February 21, 2008.
- Confidential landings
- The Dolphin Wahoo Fishery Management Plan established a 1.5 million pound cap for the dolphin commercial fishery. Data includes preliminary landings from Florida to Connecticut during January 1, 2007, through December 31, 2007.
- Octocoral landings are reported twice a year with final landings reported by May of the next year; therefore, these are the total landings in federal waters for 2006.



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**Council Session
Jekyll Island, GA
Friday, March 7, 2008**

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Eileen Dougherty EDF	843-737-4466	Charleston, SC
TONY DE FALCO, MFCN	503-234-3505	PONTIAC, IL
Dave Allison Oceana	202-833-3900	2501 M St NW #300 Washington, DC 20037
Sera Harold, MFCN	910-762-4401	Wilmington, NC
Stiff Emmertun, ACCFA	308 619-0039	Meridian, AL
MARGOT STIVES, Oceana	202 833 3900	Wash DC
MILTON BREUSFORD/USCG BRUNSWICK	912-267-7999	BRUNSWICK, GA 31520
DOUG RADCR	919-881-2915	EDF RALEIGH, NC
Dmitry Reznik	202 572 3305	EDF, Washington, DC

**South Atlantic Fishery Management Council
4055 Faber Place Drive, Suite 201
North Charleston, SC 29405
843-571-4366 or Toll Free 866/SAFMC-10**

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**Council Session
Jekyll Island, GA
Friday, March 7, 2008**

NAME &
ORGANIZATION

AREA CODE &
PHONE NUMBER

P.O. BOX/STREET
CITY, STATE & ZIP

BUFFY BAUMANN · OLEANA 202. 833. 3900

WASHINGTON, DC

Matt Ruby Little River Fish House 843-902-4734

4492 Water Front dr Little River SC. 29566

Bob CARWIN Ft. Pierce FL. 772-370-4165

Ft. Pierce FL.

James Reeves Ft. Pierce FL, 772 (332-2828

~~Fony DEKALCO, MDW 503-234-3505~~

~~PORTLAND, OR~~

~~Sera Harold, MFCN 910-762-4401~~

~~Wilmington, NC~~

*Duplicate
signatures*

**South Atlantic Fishery Management Council
4055 Faber Place Drive, Suite 201
North Charleston, SC 29405
843-571-4366 or Toll Free 866/SAFMC-10**