

SOUTH ATLANTIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

DOLPHIN WAHOO ADVISORY PANEL

**Crowne Plaza
North Charleston, SC**

April 21, 2017

SUMMARY MINUTES

Dolphin Wahoo Advisory Panel Members:

Christopher Burrows
Glen Hopkins
Fred Kinard
Tim Nettles
Ray Rosher

Richard Harris
Wendell Barnett
Tim Scalise
Jonathon Reynolds
Ty Conti

Council Members:

Mel Bell
Chris Conklin

Mark Brown
Ben Hartig

Council Staff:

Gregg Waugh
Dr. Chip Collier
Dr. Mike Errigo
Kim Iverson
Cameron Rhodes

Kimberly Cole
Mike Collins
John Hadley
Dr. Kari MacLauchlin
Amber Von Harten

Observers/Participants:

Don Hammond

Other Observers/Participants attached.

The Dolphin Wahoo Advisory Panel of the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council convened in the Crowne Plaza, North Charleston, South Carolina, April 21, 2017, and was called to order by Mr. John Hadley.

MR. HADLEY: I want to thank everyone for being here today. My name is John Hadley, and I am with the South Atlantic Council staff, and I appreciate you all making the journey this morning, and for this afternoon as well, for the Dolphin Wahoo Advisory Panel meeting. I will go over a few kind of just general items, and then we'll get into introductions.

Ray has been very kind to volunteer as a temporary Chair for us. The Dolphin Wahoo, the past Chair, is no longer on the AP, and so, in this circumstance, we have a temporary Chair, and we will have elections for a new Chair for the AP at the end, and so he has been very kind to volunteer for the position and to help out with the duties of the Chair.

As just kind of a brief reminder, an overview, when you want to speak, if you could raise your hand and the Chair will acknowledge you. Also, just a reminder that the meeting is being streamed live and is recorded. The reason for that is so that it can be transcribed. This is where we get the minutes from, and, as part of that, if you could state your name before you speak, just so that we get the minutes correct and that everything is accurately recorded, and we would certainly appreciate that. Please do speak clearly into your microphones. As you can see, the red light, that's when the mic is live.

As a general announcement on travel orders, I believe you all have travel orders and got them. If you have any questions, please feel free to ask myself or Kimberly, and she will be happy to help you out, as far as filling those out or if anything else needs to be added there. With that, I will turn it over to Ray for introductions. Thank you.

MR. ROSHER: Thanks, John, and, of course, thank you everyone for taking time out of your busy schedules to be here. We know we all have busy lives, but I think the process is very important, and so we would like to start off with introductions.

MR. HARRIS: Richard Harris, charter boat captain, Nags Head.

MR. REYNOLDS: Jon Reynolds, charter and commercial, Florida Keys.

MR. NETTLES: Tim Nettles, recreational fisherman, Palm Beach, Florida.

MR. SCALISE: Tim Scalise, charter boat captain, from Charleston.

MR. ROSHER: I am Ray Rosher, and I would have to say all three categories, but I primarily charter boat and fish in Miami.

MR. BURROWS: Chris Burrows, charter, Shallotte, North Carolina.

MR. HAMMOND: Don Hammond, Dolphinfinch Research Program, Charleston.

MR. HOPKINS: Glen Hopkins, commercial longliner, North Carolina.

MR. BARNETT: Wendell Barnett, commercial, North Myrtle Beach, South Carolina.

MR. KINARD: Fred Kinard, recreational, Charleston, South Carolina.

MR. CONTI: Ty Conti, recreational fishing, Morehead City.

MR. ROSHER: Thank you very much. If we could have the council and council staff.

(Council and council staff introductions are not audible on the recording.)

MR. ROSHER: Thank you again for being here, and the bottom line, I guess, is we're going to approve the agenda next, and then I guess go over the items on the agenda, to see if anybody wants to add or has any comments on this agenda.

MR. BROWN: I just want everybody to know that this AP hasn't met since 2014, and so it's been quite a while. Last year, I think it was July of last year, John Hadley came to work for the council staff, and I just wanted to let you all know that he has been a tremendous asset to the council staff, and to the council members, for what he brought to help everybody, and I have been very appreciative for what you've done, and I just wanted to give you a gift of appreciation.

MR. HADLEY: Thank you very much. I appreciate the kind words.

MR. ROSHER: Going over the items on the agenda, basically we wanted to open it up for any comments or additions that needed to be added to this. Does anyone have any input? I guess we want to make progress to make forward, and so we want to approve this agenda. Basically, we will just do it with a nod of heads. Is everybody in support of this agenda? Raise your hand. It looks like unanimous support, and so we will move forward with the meeting.

I guess the next item is the meeting minutes. It says that technically we should have all read these minutes. Everybody nod. Okay. If anyone has any changes -- If not, then we will ask to approve these minutes. Seriously, if anybody does have any questions or any comments on it, please speak up now. Okay. Basically, we will certify a document that says these minutes are approved and I will give it to John. I will sign it, and John will take it back and that will be official. Did you want to move right in to Don Hammond's talk or did you have another action?

MR. HADLEY: Just a quick note. Jonathon asked us to hand out an economics study that was done, and that's what each one of you have in front of you. It just provides some numbers on the economic importance of the dolphin fishery in Florida, and so there's no need to read it in detail right now, but it's there for folks to read and reference, and I just wanted to mention where that came from and that it's there for you to look over.

MR. ROSHER: Okay. Very good. I think we want to invite Don Hammond to speak or did you want to go first?

MR. HADLEY: First, we will ask Amber to come up and give an update on the Citizen Science Program.

MS. VON HARTEN: Good morning, everyone. I just want to brief you all, real quickly, before Don gets started, about some of the efforts the council is undergoing right now to develop a Citizen Science Program. This has kind of been underway since about 2015, and, as you all are very aware, there is a great need for increased data collection in a lot of our fisheries.

Our data collection programs that are in place are kind of strapped for resources, and so we keep hearing from fishermen about their interest to participate in data collection and take scientists out on their boat to improve data collection efforts in the region, and so the council started exploring the idea of possibly developing a Citizen Science Program, where fishermen could be involved with scientists to design different projects to address some of the data collection needs that we have in the region.

Back in January of 2016, we convened a workshop, here in Charleston, to kind of start talking about what a program for the council might look like to involve fishermen, working with scientists and managers and others, to improve data collection in the region, and so we brought together about sixty participants from throughout the region, fishermen and data managers and fishery scientists from the federal government and universities and extension and outreach folks from Sea Grant, to kind of have a big brainstorming session, essentially, about what a program would look like and what would be required to support projects under that program.

What came out of that workshop was kind of a framework. We call it the Citizen Blueprint, and that is to help guide the council on how that program should be developed. Then, just recently, this year, the council decided to go ahead and allocate some resources to have a person staff that program, and that's me. That's the role I serve, to manage that program.

We are kind of moving forward with starting to develop this program, and some of the first steps to developing the actual program infrastructure is we have put out a call for -- We are creating a Citizen Science Advisory Panel, and that's kind of what I wanted to pitch to you all today, to encourage you to possibly get involved in that, if you have an interest.

The way this advisory panel is going to work is a little bit different than how this advisory panel that you all sit on right now. It's going to be a pool of individuals, very similar to our SEDAR Pool, if you all are familiar how that operates. The SEDAR Pool appoints individuals to the pool. Then they can be selected to serve on specific panels to participate in some of the SEDAR stock assessments.

That is how this advisory panel is going to operate, is we have five different program areas that we're going to be trying to work on developing for the Citizen Science Program. If you apply to the pool, you will be a member of the pool. Then we can pull you in to serve on some of these teams that are going to be working on these different five program areas, and those areas are volunteers, and so we need help figuring out how to work with citizen science volunteers, volunteer fishery citizen scientists, on projects.

Data management is another topic, and so how to manage the data that's coming into the program and setting up really robust science standards for projects under the program. Next is projects and topic management, and so how we identify topics that are of interest for citizen science for the council and how to manage any projects that come under the program.

There is finance, and so figuring out how to support the program, as well as projects. Then communication, outreach, and education, and so developing training programs for the program to meet the different needs of each of the projects that might come under the program, and so, if you feel like you have any interest or experience or expertise in those areas, I highly encourage you to apply to the AP.

The time commitment is not going to be -- Any travel will not be required. We are just going to meet twice a month, via webinar, in between council meetings, and so each team would be working on different recommendations that they would then present to the council, at each council meeting, and the council would approve those recommendations to help develop the program, and so this is just the first opportunity to get involved in the program.

We anticipate that this advisory panel and the way it operates will change over time to meet the needs of the program, and then, of course, we're hoping that there will be opportunity for folks like you to get involved in projects down the road, as we get some support for that, and so I just wanted to pitch that to you. John can get you in touch with me. There is an online application. The deadline is the 26th, and so that's next week, next Wednesday. If you have any questions, feel free to get in touch, and I hope to see some of your names on my list.

MR. HADLEY: Do we have any questions? All right.

MR. ROSHER: Don Hammond is going to make a presentation, as he has so graciously done many times for us, and we look forward to hearing what you have to say.

MR. HAMMOND: I would like to thank Amber for such a wonderful introduction of my program, because that is what my program is, citizen science, and this program, for those of you that are new, it started back in 2002, when I was with the Department of Natural Resources. In 2006, when I was -- I entered retirement, and they were gracious enough to let me take it out the door and continue it as a private research program. Since that time, this is what I call a program by fishermen for fishermen.

The reason is the fishermen are tagging the fish offshore, they are recovering the fish, and, more importantly, they are providing the finances to operate. This program does not receive any federal or state money to support this program, and it is private enterprise only, and I think that you're going to see a lot more of this coming in the future with the cuts that they are threatening to a lot of the federal programs.

This program has been extremely successful. In the fifteen years of operation, we have seen more than 21,000 dolphin tagged. We have had more than 500 fish reported recaptured. We have had over 1,200 different boats involved in the tagging or recapture of the dolphinfish, and more than 2,600 anglers have participated in this program, and so it's very broad-based.

We've gotten great international attention as well. We have worked with researchers in Italy and in Spain. We have worked in the Eastern Pacific. We're trying to start a program in the Eastern Pacific, and now we just entered into a collaborative program with a university in southern Brazil to study those fish, and those are going to be interesting. Those fish swim backwards. They swim counterclockwise to our fish swimming clockwise.

Anyhow, it's been a wonderful program. Now we've got a good backer in Guy Harvey. He has been really strong in supporting us financially and in getting out and tagging the fish. Now, in a tagging study, you have to understand where fish are tagged will in fact really shape what type of tag recoveries that you get, and, if you're interested in monitoring the movements of fish in one area, you want to tag them in the area where they begin that migration, or their movements.

For dolphinfish, in the U.S. Atlantic, it is in Florida. As you see in here, we've had almost 8,000 dolphin tagged in the Florida Straits, off the Keys, and almost 6,000 off of south Florida, and 744. Almost 68 percent of all the dolphin tagged in this study were tagged off the east coast of Florida, and that is a good thing, because that is where they are beginning their migration. Also, the fact that Florida recreational anglers typically harvest anywhere from 40 to 65 percent of all the recreational dolphin harvested on the eastern seaboard, and that is by way of National Marine Fisheries Service's MRIP data.

Now, looking to the north, into the South Atlantic Bight, we had 225 tagged off of Georgia and southern South Carolina and 2,700 off of South Carolina proper and 658 off of North Carolina. That's a big drop down from there, and the reason is that -- First off, North Carolina is the second consumer of dolphinfish. They typically harvest between 35 and 55 percent of the dolphin caught off the eastern seaboard recreationally each year, but, in North Carolina, there has never been a minimum size limit.

In the words of one crusty old charter boat captain that I met on the Outer Banks, he said that he had never caught a dolphinfish too small that he didn't want to keep, and that's been their lifestyle, and that's just the way they are up there, and so that has really influenced the tagging activity in that area.

Moving on up into the Mid-Atlantic Bight, we only see 255 fish tagged. Now, you have to understand that, historically, dolphinfish have been a very minor part of the blue water fishery in the Mid-Atlantic Bight. In the Mid-Atlantic, tunas, marlin, and sharks dominate the offshore fishery, and dolphin, while highly prized, have been a very small part of it. Now, in the last couple of years, we have been seeing an increasing incidence of dolphin being harvested up in the Mid-Atlantic Bight, and there has been some nice catches made up there of them.

It's a case of we're seeing more warm water pushed further north, and you have to understand the basic premise of dolphin is they're nomads. They don't care where they are. They don't have to be anywhere at any given time. As long as they've got the right temperature and the water quality is right and there is food, they are happy campers wherever they are.

Looking to the south, we have had 456 fish tagged in the Gulf of Mexico, and that's only resulted in two tag recoveries, and the reason I believe that's the case is the majority of those tags were deployed off of Texas, and I believe those fish are moving south, down off of Mexico, and artisanal fishermen are really not inclined to report tags. It wouldn't surprise me that there is somebody down there with a coffee cup full of little orange tags.

We have had 1,200 over in the Bahamas, and those are primarily Florida fishermen that have tagged for us that go over to the Bahamas seasonally to fish over there. In the western North Atlantic, out off of the northern Caribbean Islands, we have had 489 fish tagged out there, about 2 percent of the total tagging effort.

In the Caribbean, we've had 550 fish tagged down there, and we have had numerous recoveries. Now, as I said, Guy Harvey is going to be pushing dolphin tagging in the Cayman Islands this year, and so hopefully we're going to see an increase there and trying to get some fish moved from the Caribbean into the Gulf. That is what we're looking to document.

We have had 551 tag recoveries, and so what have we seen out of this? What type of recoveries have we had? We have had one fish that moved from the Gulf of Mexico, off of Pensacola, around to the Atlantic Ocean, to Freeport in the Bahamas. We have had the Florida instate crowd -- These are fish that were tagged in Florida and recaptured before they ever got out of state, and 343 tag recoveries, the largest single category that we've had, and that is a testimony to the level of fishing effort that occurs off of the Florida east coast for dolphinfish.

Then we see the fish tagged off of Florida that made it out of state were only eighty-five, and so, basically, you're looking at three to one. For dolphin that escapes the Florida coastline, three of them get caught before they get out of state, and then we have the little unique south Florida southerly movement. This has been fun for me.

It's the case that there is an intermittent fall inshore countercurrent that sets up right off the reef that moves down to the Florida Keys, and fishermen there, when I started this program, they talked about the fall southerly migration. Anyhow, eleven of those tag recoveries, showing this southerly movement, were generated by one fisherman, Captain Bouncer Smith, because he fishes just off the reef, tagging them right near-shore, and they go south from there, but it's a very minor part of the tag recoveries that we've seen.

Fish tagged in the Bahamas that move to the Atlantic coast, we had eleven recoveries there. Fish remaining in the Bahamas, twenty-nine tag recoveries. Some of those have been the case, in one instance, the case of a fish tagged at the AUTECH Buoy in the tongue of the ocean was recovered more than two months later at the same buoy. Did he stay there or did he move around? Good question.

Fish returning to the U.S., there is two categories here, and this is a very important one, because this, in essence, shows you the value of releasing small fish. These fish typically are tagged at the size of two to three pounds, and they come back as anywhere from twenty-five to forty-five-pound fish. It's a good investment, in my opinion.

The two categories are Florida mini-migration, and these are fish that make short, three to six-month, migrations around the Bahama banks and come back to south Florida. They're tagged off of Florida and recovered off of Florida, and we have had eighteen of those, the overwintering crowd. These are the ones that were tagged off of the east coast of the U.S. and then later recovered the next year off the U.S. east coast, and we have twenty-three of those.

Then east coast dispersal, these were the fish that were tagged on the east coast and were later caught in other nations' waters, or down through the Caribbean, out in the Mid-Atlantic, and we have had twenty-one. Actually, it's been twenty-three now. We've just had two more just recently come in, one from the Dominican Republic and another one from St. Croix.

Then the North Atlantic fish tagging and moving westward, along the Old Bahamas Channel, we have had twelve of those, and the Northern Caribbean Sea tagging activity has generated six tag recoveries.

The importance here is to show that, when we talk about movement of these fish, we are not talking about one or two incidences. We are talking about multiple incidences that show a pattern, and that is important, because, the way you look at movements of fish, or any animal, is the first the time you document a movement, it could be a random movement. It could be the only fish that has ever done that before. When you get a second fish repeating that, then this is becoming suspicious. This is becoming a pattern. When you get three in there, now we're really starting to see something. That's why it's important to see that we've got multiple tag recoveries showing these types of movements.

Now, let's look at the big category, those fish tagged off of south Florida, and how they move. Again, we saw 61 percent of the fish tagged off of Florida and then later recaptured-- 61 percent were recovered in state, before they ever got out, and it shows you the fishing effort. 22 percent were recovered north of Florida, up the east coast, all the way up to New York and Massachusetts. 5 percent did mini-migrations around the Bahamas. 3 percent showed southerly inshore movements, and 6 percent returned the following year. 4 percent were recovered in the Caribbean or the Bahamas.

Now, one thing to understand is these fish can travel fast. They really can. The fastest moving fish, under conventional tag recovery, was recovered 130 miles from one day to the next. We had another fish tagged off of Islamorada that was recovered off of Oregon Inlet North Carolina nine days later. That is over ninety miles of sustained travel per day.

What we've seen here is the average speed for the fish in-state movement was 26.6 miles per day. Out of state, it was 26.54, very similar, very close. I was surprised at how close this was, and so you're seeing a movement basically of just a little over one mile per hour. Understand a block of wood dropped in the Gulf Stream can cover a hundred miles in a day, and so you're actually seeing fish swimming against the current. They spend varying portions of time swimming against the current, and that's the nature of predators, the face into the current and looking for baitfish being swept to them.

What we have seen is fish tagged in open water will travel slower than fish tagged in association with large mats of grass, because that grass is moving at the constant speed with the Gulf Stream, whereas, in open water, they are swimming steady against the current all the time. They're not having to keep up. It's an interesting little side note.

Now, looking at the speed of travel though, while that's the average for -- This is out-of-state travel of fish, and we see that more fish travel between ten and twenty miles per day than any other category, but, in the same light, we had over 6 percent of the fish that average more than fifty miles per day, and they are very capable of traveling fast. Numerous fish tagged down off of south Florida have blown through the EEZ in less than two months. Now, you think about that. That means that those fish are under U.S. jurisdiction for two out of twelve months and that's it. That's something to keep in mind.

That is one of the challenges that is faced in attempting to manage the dolphin fishery, and I think it's a case that we really look toward managing the harvest of the dolphin fishery more than harvesting the dolphin stock, and that's what you'll get out of this in the end.

Looking at fish tagged off of the Northern South Atlantic Bight and on up the east coast, we see these fish travel at the average rate of only 11.4 miles per day. That's less than half of the Florida fish, and what's the difference? It's the same animal. The difference is the location of tagging. There is such fishing effort down in south Florida that the Florida fishermen largely remove the dolphinfish from the eastern side of the Gulf Stream down there. The fish that are escaping Florida have moved to the eastern side of the stream, further away and out of range of the fishermen, and they first come in range in North Carolina and then on up into the Mid-Atlantic.

We have only had a couple of fish that have been recovered south, that were tagged off of Florida and recovered south, of North Carolina. We've had a large number recovered off of North Carolina, and, again, we see travel rates of speed is really reflective of two physical elements in the Gulf Stream, and that is two semi-permanent gyres that set up, one off of South Carolina, just north of the Bump, and another one south of Diamond Shoals. They're large, rotating masses of water that dolphin will get in, and they can stay two months going in circles, going back to what I said earlier.

If the food is there and the temperature and everything is right, the conditions are right, they are happy. They stay right there just going in circles for a long period of time, and that is why they move so much slower when tagged off the Northern Mid-Atlantic Bight rather than fish out of Florida that are in the eastern side of the Gulf Stream.

Now, other recaptures that we've shown the movement is, from the Gulf, we have had one fish that moved from Pensacola over to Freeport in the Bahamas, and he averaged seventeen miles per day. Fish that have been tagged everywhere from the eastern side to the western side of the Bahamas Banks, moving over to the U.S. east coast, have averaged about 15.7. Those fish have been captured as far north as Nantucket, up to forty degrees latitude.

Down in the Caribbean, fish off the southern section of the coast have -- All the recaptures have shown a westerly movement, and they have averaged 12.2 miles per day there. Then you have the northern shore of the northern Caribbean Islands. The average rate is only 3.8 miles per day. The currents through the Old Bahamas Channels are very weak, moving very slowly, and we have had fish that have been tagged in San Juan and then recovered six months later off of Georgetown, South Carolina. That shows that they do move all the way through the Bahamas Channel, and this is important.

Now the really impressive ones, and this is what catches everybody's attention, is the international dispersal of dolphinfish. I mean, they just showed up all over the Caribbean, all the way down south to Venezuela and east off the coast of Mexico, right at on the Yucatan Peninsula, and what we see is that we have had one tag recovery each from the Azores Islands, out in the middle of the Atlantic, 2,500 miles straight-line distance, from where that fish was tagged, and one off of the east coast of Mexico. There's been Antigua, St. Kitts, St. Barthelme, Venezuela, St. Croix, Puerto Rico has had three tag recoveries, and Dominican Republic. That should be three tag recoveries now. The Bahamas has six and Cuba has three.

Now, the Cubans have really impressed me with the trouble that they have gone to to get that information out to me. I mean, they have gone through five and six people to transfer that information to me, and I have been really impressed, and I just hope that they got the packages that I sent them, because I understand what they went through, and it really did -- It impressed me a lot.

Here, we see fish all over the Caribbean, but how did they get there? Immediately, fishermen say they just swam down the Florida coast and went around, and no. Fish don't swim against the current unless there is a real good reason to do that. That costs energy, and they are not going to do that unless there is a good reason, and there is no good reason. Dolphin are happy riding the currents, as long as the conditions are right.

Now we'll take the second phase of our study. We started utilizing satellite tags back in 2005 on dolphinfish. We were the first ones to incorporate this, and we had a lot of failures before we had successes in it, and the primary reason is the first thing that we learned is dolphinfish never get too large to be eaten. I have had a thirty-five-pound bull eaten, and there is predators out there. They are preyed upon from everything from seabirds to toothed whales to all the other predators in the ocean, including other large dolphin. The current state record for South Carolina, if you look at a picture of that fish, you will see a dolphin tail sticking out of its mouth, and so no honor among them.

One of the first things that we saw in utilizing satellite tags is something we didn't even expect. Before this study started, dolphin were a product of the surface. They lived at the surface of the ocean, regardless of the depth. What we saw is that they in fact use a large portion of the vertical water column. As a matter of a fact, we have documented dolphin diving down to depths in excess of 800 feet deep, and they engage in this deep diving more during the nighttime than during the day, and they engage in this deep diving everywhere we have deployed satellite tags, from the Caribbean to the Florida Straits to the east coast of the U.S.

Now, what we have seen is the amount of diving activity varies region to region. Off the east coast, this top graph is a fish that was tagged off of South Carolina, and you see that there is considerable diving during the day. The bottom fish is a fish that was tagged in the Florida Straits, very little tagging during daylight hours.

The Caribbean fish almost flat-line at the surface during the day and have very limited diving during the night. Okay. Well, this is really interesting, but what does it mean? Well, what it means is it explained a big question mark that I had from stomach analysis that I have been doing on dolphinfish, because I found such weird things as rock shrimp, paper nautilus, squid, and myriads of deepwater forms of fish that hide in the dark abysses during the day. They are typically called deep-scattering layer. They hide at 1,500 feet deep and then migrate up in the water column during the nighttime.

Understand that dolphin never sleep. If they stop moving, they sink. Anybody that has dropped a dolphin overboard at the dock will learn that real quick, and they are engaging in feeding activity, and so what we've seen is we have now learned that dolphinfish have two menus, a daytime menu and a nighttime menu. During the day, they are feeding on the flyingfish, the ballyhoo, the sardines, the jacks, all the myriads of animals under the sargassum. In the nighttime, they are seeking out those animals rising up from the depths and feeding on those.

They have such a high metabolic rate that they demand that they eat continuously. I think dolphin could starve to death very quickly, in a very short period of time, but this is something that we never even conceived of when we started using these high-res, short-term satellite tags, and understand that these tags are only supposed to stay with the fish for thirty days, and we had a heck of a time finding the right fish that could carry them for thirty days. They kept getting eaten, and some of them were eaten the same day that we released them. Now, you talk about frustration. A \$5,000 investment in a fish and poof, it's shot in the first day.

Then we hit the one-in-a-million fish. In 2014, we began, with the help of Guy Harvey, we began a long-term tracking effort on dolphinfish, and this was really a shot in the dark, because we couldn't even keep them on for thirty days, much less six months, but this is the idea, and this fish here that you're looking at was the one in a million.

This one gave us the answer to the big question of how do they migrate, how do they get to the Caribbean, and while this is just one track of a single fish, I think that, ultimately, it will be shown to be the primary migratory route that dolphinfish do undertake, because many other highly-migratory species have been shown to do this same type of behavior, basically a circumnavigation of the Sargasso Sea.

One thing that I want to point out right here is you can see that he started out of Charleston and blew up off of North Carolina and followed the Gulf Stream. At this point in time, the Gulf Stream was moving straight out, and it just stayed right with the Gulf Stream, riding that on out. Now, these two areas, at sixty-degrees longitude and fifty-degrees longitude, pay attention. That gives me great concern. The fish spent over six weeks in this one area and over a month right here in this area.

With the increasing effort of international longlining and commercial fishing fleets in the Atlantic, if they start fishing these areas out here, it could have a significant impact on, quote, our dolphinfish, and the one thing that you will get out of this is that there's a lot of people calling these dolphinfish our fish. It's a shared stock, very widely shared.

Now, one thing of great interest, and this has really puzzled me and I would like to know, is, October 31, something clicked in the dolphin's head. In the next thirty-one days, it traveled 1,600 miles to the Caribbean. Now that is impressive. The satellite tag released itself right at the entrance to the Mona Passage between Puerto Rico and the Dominican Republic, and so we do not know if the fish went through the passage into the Caribbean or whether it continued down the Old Bahamas Channel back toward the Florida Straits. Now, the satellite tag did in fact go through the passage and drifted down all the way to the middle of the Caribbean before the battery died on it that was transmitting the data.

When we tie all of these points together, we come up with a theoretical migration route for dolphinfish in the western North Atlantic. Basically, they are moving up the eastern seaboard, and, by the way, don't think that there is a fall southerly movement of dolphinfish down the east coast. There may be a fall run of dolphinfish, but they are still moving north at all times of the year. They do a circumnavigation, and I'm sure there is a myriad of routes that they do use in making this travel.

We do know that, from the short-term migration, three to six months, where they have been tagged off of south Florida, we have had numerous recoveries on the east side of the Bahamas, showing that they do move over there, and then we have some that are out and they come right back to south Florida, three to six months later, and so there is some type of a little mini-migration that goes around in that area there.

Lots of satellite tags will certainly help there, and in that respect, our success with the satellite tags have now prompted other researchers to begin using them. A researcher at Texas A&M is deploying satellite tags in the Gulf, and we've got a program at the University of Miami that's going to be deploying satellite tags this year, and there is a program in North Carolina, I believe in North Carolina, that is putting out some satellite tags as well, and so all of that, and that's one of the points that this program intended, was to try to foster research on dolphinfish by other researchers, showing that it can be done, but you just have to be persistent.

The one thing to get out of all of this tagging movement is the origins of the dolphin entering the U.S. Atlantic dolphin fishery, and the first one is coming from the Gulf of Mexico into the Florida Straits. This is the supply line for the dolphin fishery in the Florida Keys. This is where their fish is coming from.

There is a second supply line that comes through the Old Bahamas Channel up the east coast. Now, from Key Largo, fishermen begin to get the benefit of this movement of fish, but primarily south Florida northward gets the benefit, and this is why there has been years when south Florida has enjoyed better dolphin fishing than has the Florida Keys, and so there had to be a separate supply source to allow that to happen. This is it, coming from the Old Bahamas Channel, just like we've showed you the movements before.

Then the third supply line, that is near and dear to my heart, this is the Carolina fish. That is the fish riding the Antilles Current up the east side of the Bahamas Bank and coming across. We have had fish that have been tagged in the Bahamas caught as far south as Fort Pierce, but, typically, they do not begin to be recaptured until Cape Canaveral, and then right on up the east coast, all the way up to Nantucket, is where they're caught.

Because of the fishing pressure off of south Florida, I believe that those fishermen are effectively removing a large majority of the dolphinfish on the west side of the Gulf Stream, and so it doesn't leave a lot for the Carolina anglers to catch if there wasn't a third supply line coming back and replacing those fish, but understand they've got to cross the Gulf Stream before they really begin to benefit the fishermen from Jacksonville on up through South Carolina.

Now, the North Carolina anglers, because the Outer Banks stick out to the east the furthest, that is why they harvest or capture more of the tagged Florida fish than anybody else, and also they get a benefit from those fish coming from Florida as well as the ones that are coming from the Bahamas on up.

Some of the other issues that we see facing the dolphin fishery is changing movement patterns. I do an annual monitoring program here in Charleston, in one marina, and I've been doing it for the last four years, where visit the docks, darned near daily, to see what's being caught. In that survey, I have been able to document that the fishery has radically changed.

Back in the 1970s, when I started fishing, I had it pinned down that the third week of June was the peak period for dolphin fishing off of South Carolina. Last year, the peak dolphin fishing occurred at the end of April and the first of May. The year before that, it was the second week of May. In the last two years, the peak dolphin fishing has occurred two weeks earlier each year. What's going to happen this year? I don't know. I can't predict, but I am just monitoring to see what happens.

The other thing that we're seeing is more warm water is pushing further north than it has in typical years, and the dolphinfish are following that, and that is what has allowed the Mid-Atlantic Bight anglers to enjoy better dolphin fishing up in that area.

One thing that we saw last year that really concerned me was a significant reduction in the abundance of young-of-the-year fish. The young-of-the-year fish have historically supported the charter boats in south Florida, the Florida Keys, as well as off of the Outer Banks. They made their living off of going out and catching sixty schooling dolphin every day. They didn't think about it. They just did it.

Last year, it wasn't that way. It was hit or miss, and very few boats were getting their limits consistently, and so the basic premise of fisheries management is you've got to have small fish to catch big fish. Looking at the NMFS data, MRIP data, what we saw was a pattern that, in most of the years where you had a decline in the abundance of small fish, the following year you had a decline in the abundance of big fish being caught.

Not every year, because there was one year where there was a decline in the small fish one year and it was followed, the next year, with an increase in the number of big fish being caught, and I think this speaks to I think the real salvation of dolphinfish, and that's the geographic range that they cover.

Quality of data on the recreational dolphin fishery is really lacking, and, because it's such a unique fishery -- It's a micro-fishery, when you consider all the other fisheries. It is fairly small, and we need more intense data, and it can be done simply by surveys in south Florida and in North Carolina, on the Outer Banks, to monitor what is going on with the fishery each year, and this is something that we would really like to see.

The other thing that really concerns me about the data -- How many of you have been fishing offshore for more than twenty years? Okay. Have you noticed a decline in the number of boats that you see offshore on a daily basis when you go? No, but NMFS says there is a 26 percent decline in fishing effort over that time period. Now, I find that -- With the increasing number of boats out there every time I go offshore -- Go ahead, Mark.

MR. BROWN: (The comment is not audible on the recording.)

MR. HAMMOND: Right, and it may be that there is, but that's monitored under a separate program, the charter boats.

AP MEMBER: I was going to say that I noticed a reduction when the fuel prices were high. As soon as fuel went down, we had a lot more offshore fishing effort, and so it has stayed low for now three years or so.

AP MEMBER: One thing is weather is a big factor. Last May, I don't know, Mark -- Usually, I always consider, off of Charleston, maybe 50 percent of the days will be fishable, as far as weather, and I would say last year was probably 25 or 30. There was probably one out of three that you could fish, and so I think that had a big impact.

MR. HAMMOND: Let me finish here right quick. The other point is, and I already warned Gregg about this, inconsistent regulations on the same stock of fish. We really need to have consistent regulations applied to these stocks of fish. In the Gulf of Mexico, it's open season. The majority of the Gulf of Mexico, there is no minimum size, there is no creel limit. Only on the west coast of Florida is there a minimum size limit. I feel that, ultimately, we will show that those fish are part of the same stock of fish that we're fishing on the eastern seaboard as well.

Then the big threat, and that is the international commercial fishing in the Sargasso Sea that is increasing in recent years. That is a serious threat to, I think, all of our highly-migratory species. It really is, but I really feel that the salvation for dolphinfish stocks lies in the massive geographic range that they live in. There will always be areas out there that they will find sanctuary.

Just like this year, we're really waiting to see if the dolphin fishery is going to be depressed, because of the lack of small fish last year, but there could be a vast reservoir of small fish somewhere out there in the Atlantic that we don't know about, because we're only collecting data on about 30 or maybe, at the most, 40 percent of their range, and the other is unknown.

That and their high fecundity rate. They are almost an annual crop of fish. Now, understand that I am getting fish consistently being tagged at two to three pounds and recovered anywhere from seven to ten months later, and they're at forty pounds or better.

MR. ROSHER: I just wanted to say that we did we helped the Rosenstiel Fish Hatchery catch stock fish for lots of research purposes, mostly BP oil spill stuff, but we had a fish that we put in the tank at about five pounds. Nine months later -- Granted, it was ideal conditions, but he weighed 56.4 pounds on a digital scale.

MR. HAMMOND: In nine months. That shows you just what they can accomplish. It really is, and so there is solid reason, and I have shown it here, that the fish do return in subsequent years to be recaptured and provide a trophy fish for somebody. That is all of my talk, and I will be glad to answer any questions that you might have.

MR. REYNOLDS: If we could go back to the migratory chart, where you had the different stocks of fish entering, especially from the western area of the Bahamas that you said that provides the fish stock to the Carolinas, those fish -- Eventually, those fish have to fully migrate. They're not going to come to a roadblock, and so, if those fish from the western area of the Bahamas are in their migratory path there and then reaching up toward the Carolinas, the assumption is those fish are going to continue to come around and migrate back through and create a full pattern of migration all the way back to the Bahama/south Florida area and then back to the Carolinas again, and is that correct?

MR. HAMMOND: Yes, that is correct. That is the normal flow that we have seen there.

MR. REYNOLDS: Okay, and so those fish branch off into mini-migrations and then the normal flow is all the way around. Okay. Thank you.

MR. HARRIS: I'm at Oregon Inlet, North Carolina, and you spoke of the crusty old fisherman, which I'm getting close to falling into that category, but I fish with some crusty old fishermen that did do in fact that. You didn't let anything go, but that attitude changed in about 1985, as these guys -- As offshore fishing progressed. There were faster boats and new, young captains coming into the business.

In 1985, we formed the Guides Association, which has now been absorbed by the North Carolina Watermen's United, which is a group of charter, recreational, and commercial fishermen that have gotten together. In 1985, that happened, and the charter boat group, as a whole in North Carolina, agreed to a sixty-fish limit per boat before there was any limit. Florida and North Carolina had it first. That included Florida, Georgia, South Carolina. Nobody had one.

We went to a sixty-fish limit. Now, we didn't do a size limit, but we did a fish limit. Our state government adopted it two years later, and now the feds have a ten-fish limit, which is basically what we are with a six-person charter group. It's sixty.

I talked with a few texts with you about the number of fish last year. Early in the season, we had it great for the gaffer fishing, but we didn't have the small fish, but we didn't have the sargassum. When the sargassum showed up in middle to late July, the fish showed up with it, but they were larger-sized school dolphin, and I didn't know if that had any direct relation to that group that's coming off the west side there or if these fish were just late coming up the coast of Florida.

MR. HAMMOND: That is some of the big questions that we have, and this is why I've been pointing to we really need a solid monitoring program in North Carolina, and then down in Florida, to be able to answer and identify some of these questions, but it's going to take a specific program to reach out to go for that, and it's about time we've met, because we've conversed for a long time over this, just like Tim. I haven't seen Tim since St. Thomas, and I hate to say what year that was, and so it's the case that we do need more information, and all I can say is that's interesting. That's the kind of information that we want to gather, but I wish I had answers.

MR. HARRIS: One more question, and this relates to some of the statistics you had. Of the two-pound fish that you had tagged, how many have you had returned that have been up in that thirty to forty-pound range? Have you got any data on that, what percentage?

MR. HAMMOND: I have data on that, but I can't really cite that, but it has been most of the fish. We have had a couple fish that have been out long-term, and, when I say long-term, somewhere between six and ten months, that only weighed in the mid-twenties, but you've got to understand that, just like humans, we are not all Shaquille O'Neal. These ones that do the forty pounds in seven months or whatever, they have the genetics or whatever, and they have ideal conditions. Then you have the rest of us poor little fellows that are vertically challenged that live on the fringe, and so it's individualistic, is what we've got there.

MR. HARRIS: Thank you.

AP MEMBER: It seems like you garner a lot more information from a single satellite tag than you do for I don't know how many spaghetti-style tags, and what is the cost involved in a satellite tag, and how can we get more of them out there, because it seems like that is where the meat of the data is coming from, this once-in-a-million fish.

MR. HAMMOND: The simple answer is money. Spaghetti tags cost me basically a dollar apiece. The satellite tag, you have a \$5,000 investment. That's why.

AP MEMBER: Are you getting 5,000 times the data?

MR. HAMMOND: Well, I feel so. Well, we're getting data we can't get elsewhere. Where else could you get the diving behavior and the long-term track all the way out and around? There is no other way, and so it's money well spent, because the beauty of the satellite tag is, regardless of where that fish goes, we will get that data. If it pops loose in the South Atlantic, it will contact Argos Satellite System and that data will come back to me.

AP MEMBER: Are they reusable as long as they're not in a blue marlin's stomach?

MR. HAMMOND: It's finding them. The question is -- They said, well, you get a position on where they are. Yes, but, typically, when we get that position, they are hundreds, if not thousands, of miles from a coast, and you're looking for a little thin, millimeter-diameter wire sticking out on a little tiny black surface. It would be virtually impossible to find one. There have been satellite tags that have washed ashore and have been recovered. To answer your question, yes, they can be rebuilt for about half the price and reused. Any other questions?

MR. SCALISE: One that's of notable interest to me is that top line. I do a lot of fishing in the Bahamas and the Abacos and Eleuthera. I have a lot of friends that charter fish down there, and they are posting -- They are fishing about every day now, and they post on Facebook, and this is probably going on twelve or fifteen years that -- Every year that there is a really good year in the Abacos and the Bahamas, we have a good year. When they have a bad year, we have a bad year.

There is no doubt in my mind that those are the bulk of the fish that we're catching, and I have transited a good bit from the Abacos straight to Charleston and back and forth, and you might think that they would stay on the eastern side of the stream, but I have noticed sometimes, in going and crossing the stream, that they're heading north from the Bahamas to here. Then they'll start slowing down. I was like, what's going on? If I realize that I'm in an eddy and I'm bucking the current -- If a fish was in that eddy, he is going to be heading westward and getting on the other side of the stream.

Then another note is, the last two years, the dolphin fishing over here, and I really don't understand why, but, if you want to catch dolphin, you had to run seventy or seventy-five miles. They weren't on the thirty-fathom ledge and they weren't inshore, and I don't know if you have noticed that or have any conjecture as to why.

MR. HAMMOND: That is something else that I am hoping that, here shortly, that I will have the time to really sit down and start some analysis on that position, where the fish were tagged and their movement patterns.

MR. BROWN: Don, first off, I would like to really thank you for everything you've done over the years. I have followed your work, and I really, really appreciate your dedication and what you have supplied to the industry. One of the things that I was wondering about is I've been doing this for a long time too, and, in the fall, we get a run of those small fish, and you will just see acres and acres of little tiny fish, and it's not even worth really trying to target them, because a lot of them are undersized, but they will show up here and just, like I said, there will be miles of them, but where do they go, and where do they come from?

We see them like in September or October, but, if they're growing as fast as what Ray said, I was trying to figure out where those fish are spawning and how we end up with so many of them, and then where do they end up? Because I never really hear people talking about those little tiny fish and where they go.

MR. HAMMOND: That's a good point. First off, dolphinfish mature very early. They mature as small as fourteen inches in fork length, and, typically, the majority of them are fully sexually mature, where they're considered fully sexually mature, around twenty-five inches fork length. Every age and growth study that's ever been done on dolphinfish have found fish that were born every month of the year.

Once dolphin reach sexual maturity, it appears that they are almost in a constant state of reproduction. During the spring and early summer, dolphinfish have been projected to spawn multiple times a week, and that's what is allowing -- That you're seeing these small fish. If you look at a little fish about twelve inches long, you're looking at a fish that is probably somewhere around two months of age or less, and so where was it two months prior? That's where the spawning took place, and they're spawning along our entire east coast.

When you catch dolphinfish in December off of South Carolina, you will find eggs in the advanced stage of development. They are continually spawning all the way around their migration. That's, I believe, one of their salvations to ensure that this stock will survive, and so they're spawning all along, and you're seeing fish that are the results of spawning activity maybe in the Florida Straits, that has taken place down there.

MR. ROSHER: I wanted to mention, doing the research with the Rosenstiel School, they determined that -- Because they have them captive, and they can filter the water, filter the eggs, and they're actually hatching the eggs. Those fish start laying viable eggs at 250 grams, basically a little over a half-a-pound, and, of course, they exponentially grow in output versus weight ratio. In other words, they produce more eggs for their body size and ratio as they get more mature, and so those fish that are over fifteen or twenty pounds are really egg machines.

You see how big those get, and the interesting thing is they disperse eggs every other day, 365 days a year, and they eat -- They lay 5 percent of their body weight in eggs every other day, and so think about that. A twenty-pound fish is laying a pound of eggs every other day, and that's part of why they eat so much.

The other problem they have in captivity is the bulls are using their heads. The urge to reproduce is so great -- It kind of keeps me in business, because I get to take them out every month or two and get more fish. The bulls ram the cows against the size of the tank. They are pushing on them

often to get them to spray eggs, and that's part of what happens with their head. They are killing most of the cows, and, of course, if you put two bulls in there, it's like two lions.

It's a pretty interesting study that has gone on there, and I have learned so much from those guys, but what it really teaches us is -- How it relates to this meeting today is how can we protect the spawning stocks of bigger fish, because those are really the machines that perpetuate the species, and thank goodness they lay eggs at 365 days a year, because, if not, we would have probably wiped them out already. That's all I've got.

MR. BROWN: I've just got one more quick follow-up. Is there any other studies anywhere in the world -- I know we catch dolphin in other parts of the world, and do they have any type of similar migratory patterns anywhere else other than in our region?

MR. HAMMOND: Just recently, there have been several studies that have been initiated, but they're new. Like in Australia, a good friend of mine is running one in the Coral Sea, and they face bigger challenges than what we face, because there are fewer large municipal areas with a lot of fishermen in that area to recover tagged fish. They are having to rely on satellite tags, and there is a real long learning curve on attaching and deploying satellite tags and getting good results out of it.

There are studies underway, and, again, it's because of the success that we have seen here in the Atlantic that has inspired them to undertake it, but when you take on a study of an animal that is so dynamic and that is so highly migratory, it is not a study that you can do for one or two years and expect to really understand the animal. That is why I undertook it. It's been fifteen years to get to this point. That's what it has taken us.

We have added new information year after year after year, and we have built upon it, and now we're beginning to understand the flow of these fish, but, in your question about where these small fish go, they make the entire trip around, just the same as monarch butterflies going to Mexico for the winter. It's a different generation that makes the trip around every year, and it's just instinct. They have the instinct to ride these currents, ocean currents, and that's all they're doing, is moving from one current to the next and making this trip.

It's been real interesting, and I am looking forward to it, because we're always getting a surprise, every year. Already this year, we have -- Like I said, we've had east-coast fish that have gone down to the north shore of the Dominican Republic, and another one to St. Croix. Again, that's just showing that link of the stocks in these widely separate areas. Any other questions?

MR. HARTIG: This is fascinating work, and just ditto on what Mark said. I mean, I missed your presentation several years ago, but I have read it several times, just the one in the minutes, and, being from south Florida and catching dolphin for over fifty years, this is -- It's really, really interesting information, and it just goes to show the long-term commitment that it takes to try and answer some of these questions that we have about our fisheries.

I mean, my gosh, your long-term commitment to this and then others who have ponied up to the bar and supported your work is just critical. To me, someone like Yamaha could buy \$5,000 satellite tags and contribute to this. Any big manufacturer, tackle manufacturer, or anybody could contribute to this cause to be able to answer this question, as dolphin is so important.

My question is that I came across a sargassum paper a couple of years ago that talked about changes in sargassum and current changes, climate change and things of that nature, and the dynamics of that. Certainly we see, in Florida over the years -- We're experiencing right now one of these massive amounts of sargassum coming through the straits, and, just from a -- I was talking to John about it. From a predation standpoint, if you have a lot of juveniles and you have a lot of spread-out sargassum, you would think you would probably have more survival in any one year when you have that much sargassum, because it swamps the predators. It is not a defined weed-line. It's all over the ocean.

Then John said, well, that's the same thing with the fishermen. He said that they can't set up on a given weed-line. There is so much weed in the ocean, and so they can't be as effective as they would be if you just had these normal edges that occurred, and so I was just wondering if you tried to correlate any of your information with the sargassum abundance.

MR. HAMMOND: I have looked at the issue, the question of sargassum, in association with where fish are tagged, and there is definitely -- More fish are captured around sargassum than in the open water, but how that really translates, I have yet to get down to the point of being able to analyze that. Hopefully, in the next few years, I am going to have a little more time to begin to look at these in-depth issues.

You have to understand that I've been an army of one doing this work, and, when you're dealing with 2,600 fishermen, it takes some time, just in communications, and so hopefully we're going to see a more detailed analysis of the information we've got, because we've got a tremendous database right now, and that's one of the things that I really offer up, is, to other research agencies and researchers, I make my database available. Anybody that is working on dolphinfish, because my whole concept is I want to see the maximum benefit out of the work from these fishermen.

These fishermen -- Think about the money spent on the individual fishing trips to go out there to tag two or three dolphin. The government could never afford to undertake something as massive as this study, and this is where citizen science comes in. The American public especially is very keen on helping to understand the resources that they enjoy, they really are, and we just need to capitalize on them and give them better training and to teach them how to effectively collect the information and how to properly tag the fish, and we the scientists -- Our jobs will be much easier, and the research will be better for it.

MR. ROSHER: Ben, I wanted to say, first of all, thank you for you and the other council members being here, and I think your point is right on the money. As the years go by, you realize that the fishery stocks are important, but I am not sure that it's more important than the bait supply and habitat contribution, meaning whether you're restoring coral or adding artificial reefs, and I really appreciate your comment about the sargassum, because I think sargassum factors into this meeting today more than people realize.

It's not just the haven to protect dolphin stocks. I have watched blue marlin chase dolphin in sargassum and watched the dolphin -- I never understood how it could benefit them. They will lay right on a mat, sideways, and then the marlin comes up, and he might be a foot or two away. He thinks he's right there, and so the seaweed is protection, whether they're this big or this big, and

the bigger issue is, when you take a sabiki and drop below the sargassum, I have caught juvenile -
- I will just go through the list.

It's typically blue runners, speedos, tinker mackerel, goggle-eyes, just to name the main ones. Those are the main four that you catch that are anywhere from a couple of inches long to six inches long, and even baby wahoo, under the sargassum that are less than eight inches long. What that teaches you is the habitat connected to the food supply connected to the really protection that the sargassum can provide, and that may be a bigger role in our job here as the -- Your job as the council, but also our job as the AP members. I just hope that you carry that back to the council and think about sargassum protection, and obviously there's a lot of dynamics to that, like where does it come from. There is no farms, but you get what I am saying. There are some factors beyond just harvest.

MR. HARTIG: Just to respond, there is a number of snapper grouper species that use sargassum as a major part of their initial life history. I mean, all the cranchids use it, all the jacks, the amberjacks, the rudderfish, almaco and banded rudderfish, and then some of the lesser species as well, like cottonmouth jacks, which you don't see very many of, but you see -- I actually see more of them underneath the sargassum than I have ever caught, but gray triggerfish is another one. It is dependent on the amount of sargassum for a portion of its life cycle.

Rainbow runners, and you can go on and on, but the council is aware of the importance of sargassum. When we talked about sargassum years ago, we ratcheted down on the harvest that was occurring at that time, and so, yes, somewhere, someone in fisheries and someone in the sargassum community who actually studies sargassum, we need to connect the dots.

We need to get some university student somewhere who wants to look at dolphin, and possibly other species, and then sargassum research to date. Now, you will probably have to mine some of it, but it was a pretty interesting study, and I can't remember the authors. I could probably dig it up, but it was interesting, and, some of the changes that had occurred during their long-term study, they were actually alarmed at.

MR. ROSHER: I think sargassum harvest is a big issue, and I want to state for the record -- I mentioned earlier about protecting the larger breeding stock of dolphin. At the same time, I've been engaged in the commercial sector, and the recreational and charter, and so I am not against any one group. The main goal should be how do we keep everybody fishing, at what levels can we harvest, and I just want to state that for the record.

MR. REYNOLDS: I just wanted to mention also that a lot of the studies through University of Miami research in the wild -- Captive dolphin have ideal conditions at all times, but one of the highest rates of reproduction for a spawning dolphin is going to be lay the largest amount of eggs at their highest metabolic intake in 80.5-degree water, and so, most of that time, that occurs along the sargassum weed. They have an abundant food supply, and they want to eat and spawn and lay eggs as rapidly as possible, and then, as a result of that, and the eggs being laid so close to the sargassum, you have immediate habitat for a new spawn of fish, and so that's just -- It all wrap in together so importantly.

MR. BROWN: I know you all have probably seen it too, but you will see little tiny dolphin under the seaweed. I have seen little small ones that probably weren't born too long ago, but I did want

to say one thing about instinct. They had fish at the South Carolina DNR, maybe even when you were there, Don, that they had in tanks and stuff, and they were trying to do a growth study on them.

They found fish that were dead every day when they went in there, and so they were trying to find out why these fish were dying. They put up some cameras inside of that area where they had the dolphin, and they found out that, early in the morning, birds were flying over the tank, and the dolphin were chasing them across and running into the side of the tank and breaking their necks, and these were real small fish, and so they were born with the instinct to chase something that was above the water, and I thought that was pretty cool.

MR. ROSHER: Thanks, Mark.

MR. SCALISE: I am just assuming, but, with the conventional tags, that's the smaller, juvenile fish. That's all we would ever tag. You would have a hard time convincing a charter to tag a twenty or thirty-pound dolphin. Then I would assume, logistically, for the satellite tags, that would be bigger, more mature fish. Do you think that is a -- You have a different subject fish, and, as far as data mining, you're probably getting better data out of the more mature ones or --

MR. HAMMOND: There's no question, I think, that we're getting a biased view with satellite tags, simply because it does require the older fish, and, as we know, with virtually every animal, behavior changes as an animal matures and grows older, and so, yes, but we don't know how much different is it, is the big question, than what their behavior, just like the small fish may not engage in deep diving near as much as the older, larger fish, and so that's something that is going to -- Time and more technology to make these satellite tags much smaller, so smaller fish can be able to carry them, and that's the only way that we're going to be able to answer a lot of those questions, from that, but I am sure there is a difference, but we just don't know how much or where.

I would like to thank everybody for the kind words for this program. Believe me, this has been a program by the fishermen. They're the ones that have really demanded that this program continue, and they have supported it. Without them, this program would have never existed, and so it is a program by the fishermen, for the fishermen, and they are the ones to be thanked for this.

MR. ROSHER: Let's express our thanks to -- One more question. I'm sorry.

MR. KINARD: What is the status of the harvest of sargassum? I know, at one time, off of North Carolina, that was quite a commercial venture, but I haven't heard much about that lately.

MR. HAMMOND: I think someone from the council would better address that.

DR. COLLIER: The South Atlantic Council has an ACL of zero for sargassum right now, and so there is no harvest of sargassum. Actually, at our June meeting, we're going to have somebody -- There is an international commission that's going to come and speak on behalf of sargassum and some of the international cooperation that is going on right now, and so that is the forefront of everybody's mind right now, and the discussion is going to continue.

MR. ROSHER: Thank you, and Don just touched on it. The international harvest is something that -- It's hard to affect, but I think we all in this room recognize the importance of it, but I wanted to say thank you to Don Hammond for all of his work. (Applause)

MR. HAMMOND: Thank you. I appreciate it, and I enjoyed presenting to you, and I hope you found it informative.

MR. ROSHER: We always do. There were a few new things this year, and thank you, Don. I want to take a five-minute break, I think, and stretch our legs and we will be back.

(Whereupon, a recess was taken.)

MR. ROSHER: We call the meeting back into action here. We'll take our seats.

MR. HADLEY: We're about to get going again here. I just wanted to remind everyone -- We're doing a pretty good job, but if you could remember to say your name before you speak, just so it's easier for the folks following online to know who is speaking and also just for the record, as far as the meeting minutes, and so just a quick reminder. With that, I will turn it over to Kim.

MS. IVERSON: Good morning. I have dealt with everybody at the table, because you're here as an AP member, but there are many of you that are brand-new to the process, and so I thought it might be helpful -- We thought it might be helpful, as staff, to kind of do a primer on the council process and why you're here and the advisory panel's role in the whole scheme of the management process.

This is the fortieth-anniversary of the Magnuson-Stevens Act, which is the legislation that created the eight regional management councils, and we'll talk a little bit more about it, but, in going through, I thought that maybe it would be helpful if we could show this video. I am going to attempt to do this, and hopefully the audio will be okay. It's just like a two or three-minute introduction on the Magnuson-Stevens Act that I think is much easier for the eye and the ear, since they went to the trouble to produce this video, and so bear with me.

(Whereupon, a video about the Magnuson-Stevens Act was presented.)

MS. IVERSON: That was just a quick introduction that NOAA Fisheries, National Marine Fisheries Service, created to kind of give you a big picture of the Magnuson-Stevens Act and why it was created and the regional management councils that were formed. I think earlier, in Don's presentation, you had this wonderful discussion on the international impacts of fishing activity, and so we want to bring that down. We talked about the U.S., and now we want to bring it down a little bit further, into the South Atlantic and the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council and its role in this process.

As they said earlier in the video, it's the fortieth-anniversary of the creation of the Magnuson-Stevens Act, and the eight regional management councils were created. There are actually two men, Senators Stevens and Magnuson, that created that Act forty years ago.

This illustrates the eight regional management councils. There is the New England Council, the Mid-Atlantic, the South Atlantic, the Gulf, the Caribbean, the North Pacific, which is basically the

entire federal waters off the State of Alaska, and then the Western Pacific, which includes the Hawaiian Islands and American Samoa and the other territories.

Bringing it down to a closer focus, in the South Atlantic, the South Atlantic Council has jurisdiction in federal waters, and that is greater than three miles offshore, from the North Carolina/Virginia line down to the Dry Tortugas, along the east coast of Florida. You see the little jag there where it comes in, and that's because of the Bahamian border there, and so the EEZ, or the Exclusive Economic Zone, does come in off the southeastern coast of Florida. It's a little bit different in each region. The Gulf Council, when you get over into the Gulf of Mexico, the state waters extend out nine miles, and so it varies from region to region.

Who are these council members? Who is the council and what do they? The council members that you see from the ones that are represented here in the room are fishermen like yourselves, commercial fishermen and recreational fishermen. Each of the states have the state agency person here, and Mel Bell is with the South Carolina Department of Natural Resources, and so each of the four states has a representative, and NOAA Fisheries has a representative. Those are all voting members of our council, and then we have non-voting members from the U.S. Coast Guard, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission, and the Department of State.

Each council has a Chair and a Vice Chair. Dr. Michelle Duval is our current Chair, and she is with the North Carolina Division of Marine Fisheries. She's been here all week, and she had to leave yesterday, but she is very actively involved in all of the council's issues, as well as Charlie Phillips, who is our Vice Chair. Is our current Vice Chair, and he's a full-time commercial fisherman from Georgia.

The council members are appointed -- The at-large members are appointed by the Secretary of Commerce. The governors of each state makes recommendations for three appointees, and then the Secretary ultimately makes that determination, and members may serve three-year terms, and they have a three consecutive term limit in which they can serve.

Each council functions a little bit differently. Our council, the South Atlantic Council, meets four times each year, once in each of our four regional states. In March, we meet in Georgia, and it's generally the same meeting week each year. The second week in June, we meet in Florida, and we try to vary those meetings from north Florida down to the Keys, since Florida is such a large state. In September, we always meet in South Carolina, generally in Charleston, and then, in December, it's in North Carolina, and, again, we try to vary, from Wilmington all the way to the Outer Banks. This year, we will be meeting in the Outer Banks.

The council meetings last for a week, and so they begin on Monday and they run through Friday. Generally speaking, the committees all meet at the beginning of the week, and we go into Full Council Session on Thursday, usually Thursday afternoon, and Friday morning. The committees are where the sausage is made. That's where the work is conducted. The council's committees are made up of council members, and they come to the table and discuss management measures and alternatives and the amendments. Now, councils vary. I believe the North Pacific Council, the one that's off of Alaska, meets for ten days straight. I don't know how they do it, because, by Friday, we're pretty much done.

What does the council manage? Generally speaking, they have fishery management plans. One is the Coastal Migratory Pelagics, which covers king and Spanish mackerel and cobia. Of course, there is Dolphin and Wahoo, which is managed along the entire Atlantic coast, with the South Atlantic Council working together with the Mid-Atlantic and New England Fishery Management Councils on the management actions for dolphin and wahoo, but they are the lead council. They do have representatives that come to the table from the Mid-Atlantic and New England Councils when discussions take place.

Then, of course, the other species-specific, we have Golden Crab, which is a commercial fishery, primarily off of southeastern Florida, and you talked about sargassum, and there is actually a fishery management plan for sargassum.

Fred, you had asked about the commercial harvest of sargassum off of North Carolina, and that was several years ago. It's my understanding that was a family-run business and that they are no longer harvesting sargassum, and it's been quite a few years since that commercial harvest has taken place. I think they were using it for agricultural and feed supplements and things like that, but, when the council implemented their fishery management plan for sargassum, the harvest was so limited and restricted, with the council recognizing the value of that essential fish habitat, and so I don't think that that is -- Maybe you guys know more about that.

Our largest fishery is the snapper grouper fishery. It's a multispecies fishery, and I think most of you are familiar with the species that are involved there, and, of course, spiny lobster. There is Ben holding one of his nice mackerel there.

Our council members, as I said, serve on various committees, and so that's where the work takes place, and, again, they meet at the beginning of the council meeting week, and they are responsible for reviewing the amendments to these fishery management plans. That is how the regulations and the rulemaking takes place. The Full Council is responsible for the final decisions that are made at the table.

The council has to operate under mandates. They have rules and regulations and restrictions under which they have to operate. There are ten National Standards that the councils must work under, and I'm talking about all eight regional management councils and not just the South Atlantic Council.

The Magnuson-Stevens Act was last reauthorized in 2007, and we'll talk a little bit more about that. There is a current reauthorization in process, and you've probably read about some bills that have been introduced in the last year or two. NEPA, or the National Environmental Policy Act, mandates that the councils have to look at management alternatives. They can't simply come to the table and say this is what we want to happen. You have to look at options and management alternatives, and there are other things, like the Marine Mammal Protection Act and the Endangered Species Act. All of these things have to be factored in as the council discusses management measures and how they're going to regulate.

What is a fishery? You guys are very well aware of this, but there are many components. You've got the fish, and you've got the habitat that's associated. You've got the fishermen and the sectors, the recreational sector and the commercial sector, the for-hire sector, the charter captains that are involved. There is communities and businesses, the bait and tackle manufacturers, and the hotel

and restaurant businesses that are dependent on the fishery, and so all of that has to be considered as the council makes their decisions. Again, this is kind of an illustration that all of these factors have to be considered, your social and economic factors as well as your biological factors.

Does the council collect data? No. Remember the picture of the council members. These are council members that are sitting in the room. When they leave here, they will go back, and Mark will be running a charter, probably, tomorrow morning, out of Shim Creek, here in Charleston, and so these are people that come to the table to discuss the regulations and the rules and the management measures that are being developed, but the council itself does not collect data.

Oftentimes, we will go to public hearing and hear that your data is wrong or your data sucks or whatever they have to say, but keep in mind that when the council members come to the table that they are handed the -- They get the data, the exact same information, that you receive as AP members and get to review, but there is a definitive data collection process that is involved in collecting biological data.

It's difficult. You can't count fish like you can count trees or like you can count other natural resources, in some cases. As you saw earlier this morning, and you're well aware of, fish move. The migratory patterns are not known and the life history, and we're trying to learn more and more all the time, and so there is always this data collection that is ongoing.

You have two types of fishery data that's collected, fishery-dependent data, which is you the fishermen providing information to the data collection agencies, and that being the state and National Marine Fisheries Service. You provide logbook data when you fill out your logbooks and when you report your trip tickets. Then, under the Marine Recreational Information Program, or MRIP -- Again, we use a lot of acronyms, and so, if we're using acronyms and it's something that you don't understand, please don't hesitate to ask. We have lots of staff here, and we will be glad to help with the acronyms as the discussions continue. Then we also have a list of acronyms on our website, the council's website, which is a great source of information.

Then you have fishery-independent data, these types of surveys that are conducted. This is a research vessel that operates for the MARMAP program, which is an independent data collection program that operates out of Charleston, but covers the whole Southeast. They deploy traps. The traps have video cameras on them, and so there is video data available. They look at the species that are collected. They use hook-and-line and remove the otoliths from the fish to do ageing, and so there's this fishery-independent data.

Of course, this is really expensive. It's expensive to send these research vessels offshore, and, as, Amber noted earlier, one of the reasons behind that Citizen Science Program, and one of the things that we've heard from you as fishermen, in talking at port meetings and looking at the council's vision process, is that there's a need for citizen science and to let the fishermen be involved in this data collection. Again, I would encourage you to follow up with the Citizen Science Pool. You are automatically there, but to work with Amber to get on one of the workgroups and the plan teams.

What happens with this data when you collect it all? I think most of you are familiar with stock assessments and the stock assessment process, the SEDAR. The Southeast Data Assessment and Review, or SEDAR, stock assessment program is operated and based here in Charleston, and it

covers the Caribbean, the South Atlantic, and the Gulf of Mexico, as far as conducting stock assessments for various species. They have a really good website, sedarweb.org, and you can go and search, if you are interested in a particular stock assessment that's been conducted. There are documents that are associated with those, and you can search by species or by the number of the stock assessment, and we have some staff members here that can help answer questions. Again, I am trying to go through this fairly quickly.

Not only do you have to look at the fish, but you have to look at the social and economic impacts. What are the economic impacts if you close a fishery or you put more restrictions in place or you create marine protected areas? How does it affect the fishing communities? The council members have to consider those aspects as well.

Each of the eight regional management councils in the country under the Magnuson-Stevens Act has a Scientific and Statistical Committee. I think most everyone agrees that you should have science-based decision making in the fishery management process, and these are folks that come together. As a matter of fact, they will be meeting here in Charleston starting next week for a week-long meeting. If you're interested, that is available from our website. You can go and log in and listen each day to these discussions.

These are the folks that come together and review the data. They review the actions that the council is proposing, and they also are very, very key in this process, in that they develop the fishing level recommendations that the council receives. When we talk about annual catch limits, they are based on the recommendations from this group of folks here, from the scientists, and they are not part of the management process. They do not look at the economic and social impacts. They are simply there to review the science and to make recommendations.

Now, they do have a Social and Economic Sub-Panel that meets to look and provide recommendations on that, but they are looking basically at the science, and so I don't want to take away from the social and economic. John is our economist on our staff, and so he works with that group, and Kari is on the social end of things.

Remember I mentioned that the Magnuson Act is constantly be reauthorized, and the last reauthorization was in 2007, and President Bush signed the reauthorization. The idea behind that reauthorization was to end overfishing immediately and establish these annual catch limits and accountability measures, so that the stocks would begin to rebuild.

I think you are familiar with some of the terminology, hopefully, that has been used, and so what are these annual catch limits? They are exactly what they sound like. They're the amount of fish or the number of pounds, in numbers of fish, that can be harvested in a single year. Again, it's based on this acceptable biological catch recommendation set by the Scientific and Statistical Committee.

These annual catch limits cannot exceed that ABC, or acceptable biological catch. You can go under, but you can't go over, and so you can't have more fish. I explain it to the fishermen that this is the pie. Sometimes you get a medium piece of pie and sometimes you get a large and sometimes there is not a lot of pie left when you look at these acceptable biological catches.

Then the council members, when they come to the table, are responsible for the allocations. Who gets what? What sectors get what? How much is allocated to the commercial fishery and how much is allocated to the recreational?

Also, under the reauthorization of the Magnuson-Stevens Act, it set up accountability measures, and so what happens if you go over your annual catch limit? You try to have measures such as in-season closures that help make sure that you don't exceed that annual catch limit, and, if you do, in some cases, there are payback provisions. We are dealing with that right now with the cobia, the cobia situation, with the cobia closure, where there are overages in the recreational annual catch limit, and so that fishery remains closed. We are dealing with that with red snapper as well, and that's an ongoing saga that we addressed earlier this week with our Snapper Grouper Advisory Panel.

All of this is dependent on public participation. When the Magnuson-Stevens Act was created, it was mandated -- There was no choice, but it's key that the public participate. Remember that the councils are made up of people that are involved in these fisheries, commercial and recreational fishermen, and it's essential, and so we have public hearings that we will be on the road.

Generally, we meet and have our public hearings at the end of January and the first of February, and we will go from Wanchese to Key West and hold meetings and encourage people to get involved. That is really, really key to the process. We generally have hearings the end of January and first of February and again in August, if needed, and our staff will be on the road to give presentations and get public input.

This whole process is based on a bottom-up approach. You have public input from the fishermen and from others that are involved, and not just fishermen. We have other groups that are represented, environmental groups, and we've had local mayors come. We have had travel and tourism folks that show up at our public hearings and chefs, especially here in the Charleston area. I mean, we have wonderful restaurants, and a very strong involvement from our local chefs.

We have that public input, and then you have the stock assessments that I mentioned, input from the Scientific and Statistical Committee, input from you as advisory panel members, and all of this goes up to the council. The council reviews the input at their various committees and then makes the recommendations that go into the fishery management plans and amendments.

Those are submitted to the National Marine Fisheries Service, NOAA Fisheries. They review and make sure that all of the mandates are met, all the requirements are met, and then they are sent to the Secretary of Commerce, who ultimately makes the decision. The Secretary can either approve an amendment, partially approve an amendment and the actions in it, or disapprove it, and so those actions are all reviewed at this level, and that is how a new regulation is made. It's also the reason that sometimes this process can seem excruciatingly slow, but you don't want quick decisions being made on things that can impact not only the fisheries, but the fishing communities, and so that's the bottom-up process, and that's where your role fits into it.

Let's look a little bit more about the advisory panels. We have thirteen advisory panels. The Citizen Science Advisory Panel is our newest. You are here because you are part of this Dolphin Wahoo Advisory Panel. You represent the interests within that fishery, and then these are the others. You can see that there are some that are species-specific.

We have a Law Enforcement AP with law enforcement agencies represented from each of the states and at the federal level. Again, our Snapper Grouper is probably our largest. No, it's not our largest. I think our Habitat and Ecosystem-Based Management AP is our largest, but we have thirteen different ones to address these issues. Again, you see the diversity of the advisory panel members, as you introduced yourselves this morning, and they represent various interests from the region. It's really important to have good representation, and so I appreciate you giving up your time to be here today.

The advisory panel members are appointed by the council. We have an AP Selection Committee that reviews applications. All of you, your applications were reviewed, and you were also vetted. You're here because you have clean records. We do a law enforcement background check. You have a term limit of three consecutive terms, and we'll talk a little bit more about this. We're going to have to deal with some of these guys that are sitting at the table that are wonderful AP members, but, a couple of years ago, the council decided that they would put term limits, very similar to council members, in hopes of getting new people involved with the advisory panel process.

You meet on an as-needed basis, and so that's one of the reasons that you haven't met recently. We haven't been dealing with dolphin issues and wahoo issues, and we certainly don't want to have meetings just to get together. You're all very busy people, and so we meet on an as-needed basis.

Let me just reiterate that if you don't meet -- In a year that you don't meet, that doesn't count against your term, and so, if we haven't met in a couple of years, the inactivity doesn't count against your term. When you were appointed to the AP, you received a copy of our SOPPs, our Standard Operating Policy and Procedures. In it is outlined your AP duties, and I am not going to read this off, but you are here to offer advice, to give recommendations.

As you go through this meeting today, you may want to make some motions. Those motions and that advice will be taken to the committee, to the Dolphin Wahoo Committee, when the council meets the second week in June. Our next meeting will be in Ponte Vedra, Florida. That is northeastern Florida, up there around Jacksonville, but you're here to represent your fishery and share your knowledge. Please feel free to speak up. You're here for a reason. What you don't say won't be heard, and so I encourage you to provide your input as we go through these discussions.

Again, I went through that, how the AP members are expected to participate and provide input, but I will also use you. From time to time, you may get a call from someone that says that I talked to Kim Iverson and she said that you knew a lot about dolphin fishing off of Hatteras or you're a commercial longline fisherman and you could tell me a little bit more or I'm doing a story on longline fishing. I may get a reporter that is doing a story and wants some information.

So please understand, if you get a call, as an AP member, you are a resource for us to use as well, and so I am not trying to put you on the spot or anything. I hope no one will come and put a microphone in front of your face to do an interview, and I will give you a heads-up. I will do my best to give you a heads-up, but especially if I get somebody that's interested in getting into the

charter business and they are interested in doing so off the coast of Florida. I see some smiles. Anyway, I may send them to you, and so you're a source of information for us to use as well.

I went through it really quickly. It's a lot to take in. I appreciate you all being here, and, again, we are staff. You dealt with me in getting here, to the table and the advisory panel process, and John is a wonderful resource. He works directly with you as the advisory panel members, and then our council members. The contact information is on our website, and our staff is always here to help, and so, if anybody has any questions, I will be glad to help answer some.

MR. ROSHER: Thank you, Kim. I really appreciate it, and I guess we're going to move on into -- Did you have something else?

MS. IVERSON: I did. I have one other thing, and I don't mean to detract from it, but I also brought some postcards, and I don't have any formal part of the presentation, but some of you have been through this program. It's the Marine Resource Education Program, and I have postcards in the back.

It's a wonderful workshop-based program. We have a science workshop that actually is going to start in a couple of weeks down in Florida. It's held in conjunction with the Florida Fish and Wildlife Research Institute, and it delves into exactly what I was just talking about, talking about the science and how the data is collected. It's a group that you have to apply. They cover your travel expenses to go down to Florida. It's in Tampa, the St. Pete area, and then that science workshop is held in the spring. Then, in the fall, we do a management workshop, and it's a wonderful program.

If you're interested, I will be at the back of the room, and you can grab one of these postcards. The applications for this year's program is closed, but I would highly recommend that you apply, and it really helps you, as far as being an AP member, better understand the details of this process, and, if you know of others that may be interested, please just pick up a postcard. Again, the applications for this year have closed, because we have the workshop coming up in a couple of weeks, but you can always apply for next year.

MR. ROSHER: All right. Thank you, Kim, and I think we're going to have John Hadley talk to us a little bit about recent dolphin wahoo amendments, and we will go from there.

MR. HADLEY: Thank you. As Ray mentioned, I was just going to run through some of the dolphin-related amendments that have gone into place since the AP last met, which was in 2014, and so there's been a bit of change since then. I will run through, and one of the reasons for doing this is kind of a primer for our discussion on Dolphin Wahoo 10, and so it's just a little background on what has changed and where we stand now.

I believe you discussed this at your last meeting, but Amendment 5 to the Dolphin Wahoo FMP was effective on July 9 of 2014. This one essentially increased the ABCs and ACLs for both the sectors and the recreational ACTs for dolphin. It added a payback provision for dolphin and wahoo, and it modified the current framework procedure.

The main reason for this was to incorporate changes in recreational data, and so an update from the Marine Recreational Information Program, or MRIP. Specifically, there was approximately a

91,000-pound increase for the commercial sector ACL and approximately a 657,000-pound increase for the recreational ACL. The catch limits also increased, or the ACLs for wahoo increased as well on the commercial side, by approximately 6,000 pounds. For the recreational side, it was approximately 297,000 pounds. As I mentioned, the accountability measures for dolphin and wahoo included a payback provision when the total ACL is exceeded and if the stock is overfished.

Amendment 7, I believe you discussed this as well, but this essentially went into effect at the beginning of 2016, and it was done to allow fishermen fishing in the Bahamas to fillet their catch and bring it back into the U.S. It was specifying the two fillets are equivalent to one fish for dolphin or wahoo and requiring the skin to be left on, for identification purposes. It was requiring fishing gear to be stowed, and so kind of transit provisions, and proof that you were in fact in Bahamian waters, and so the dated and stamped passport.

Amendment 8, which also went into effect in early 2016, this -- Well, we will discuss this a little bit more, but, essentially, it increased the commercial allocation of the total ACL from 7.54 percent to 10 percent. That was approximately an additional 377,000 pounds to the commercial ACL and a similar reduction to the recreational, or the same reduction to the recreational ACL, and so you're shifting some of that ACL from the recreational sector to the commercial sector. The recreational sector changed from 92.46 to 90 percent. On a percentage basis, not a huge shift, but there was a change there. Again, this went into place in early 2016.

We had Regulatory Amendment 1, which just went into place. It's been delayed a little bit, but it went into place early this year, and this establishes the commercial trip limit for dolphin at 4,000 pounds after 75 percent of the commercial ACL has been reached. If the trip limit is put in place, it stays in place until the end of the fishing year. The intention here is to -- If the commercial sector is starting to reach its ACL, the 4,000-pound trip limit will hopefully extend the season and prevent a closure for the commercial sector.

Amendment 9, this is part of the Generic For-Hire Reporting Amendment, and so this will include an electronic logbook for all South Atlantic for-hire permits. They will be submitted electronically to the Science Center, and it will be on a weekly basis. That is kind of upcoming. It's towards the final stages of being implemented.

Then, finally, we have Dolphin Wahoo Amendment 10, and so there are several items in this, and I will go over each one specifically, but, just as a general overview, it potentially redefines optimum yield for dolphin, revise the recreational ACT for dolphin, establish a commercial ACT for dolphin, allow adaptive management, modify accountability measures for dolphin, and then look at modifying authorized gears for when dolphin and wahoo can be possessed, and, finally, looking at the operator card requirement for the dolphin wahoo fishery. Any questions on that before we jump into Amendment 10?

All right. If you give me just a second here, I will pull up the discussion document. This is Dolphin Wahoo Amendment 10. I will just briefly -- Like I said, we will dive into these actions. I will read them out, just so we can go over them initially, and we will get into the details of each one. Then I will go into a little bit of background on where this amendment came from and where we stand now.

There are eight actions, as the amendment stands now, to revise the optimum yield definition for dolphin, modify the recreational ACT for dolphin, and establish a commercial ACT for dolphin. For Action 2 and Action 3, one of the reasons for doing so is potentially using these in the definition of OY. There again, we will get into the details of that.

Action 4 is adaptive management of sector ACLs for dolphin. Action 5 is revise accountability measures for dolphin. Then revise the ABC control rule, and these two actions essentially accommodate what would potentially be going on in the adaptive management of the sector ACLs. The last two would allow properly permitted vessels with gear onboard that are not authorized for use in the dolphin wahoo fishery to possess dolphin or wahoo, and one of the main reasons for this is we've had New England lobster fishermen that would like to -- A lobster pot is not an allowable gear in the dolphin wahoo fishery, and they would like to be able to possess dolphin and wahoo. Then, finally, whether or not to remove the requirement of vessel operators or crew to hold an operator card in the dolphin wahoo fishery.

As a little bit of background on what started Dolphin Wahoo 10, we had the June 30, 2015 closure of commercial harvest, and so, at this time, on June 30 -- I believe actually, in 2014, there was a slight overrun of the ACL. It was monitored in 2015, and, when it was projected to be met, the commercial harvest was closed, and it was closed for a good chunk of the year, and so you had July through December of 2015, and it reopened in January of 2016.

At the same time, the recreational sector's estimated harvest was approximately half of the recreational sector ACL, and so what we were looking at was approximately 6.7 million pounds of the total ACL going unharvested. Because the dolphin commercial sector was closed while several million pounds of the total ACL was not landed, the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council wanted to look at actions that would potentially allow for some quota sharing or adaptive management of the sectors ACLs, to try to prevent any harvest closures in the fishery and essentially extend the season.

As I mentioned, the council is looking at optimum yield to better address the needs of the commercial and recreational sectors, and so looking at the different kind of fishery management goals of the two sectors for dolphin. Then potentially using the ACT for the recreational sector in establishing an ACT for the commercial sector in the definition of optimum yield.

There is two other actions, as I mentioned, revising the ABC control rule and the accountability measures. This is to accommodate some of those quota-sharing or adaptive management options. Then, finally, there was the -- There is the operator card requirement, as I mentioned, and the change in allowable gears. As I mentioned, this was expressed from the commercial fishermen in New England. They would like to harvest dolphin by hook-and-line while having lobster pots onboard, which is a prohibited gear.

MR. ROSHER: I just had a question about that prohibited gear. Today, can they retain a recreational limit?

MR. HADLEY: My understanding is that, no, they cannot, because, if they have that gear onboard, they're obviously not using it to catch the dolphin, but since it is a prohibited gear in the fishery - - We will bring up the federal regulation, but that's essentially where the problem lies.

Then kind of a status of how we got to what the current process is. There are essentially revisions to the MRIP Program and the survey that are coinciding with the development of this amendment, and the preliminary results show notable increases in estimates of recreational catch, and so there is a bit of uncertainty.

Knowing that we're going to have these revisions and new recreational data, there is a bit of uncertainty in assessing how these management actions may affect the recreational sector, and so, due to this expected uncertainty, and also concerns by the council over the limitations on the amount of staff time to put forward, that can be put forward, given all the different amendments that are going on at the moment -- With these two concerns combined, the council ultimately approved a motion to suspend further development of this amendment until the revised recreational data are available, and so it has kind of been in suspension, but the council intends to pick this back up once the revised MRIP data are available. Any questions? If not, I can move into the actions.

MR. ROSHER: No questions? All right. Then we'll move on into the actions.

MR. HADLEY: All right. Action 1 would revise the optimum yield definition for dolphin. There are four alternatives in this action. Currently, OY is equal to the total ACL. Alternative 2 is optimum yield is equal to the sum of the commercial ACL and the recreational annual catch target, or ACT. Alternative 3 is OY is equal to 75 percent of the maximum sustainable yield, and Alternative 4 is OY is the long-term average catch, which is not to exceed the total ACL, and will fall between the total ACL and the sum of the commercial and recreational ACTs. In this case, this Alternative 4 is largely -- It was influenced by a definition of OY that the Mid-Atlantic Council currently uses, and it's kind of a different approach to establishing OY.

Looking at the table here, we have the different levels where OY would stand, under the different alternatives. Right now, it's approximately 15.3 million pounds, and so OY is equal to the total ACL and is equal to the total ABC. Alternative 2 would be stepped down to approximately 14.3 million pounds. Since there is a range, since dolphin is kind of a different stock, and one that is difficult to pinpoint as far as what an MSY estimate is, there is a range for MSY. Consequently, there is a range for what Alternative 3 would be if you use 75 percent of the MSY. Then, finally, in Alternative 4, it would really -- This is assuming that there is no change to the ACT for the recreational sector and there is no establishing the commercial ACT, but, as it stands now, it would be a value between approximately eight million pounds and 15.3 million pounds.

Before discussion, I will just get into what the Magnuson-Stevens Act defines what optimum yield is. There are several different items here. It's the amount of fish that will provide the greatest overall benefit to the nation, particularly with respect to food production and recreational opportunities and taking into account protection of marine ecosystems; that is prescribed on the basis of maximum sustainable yield from the fishery as reduced by any relevant economic, social, or ecological factor. In the case of an overfished fishery, that provides for a rebuilding level consistent with producing the MSY in such a fishery.

As you can see, there is a lot going on as OY is defined, but what you can really look at it as, it's a guiding goal towards what you would like the fishery to look like, sort of year in and year out, and so it's almost like a long-term goal for the fishery, in guiding it towards that. I believe that's all that I have for that.

One more that I will scroll down to, and then we'll jump back up to the alternatives here in just a second, just to look at how the landings have played out in recent years, and so this is looking at 2005 through 2015. You can see the landings of dolphin are largely dominated by the recreational sector. As you can see, in recent years, there's been a fairly notable uptick, and, again, this only goes through 2015, in total landings, and this is by pounds. The commercial sector has been fairly steady. You've seen an uptick over the past couple of years as well, but that kind of shows how the two sectors fall, as far as harvest in the fishery.

With that, I will scroll back up to the different alternatives and a couple of just kind of general discussion questions that I was hoping to get input on from the group. Does the AP support revising the definition of optimum yield for the dolphin fishery? If so, would the AP support considering the use of a recreational and commercial annual catch target in defining OY?

MR. HAMMOND: What is the definition of long-term?

MR. HADLEY: That's a good question. That's a question that we asked, and it would be approximately a ten-year moving average, but very good question. That's what the council would consider long-term.

MR. ROSHER: I wanted to ask also, what is the purpose for revising these numbers? Is there some markers that show that we're not harvesting enough or we're harvesting too much? Can you give us a little input on that?

MR. HADLEY: In revising the definition of OY?

MR. ROSHER: Yes.

MR. HADLEY: I guess sort of the two components of using a commercial ACT in establishing -
- Well, changing the recreational ACL, as it stands now, is to recognize the two sort of goals of the recreational sector against in the commercial sector. The recreational sector obviously harvests a large component, but you also have to look towards -- Not that the commercial sector doesn't look towards this as well, but more so abundance and encouraging interaction with the animal, to get people to continue to take trips. On the commercial side, you're more looking towards being able to harvest the fish, and so that was kind of the rationale of the council. You have two sort of not necessarily competing, but different priorities of the two sectors.

MR. ROSHER: Do we want to vote on actions now or take input from all the members?

MR. NETTLES: I had one question. I was looking at these numbers last week. When this started, historically, the catch was divided like ratio-wise, like 93.7 percent, I think the number was, recreational and seven-point-something percent commercial. If you go through these numbers and you calculate it out, the recreational percentage has been slowly declining. Now, we know that there is different things, like fuel prices and weather. All of that will affect the recreational fishery, but, in 2014, it dropped to 80.1 percent.

If we change -- If we define OY and we change ACLs, is that still going to affect these percentages, because this is a very important recreational fishery to south Florida, and, if we set it too low, to

where we are going to affect the long-term ability for fishermen to fish out of south Florida, this will -- It will become a huge disaster down there, and that's one of my concerns. Setting these numbers, is this going to change this percentage between the two sectors?

MR. HADLEY: Not necessarily. As I said, OY is more of a -- It's a guiding vision, if you will, for the fishery, and, as it stands right now, it's set at the maximum harvest level. How that really -- When you get into allocations, that tends to be -- That is usually a different action, separate from OY, and it tends to be based on -- Well, there is several ways to do it, but, if you look at how the allocations are typically set, it's based on historic landings, and so you're not necessarily shifting -- With this action, you're not shifting any kind of allocations.

MR. REYNOLDS: Adjusting an ACT to define optimum yield in the recreational sector, in this case, we would have to come up with what accountability measures, spread over a certain amount of time, and so I guess what my question is, it's, if we wanted to adjust an ACT, what we would be providing is possibly more opportunity for stocks staying in the water by adjusting to maybe a 60 percent ACT, since that's where the recreational sector lies throughout the years of the total ACL, and that's providing an annual catch target to keep large amounts of stock in the water for recreational opportunity, and is that correct?

MR. HADLEY: Yes, that's correct, and we'll get into the next two actions, and one looks at the recreational ACT and one looks at the commercial ACT. What the ACTs, as they stand now, they're not necessarily -- These are annual catch targets and so it's essentially it's guiding this is what you want to manage the fishery towards, as far as harvest. Now, as they stand now, they're soft targets, and so they're not attached to an accountability measure. If you go over them or under them, there is not necessarily going to be any change in management. Where those changes, those accountability measures, are linked to, they are linked to the ACLs, and that's the total ACL and then also the two sector ACLs.

MR. ROSHER: Any other questions?

MR. SCALISE: As far as access with the commercial sector, as far as permits, is that open? Can people who are not permitted, can they gain permits now or how does that work?

MR. HADLEY: With the federal dolphin wahoo permit, that one is open access. Now, to go along with that, it depends on what state you're in. You would also have to have a commercial license to sell it. In many states, that's not necessarily an open-access permit, and so it depends on what the state requirement is, but, as far as getting that federal commercial permit, it is.

MR. ROSHER: Do you want to go through each alternative and vote if the group has no more comments on these alternatives? Is the floor still open for comments?

MR. HADLEY: Certainly, if you have any more input. We don't necessarily have to vote on each item. If there is a specific direction that the Dolphin Wahoo AP wants to give to the council, say Alternative whatever it may be, we recommend that this is removed and it's not going to work well for the fishery, as far as an action, that would be the guidance, but, as far as the input, the discussion certainly captured -- From an overall standpoint, does the AP think that this is something that -- Should we revise the definition of OY for the dolphin fishery, considering, as it

stands now, it's at the maximum harvest level, which that's certainly fine, if that's what the AP feels, but, if not, what sort of direction to go.

MR. ROSHER: I will at least put my two-cents worth in, but I am not going to, obviously, make an action, but we've seen, two years ago, the commercial sector have to stop fishing, and I agree with the -- As a matter of fact, I think that was one of the suggestions we made the last time we met, was reaching a certain percentage of harvest and then reducing their daily trip limit, and I think that is a really sensible action to make.

We made it for commercial. Do we want to -- I don't know that this is proper, but do we want to recommend that the similar thing could happen in recreational? We have had this conversation before, where -- It's not in place now, but does it make sense to do something similar in the recreational sector?

Meaning let's just say we reach -- Let's just use, for round numbers, fourteen million pounds is our limit and we reach 75 percent of that limit. Then we would look at daily bag limits being reduced from ten to five or something. My goal, as a fisherman in all three categories, is to have access for all three groups, commercial fishing, recreational, and charter. Keeping them on the water fishing is the goal, and I think that's what was accomplished with the 75 percent rule, going to a 4,000-pound trip limit.

I think it's a little risky to start playing with revising the optimum yield. I think the numbers -- We have seen these numbers cause a shutdown in the commercial fishery. Will we possibly see that happen in the recreational sector if we start playing with these numbers? Don Hammond, every year that you have spoken, you have said that -- To your point today, we probably interact with these fish two months out of twelve, and, even if it's three months, whatever that case is, it's really difficult to sit in this room and say we should start tying the hands of any one of these groups, commercial or charter or recreational, but I do agree, and it's not as one of these actions, but it's just food for thought, if somebody wants to make a proposal.

A sensible way to make sure that we're all fishing twelve months a year would be to set a benchmark, like we did on the commercial sector, of a percentage being reached and then we reduce daily trip limits, or bag limits, and I think another factor in this discussion is the new assessments that are going to be -- Do you have any information on when those will be available? Those assessments may change this whole picture also, and so it's almost like one of these deals where it feels like we should really get all of our facts straight before we start playing god with big numbers, and so that's my two-cents.

MR. REYNOLDS: I agree with a lot of that statement that Ray just made. I think that it would benefit, to a greater degree, if we were going to move forward with something like that, to adjust a vessel limit though, the reason being because a lot of recreational fishermen or charter boat operators are going to have small parties onboard, and so, if you only have two people catching five per person, you're not going to have a great impact, if you're catching twenty, but possibly with the number of anglers or boats on the water, a reduction from sixty to maybe forty, as a vessel limit, regardless, might be a better way to go about than a reduction in bag limit. That's the only suggestion that I would have with that.

MR. ROSHER: I was only mentioning that when we reach a certain benchmark. Up until then, I think the current limits that we're seeing, size limits and bag limits, have been healthy. When you look at the graphs, we're not up against the ceiling, and it's kind of six-to-one-and-half-a-dozen-to-the-other whether you touch both the boat limit or a bag limit. It's just a reduced harvest, but it keeps boats fishing. That was my only proposal to throw out to the floor, and you guys can comment on it and vote on it and make actions on it.

MR. HOPKINS: As far as redefining optimum yield, I am leery of anything that gives the potential to take fish away, and all three proposals -- I mean, you have the possibility of having an increase with Alternative 3, but anything that takes away, I am very leery of, and I understand there is going to be a new stock assessment in five or six years, and I would say that would be the time -- Like I said, there's nothing pressing here against the ceiling. I'm sure there's a reason they want to do that, but I don't understand it, and I am leery of it.

MR. HADLEY: If I could just clarify, just so that we're all on the same page, as far as the Marine Recreational Information Program, the recreational numbers and the revisions to that, it's not necessarily a stock assessment. The dolphin fishery doesn't have a stock assessment. It was unable to be assessed, but what we're looking at is we're going to look at a potential change in how that total harvest plays out, and so, as I mentioned, the preliminary numbers, I really don't have a solid percentage to give you guys. I wish I did, but the preliminary information suggests that those MRIP estimates are going to be revised upwards, and so that's kind of the uncertainty there in the expectations.

MR. BURROWS: To kind of echo what Glen is saying, I think, when you look at Alternative 4, you could have your optimum yield gutted by factors that have nothing to do with fishing, like we talked about earlier, three consecutive years of astronomical fuel prices and how that affects the effort, and that Alternative 4 is a scary proposition for myself, because I could see optimum yield plummeting if we're factoring it over a ten-year average. We have seen three years in a row of terrible fuel prices, and what if we saw seven?

MR. ROSHER: It seems like the group is a little nervous about making changes. Should we take a vote on Alternative 1, which is -- Go ahead, Tim.

MR. NETTLES: **I would go ahead and make the motion that we go with Alternative 1 and take no action at this time, until further information is given.**

MR. ROSHER: Okay. That was going to be my thought. Let's have a show of hands on Alternative 1. Then, if anybody wants a show of hands on any other alternative, tell me and we'll open the floor to that, but can we have a show of hands of support or lack of support for Alternative 1? **All in favor, nine in favor of Alternative 1; any opposed, none.** Any other alternatives you all would like to look at? Were you for?

MR. BARNETT: Opposed.

MR. ROSHER: Opposed. **So it's nine to one.** I am sorry about that, Wendell.

MR. HADLEY: All right. With that, I will move on to Action 2 in the amendment. This will certainly play off of the earlier discussion that we just had, and so this action would look at

modifying the annual catch target for dolphin. Currently, the annual catch target for the recreational sector equals the sector ACL. Before we jump into this, I believe we have Anna Beckwith that would like to contribute to the discussion, and so we'll do that first, and then we will continue from there.

MS. BECKWITH: I appreciate the conversation that you guys had under Action 1. I didn't want to speak until you guys had taken the vote, but I did want to give you some feedback about where we were thinking and why we had presented these options to you guys, just for sort of frame of reference.

When we had discussed at the council redefining optimum yield, the background intent of that was to find a way to show the importance of abundance and opportunity to the recreational fishermen, and, right now, the way optimum yield is defined, it is really defined sort of as harvest and catch, and so, for recreational fishermen, of course, having a higher abundance of fish in the water and the opportunity to catch those is of paramount importance, and so, as we look in the future to these reallocation scenarios, if our optimum yield is based on harvest and catch, then that does open up discussion for reallocating unused portions of recreational dolphin catch to commercial, who can actually harvest and achieve optimum yield, where the recreational fishery has not been able to do so.

If you look at the verbiage for those actions, the intent there was not to necessarily -- Of course, we have to make those choices at the council level, and that's why it's sort of laid out that way, but the intent was not to set an accountability measure tied to the ACT. It was simply to sort of acknowledge that, especially in the dolphin fishery, that sometimes we catch 30 percent of the ACL and sometimes we catch 60 and sometimes we have the potential to catch, as the economy improves and people go fishing, we might have the potential to catch more, but that our optimum yield will vary greatly.

By defining optimum yield as between the ACT and the ACL, we're saying that we sort of recognize our variability in this fishery and we have no intent on setting an accountability measure to stop the fishery if it achieves the ACT, but we're just simply trying to find a good way to acknowledge that the recreational fishery is based on abundance and opportunity and not necessarily harvest and catch, which is the current definition of optimum yield.

I just wanted to sort of give you guys that feedback. That was certainly my personal intent in moving forward with redefining optimum yield to be that long-term average, was to recognize that our catch is variable and that we're looking for abundance and opportunity, but my intent was never to move forward with attaching an accountability measure to that ACT, but just simply framing what is important for this particular fishery.

Our fishery is different than a lot of the other fisheries, and so, when we go into reallocation discussions, we can acknowledge that, for the recreational fishery, abundance and opportunity are equally as important as harvest, and so I just wanted to give you guys my thoughts on that, but thank you so much for the discussion, and I am listening intently.

MR. HADLEY: Thank you, Anna. Just for everyone here, just to make sure everyone is on the same page, Anna Beckwith is the Chair of our Dolphin Wahoo Committee on the South Atlantic

Council. I just wanted to let everyone know. I should have introduced her more thoroughly to begin with, but that was Anna, and thank you for that, Anna.

MR. HOPKINS: I was wondering, if she's listening, if she could answer a question. Is redefining optimum yield necessary to move on with the potential of doing in-season transfers of quota in future years? Is that a prerequisite, changing that definition in order to be able to do that in the future?

MS. BECKWITH: I think John will go through some of the different options we have later on for potential quota sharing or quota trades and that sort of thing. There are some additional options in there that would actually not require a quota transfer from recreational to commercial, but would allow the commercial to carry any unused, a percentage of their unused, catch over to the following year.

The commercial harvest has a tendency to stay pretty steady and then, in years of high abundance, sort of shoot up quite significantly, and so some of the mindset behind one of the options that John will discuss with you guys a little bit later is, if they have an unused portion, they can carry that over and give themselves a buffer to future high-abundance years in that catch, but I think John will carry you guys through those options. This is not a prerequisite, redefining optimum yield, but it certainly does encourage greater amounts of potential transfers to achieve that optimum yield if optimum yield is based on harvest and catch.

MR. ROSHER: I just wanted to say, after hearing Anna's comments, does anyone want to change their position on that vote? Okay. We have noted no changes.

MR. REYNOLDS: By choosing Alternative 1, does this lead to no opportunity to adjust the ACT percentage of the recreational sector on Action 1? That's my question.

MR. HADLEY: I will give my interpretation, and, Anna, please feel free to jump in on that, but no. As far as to concisely answer, it doesn't -- We'll be looking at revising the recreational ACT, but, as I mentioned, it is a soft target, as it stands now, and, with Alternative 1, no action, you wouldn't be using it in guiding what OY is, and so, right now, OY is set at the maximum harvest level, and it's not being achieved. I mean, there is millions of pounds of dolphin, of the ACL, that are remaining uncaught every year.

Some of the rationale of why the council was thinking about revising OY, Anna laid out some of the rationale there, but, no, you can absolutely change the ACT, but, as it stands now, it's not linked to anything, and it would not be linked to OY, and so it's a soft target for the recreational sector.

MR. ROSHER: Okay. We voted on Action 1. Do you want to move on to the next action, which is Action 2?

MR. HADLEY: All right. Moving on to Action 2, this would modify the recreational annual catch target for dolphin. As it stands, there is a recreational catch target for dolphin. You can see there is an equation up there. It's the sector ACL times one minus the percent standard error or 0.5 percent of the ACL, whichever is greater. The council is considering three other alternatives currently, that the recreational ACT equals 50 percent of the ACL. Alternative 3, the recreational

ACT would be 60 percent of the recreational ACL. Then Alternative 4 is the recreational ACT would equal 70 percent of the recreational ACL.

In this case, the table here shows what the recreational ACT would be under each alternative, and, in this table -- I put this together as -- I am not sure how relevant it is to the discussion right now, but, if you were to use the recreational ACT and commercial ACT in defining OY, that's kind of where you would stand. The highlighted numbers are where the -- That is the current alternatives that are being considered.

One of the questions for the Dolphin Wahoo AP is -- I will just reiterate that it is a -- There again, the recreational ACT is a soft target. It's not linked to an accountability measure, and so, if the recreational sector is underfishing it or overfishing it -- Fishing above it, and I won't say overfishing. That's another loaded word, but fishing above the ACT, there is no accountability measure there. The accountability measures come in with the ACLs.

One of the questions for the Dolphin Wahoo AP is the reasoning behind considering a decreased recreational ACT is the tradeoff between allowing access in retention of dolphin, to keep trip satisfaction high, but also leaving enough animals in the water to allow a high probability of interaction with the species and continued targeting recreationally, and so does the AP support a recreational ACT that is below what is currently specified, and so approximately 12.8 million pounds?

MR. ROSHER: John, I just have a question. This feels like a reduction in access. Is that correct?

MR. HADLEY: It's not, and the reason why it's not is there is no accountability measure there, and so this doesn't really -- As I said, right now, it's a soft target, meaning that there is no regulation in place, or no regulation that would be triggered by the ACT. It was established, but it's, for the most part, not necessarily being used in respect to regulations or access to the fishery.

MR. ROSHER: I just wanted to ask what is the purpose behind it? Why is this a consideration? Why are we heading in this direction if it seems like we're not reaching -- I mean, I understand that we're not reaching our ACLs now, but what is the need for it?

MS. BECKWITH: I can answer that one, if you would like.

MR. HADLEY: Sure, absolutely.

MS. BECKWITH: Again, this is sort of tied to the discussion I just had with you guys under Action 1. The overall intent, for really all of these actions, built on each other, where we were, again, trying to define optimum yield to be this number, this varying number, between an ACT and the ACL, so, when we have these discussions about reallocation, we can lay out on the table the importance of the recreational fishery having opportunity and abundant supply, and so setting the ACT lower -- I don't know what it is now, and I can't remember, but setting it at 50 or 60 percent just acknowledges the wide variation of recreational harvest.

When the commercial component achieves their ACL, and they come to us and say, hey, we're achieving our ACL and you guys are not and we would like you guys to reallocate some of your ACL to us, we have to make that decision on do we want to reallocate recreational ACL because

it is under a current optimum yield definition that is relevant to harvest, and so we're not achieving our harvest. Therefore, should we allow a higher ACL for the commercial guys, in order so that they can achieve the harvest, or is the fishery management plan for dolphin focused on the recreational opportunity and recognizing that variation?

These are all types, and so I think what I am trying to convey to you guys is that this is not a reduction in access. This is, in a way, a protection of that acknowledgement that recreational fisheries for dolphin vary and that the focus for recreational fishermen in this fishery is not harvest, but it is opportunity and abundance in the water, and so this is sort of our way of being able to define optimum yield to be harvest for commercial and then optimum yield to be something different for recreational. This is one of the only ways that National Marine Fisheries Service has sort of indicated to us that we can make that distinction for optimum yield, that optimum yields can be, instead of just being harvest for recreational, that it can be wanting to keep some abundance in the water and that full harvest is not the goal.

MR. ROSHER: Anna, I was just curious. Is there a reason -- What is the main reason for changing it if neither group, for instance, last year came close to their harvest levels? I am just trying to understand the motivation, and one last question. How long has the 75 percent rule been in action? Was it in action last season?

MS. BECKWITH: Yes, it wasn't in action last season, and the reason for the change is, if the commercial industry continues to grow and achieve their ACL over and over again, then a reallocation will have to occur, if we are not achieving our recreational ACLs, if it's under the current definition, and so we are presenting this simply as an option to recognize is -- When we look at the fishery in ten or fifteen or twenty years, what is the vision of the fishery?

Do we still want it to be a primarily recreational fishery or are we ready to allow some growth in that commercial harvest and reallocating effort towards the commercial harvest? There is no right or wrong answer, but it's simply what is our vision of this fishery in ten years, as the commercial industry is able to achieve their ACL and reaches their ACL, potentially, more often.

MR. NETTLES: I have a little confusion, and maybe you can answer this. I like the idea of the more opportunity the more interaction, but how would you track that? Everything that we've been tracking so far has been based on pounds landed, and so surveys or something would have to change to where you would be able to get this data to show that we have more interaction with the recreational fishermen in this fishery. Everything we're looking at here is just all related to pounds landed, both recreational and commercial, and so I don't understand how they would track that.

MS. BECKWITH: Sure, and I don't think any of the surveys would change, because, if we set our ACTs to say 50 percent of the ACL, then that would be the information that we would have that we're achieving our optimum yield, because, on a regular basis, we're achieving somewhere between 50 percent of our ACT and 100 percent of our ACT, or ACL rather. The surveys wouldn't per se change. I am not sure if that answers your question.

MR. ROSHER: Did anybody else have a question?

MR. REYNOLDS: I think it's extremely important for the dolphin species, for everyone to understand the enormous recreational benefits to this species and the economic output, the social

impact that we have provided and numerous data collection over the course of the year, of 2015, and telephone surveys and extensive research and input, with a very low level of error to show the recreational output of this species, the social impact of this species, and how it impacts the State of Florida, which I'm sure as well affects other states, such as another state like North Carolina, that catches another large portion of these fish.

I think that's important to take into consideration with this, with effort and to understand that stock and availability is one of the most important things for recreational fisheries, and so, to set an annual catch target, especially without an accountability measure, I believe would be a very good idea, somewhere on the range of 60 percent, so that we have a better understanding of where we want to be, but don't necessarily have to be.

On years where we catch more or less -- I have had a lot of conversations about this with Anna and Chester Brewer as well, to explain to me the reason for this and the optimum yield definition that would affect recreational fisheries in a fishery that is so important to our recreational and charter boat industries, and so that's where I think most of this is coming from.

MR. ROSHER: The only concern I have is that, when you start lowering your OY, does that become the standard and suddenly that becomes -- In other words, these numbers that we have today, the ACLs that we're looking at today, are forgotten a few years from now, and then we're having a discussion where we're at -- 60 percent would be -- I think it opens the door for some big changes down the road that could potentially affect access, and I know, today, you're talking about no accountability, but what happens if accountability is suddenly added to this?

That's just my two-cents' worth. If it's not broke, don't fix it. I don't see a big problem in the numbers that we have. That's the reason that I asked Anna about how long has the 75 percent rule been in place. I mentioned that it's not that I feel like it should be applied to commercial only, but I feel like it's a great benchmark to keep everybody fishing.

Fishing access is my goal for all three groups, and, if I endorsed anything, it would be having that same precaution that if any of the groups get close to their ACL that we say, okay, everybody slow down. If you want to keep fishing, we're going to have to do it at a slower pace the rest of the year and keep people fishing, whether you're recreational, charter, or commercial. I mean, that's just my two-cents' worth.

I am nervous to make changes, especially to go to the extreme of 60 percent, when we really don't know what that's going to result in a few years down the road, and what happens if we start having banner years and then they say, you know, you're at your ceiling? Maybe I am incorrect in this assumption, but, if it's not broke, don't fix it. I don't see a big problem in the way it is today. Let's put it this way. If there are changes, they should be, I think, small.

Don Hammond has spoken, year after year, about the -- We just had this discussion today of how fast they grow and how widespread their travels. Some of the things that happen in our economic zone is not going to protect those fish when they go outside of it, nine or ten months out of the year, and so that's just food for thought, and now is a good time to talk about it, because everybody's opinion matters. Any other comments?

MR. REYNOLDS: Has an ACT ever evolved into the ACL in a previous fishery? As Ray is saying, we want to be cautious of our ACT ending up our ACL, and so I'm wondering about the history of other fisheries that this has possibly went into management about in the fishery management plan, whereas -- That's a very good point. We wouldn't want to have our ACT develop into our ACL and then have an accountability measure that our ACT is our ACL in the future, but rather just have the stock of fish and our target levels with a soft target, as John said, developed. Is there any fishery that that has developed in that manner?

MR. HADLEY: Not that I am aware of in the South Atlantic. I do know other councils -- An ACT is essentially a tool. In this case, you can use it as a soft target. One of the things the council was looking at doing was using it in defining OY. I believe some other councils use it to trigger an accountability measure, but not necessarily a closure or anything like that, but it could be used as a step-down.

Say if the ACT -- If the recreational sector hits the ACT, okay, we trigger a reduced vessel limit to forty fish instead of sixty, and so it can be used in several different manners. With that said, that takes a specific -- That takes an action to do that. It doesn't just happen, but, to get back to your point, I am not aware of any in the South Atlantic, but it can be used for several different items, but you have to make that connection. You have to make a specific action to do so. In this case, without -- It's not necessarily being -- It could, yes, if that action were taken, but it's not being considered in this amendment. In this case, it would just essentially be a soft target.

MR. ROSHER: I wanted to mention -- I touched on it a minute ago, but small increments of change are something that don't scare me. Large increments of change do. For instance, when the commercial sector was granted a few extra percent, when it went, I think, from like seven-point-something to 10 percent, and so now we're talking about something that benefited the commercial sector in a small way, and it opened the door for some more harvest. That's a good example of a small incremental change.

Protections in place, I believe are also very important, and so I won't make an action, but, if somebody wants to -- One just off-the-top-of-my-head thought would be, if you mirrored the same protection for the recreational sector that we have in the commercial, it makes it real easy to remember a 75 percent rule, but it would require an action, or a proposal by somebody, and then a vote.

I am not saying that that's what should happen, but just give that some consideration, so that it also, again, and I've said it several times, keeps people fishing. That's something that -- Will we discuss an action down in the future that this would be more appropriate, or would now be the most appropriate time to talk about mirroring the same protections of access and then let -- The reason I asked Anna about how long it's been in place is I believe, in the world of fisheries, there have been a lot of rules that have been implemented and not enough time given to see the outcome of those rules. It does take years, at least a couple, and I am a fan of let the rules that have been implemented on the 75 percent rule on the commercial sector -- Let's see that works.

If we have to massage those numbers for the longline fishery, to a greater number down the road, let's see, but we want to keep people fishing. I think that's the goal of everyone in this room, but small changes are what makes sense to me, but, again, I will open the floor for any further discussion.

MR. REYNOLDS: That makes a lot of sense, Ray, and so, if we found ourselves at possibly an 80 percent ACT for the recreational sector, possibly that would be something that, in the future, that would cause a trigger for the step-down that you're talking about with the vessel limit.

MR. ROSHER: Or you could match exactly what they have for the commercial, which is 75 percent, and go down to a reduction, and it's just easy for everybody to remember, if you want to propose that, but you can do any number. The floor is open. You guys can make any proposal, but it's not my place to make that proposal. We can take a show of hands if you want to vote on any alternatives or if someone wants to make a proposal that we mirror what's been put in place for commercial. The floor is open, and you guys tell me what you're thinking.

MR. REYNOLDS: **I will motion to -- I would say 80 percent ACT in the recreational sector and room for a possible future accountability measure for a step-down before we reach a recreational ACL where an accountability measure would have to be put into place.**

MR. ROSHER: Are you proposing that, when we reach 80 percent of our ACL, that there would be a reduction in the daily limit, the bag limit?

MR. REYNOLDS: **Vessel limit.**

MR. ROSHER: Vessel limit, okay. If you can, just be precise on what you would like to see the vessel limit go to, and you would have to word it as vessel limit or bag limit. The reason for the bag limit being reduced is because then it mathematically works out, no matter how many people you have on the boat. If it were to drop to five or six or four per person, then the number is the number, but, if it's a vessel limit, you would have to then state or X percent of the bag limit, whichever is less. In other words, you've got to take that into consideration.

MR. NETTLES: I think now we're more trying to set an ACT than to set limits as far as what would happen if we're meeting that, and am I correct?

MR. HADLEY: Yes, you are correct, but, if I could add, we have a motion. Jonathon, if you could read that, and, if that captures what you are intending to do, and possibly get a second. Then that would open it up for discussion, if there's a second there. Is there anything you would like me to add? If you have a suggested vessel limit reduction, we could put that in there as well.

MR. REYNOLDS: That is a reflection of the motion that I made. **I would recommend staying to ten per person and forty max vessel limit.** The reasoning being, if there is only two persons onboard your vessel, you can still catch twenty fish instead of only ten fish, but, if you have six people, you can still only catch forty fish.

MR. HADLEY: Does that accurately capture it?

MR. REYNOLDS: Yes.

MR. ROSHER: The way it's worded now, I think that's also two recommendations. First of all, it's a recommendation to reduce the OY to 80 percent, and is that the way it's worded?

MR. HADLEY: It's to reduce the ACT.

MR. ROSHER: Okay, and so we're not talking about the OY in this at all. Okay. I see that. Would we like to vote on this? We need a second, I'm sorry. Is there anybody who would like to second this? Okay. I will read the motion as it stands now. **It's that there would be a consideration of a recreational ACT of 80 percent of ACL. Also, add a future AM that would trigger a recreational reduction if the recreational ACT is met.** Suggest ten per person with a maximum of forty per vessel. Is that accurate, Jon?

MR. REYNOLDS: **Looking at the numbers, I think maybe even 70 percent for ACT would be more accurate.** Yes, then the entire motion would be accurate.

MR. HADLEY: Did we have a second on that? All right. We have the motion as it stands, and the change would be consider a recreational ACT of 70 percent of the ACL, with the ACL being the recreational ACL. Do we have a second for that?

MR. CONTI: I will second it.

MR. ROSHER: All right. Ty has seconded it, and if we could have a show of hands. **Can we have a show of hands of support for this motion, nine in support; any opposed, one. Tim Scalise is opposed.**

MR. HADLEY: Thank you. With that, we will move on to Action 3, and this is a similar action, but it would be done for the commercial sector. At this point, there is no commercial ACT. There hasn't been one established for dolphin, and so the council is considering establishing one. There are three different alternatives that the council is currently considering.

The alternatives are the commercial ACT equals 80 percent of the commercial ACL or the commercial ACT equals 90 percent of the commercial ACL. Then the final one, Alternative 4, being the commercial ACT equals the commercial ACL. Here again, it's looking at establishing an ACT for the commercial sector and at what level would that ACT be. There is two discussion items for the AP. One, does the AP support establishing a commercial dolphin ACT? Two, if so, should it be below the ACL?

MR. HAMMOND: Just an item for thought, and that is, if the commercial sector is allowed to carry over unused quota, would not the recreational sector have that same legal right as well?

MR. HADLEY: We will get into that. The next action addresses that question directly. There is two different alternatives, and one specifically looks at the recreational sector and the other looks specifically at the commercial sector.

MR. BURROWS: **I want to go ahead and make a motion to adopt Alternative 1, no action, for no ACT for the commercial sector, or the ACT would equal the ACL.** At 10 percent, I don't see how changing that number or allowing it to be further cut into is in any way beneficial for this fishery. My personal feeling is the commercial gets such a small slice of the pie. I know I am technically in charter, but I interact with all three sectors, and that closure in 2015 hurt our restaurant business, and so I see the long-term effects of that, and so I don't recommend any change.

MR. ROSHER: Do we have a second for that motion?

MR. NETTLES: I will second it.

MR. ROSHER: Tim Nettles is going to second it, and if we could have a show of hands in support. I will read it first. I am going to get a pay cut. **The motion is to adopt Alternative 1 in Action 3, and if we could have a show of hands.**

AP MEMBER: I have a question. I kind of missed it. Alternative 1 was no action?

MR. ROSHER: **A show of hands, ten; any opposed, I think we show no opposed.** Okay. We will move on to the next action, and I will leave it to John.

MR. HADLEY: All right. With that, we will get into Action 4. This was the meat, if you will, of the amendment. This is one of the big ones, of the big actions, and this would allow adaptive management of sector ACLs for dolphin. This is essentially looking at quota sharing options as well as just, as it says, adaptive management of the sector ACLs. It's pretty clear how it stands right now.

Alternative 1 would be no action. Right now, the current allocation for the recreational sector for dolphin is 90 percent of the total ACL. The current allocation for the commercial sector for dolphin is 10 percent of the total ACL. This is sort of a retrospective analysis of how that ACL plays out compared to landings, observed landings, in the dolphin fishery since 2005.

Just to be clear, the ACLs have not been in place since 2005, but this is looking back at how they compared to the current ACL. It's approximately 1.5 million pounds on the commercial side and 13.8 million pounds on the recreational side. Again, keep in mind, as was mentioned earlier, that these were updated in -- The allocations changed in 2016. You can see, in 2014 and 2015, you had a fairly large bump in the commercial landings. They're running up against the ACLs at the time. However, with the increases in the commercial ACL, they were not reaching the new ACL levels.

Moving over to the recreational sector, the recreational sector has been underharvesting its allocation of the ACL. On average, they've been catching approximately half of its allocation. Looking at how the total fishery has played out, looking, there again, at approximately half of the total ACL ends up being caught. That's largely a function of the recreational sector does have a large piece of that pie, and so, as the recreational sector goes, so does the majority of the fishery, as far as landings.

I will take a step back and, before we get into the alternatives, just looking at -- Given that there is, as I mentioned, there is some uncertainty in the recreational data, there is not -- We couldn't give you a great analysis of how this would occur, but, as far as selecting a preferred, it may be difficult, but, from a conceptual standpoint, this is starting to think outside of the box of these more rigid options and whether or not to consider these different options and how they would be applicable to the dolphin fishery. That is some of the input, as far as how the AP could certainly provide guidance to the council on some of these, especially from the mechanics of some of these different alternatives.

With that said, I will get into the Alternative 2. This would set aside a portion of the total ACL that can be used by either sector as a common pool allocation, and I have a table here that kind of explains it in a little bit more detail, but I will go over the different sub-alternatives. In this case, a certain percentage of the total ACL, and so the whole pie, would be pulled aside as a common pool allocation, and this could be used by either sector.

The remaining total ACL is then split between the two sectors, according to the current allocation, and so that would be 10 percent to the commercial sector and 90 percent to the recreational sector, the difference being the size of the common pool allocation between the different sub-alternatives, and these range from 1 percent of the total ACL all the way up to 10 percent of the total ACL.

When we look at the table here, it helps better explain how this would work, as far as these would be the common pool allocations, and so these would be the -- This would be the ACL that could be used by either sector, as needed. That's what would be remaining and how it would be allocated between the two sectors. Then here are the upper limits for each sector ACL with the common pool added. You can see, in each instance, it tends to be above what is currently available.

Moving on to Alternative 3, if the commercial ACL is not met in a given fishing year, the unused ACL may be carried forward to the next fishing year only. The carried-forward balance shall not exceed a given percentage, and these are the sub-alternatives, of the commercial sector ACL, and so this is your rollover provision.

This would be taking uncaught -- If a sector is underharvesting its ACL, it could potentially roll a portion of that forward for the following year, and so the different subalternatives here would be 5 percent of the commercial sector ACL, 10 percent of the commercial sector ACL, and 20 percent of the commercial sector ACL. Looking at what these values would be, the commercial sector could potentially carry forward approximately 76,700, 153,000 pounds, or approximately 307,000 pounds. Then, over on the far right, is the potential upper limits for the commercial sector ACL plus the carryover, should that be needed and should that occur.

For the recreational sector, this is a similar provision. Alternative 4 is the same thing, applying it to the recreational sector. There again, the recreational sector could carry forward unused ACL, if needed, in the next fishing year only. The percent of the sector ACL that could be carried forward is lower in this case, just due to how large the recreational ACL is. It would not exceed between 1 to 5 percent, depending on the sub-alternative chosen. Here again, it's a similar table of what those values would be, ranging from 138,000 all the way up to approximately 691,000 pounds of ACL that could potentially be rolled over for one year.

Finally, we have Alternative 5. This is a conditional transfer, and I will read it. It would conditionally transfer, for the next fishing year, a certain percentage of the ACL from a sector that is not landing its ACL to the other sector that is landing at least 90 percent of its ACL. In this case, it's sort of a demonstrated need for one sector and then a demonstration that the other sector is in fact underharvesting.

If the landings of the donating sector are below the minimum landings threshold, and so that's the threshold for underharvest, if you will, the highest landings from the donating sector, based on

available finalized data from the five years prior, will be used as criteria to determine if landings are below the minimum landings threshold for a conditional transfer to occur.

If we're looking at this, a conditional transfer would be between 1 and 10 percent from one sector's ACL that could be transferred to the other sector's ACL. Then, looking at the minimum threshold, and so 5e through 5g, and these range between 50 and 75 percent of the unadjusted ACL for that sector, and so, essentially, this is how much the sector would have to be underharvesting, five years in a row, and, if that occurred, then the conditional transfer could take place. If that was exceeded in one year, then you would restart the clock, so to speak.

Those are the five alternatives that are being considered. From a conceptual standpoint, a couple of the questions for the AP to discuss, in addition to just general input on the action, is, from a conceptual standpoint, does the AP support allowing adaptive management of sector ACLs or quota sharing between the recreational and commercial sectors and are there any actions that you do not think would work for the dolphin fishery, considering the pulse nature of landings? With that, I will turn it over.

MR. ROSHER: This is a big one.

MR. HADLEY: It is, and I will mention that, if you need me to go back over anything -- There is a lot to digest here, and so I'm happy to run back over any of the different options.

MR. ROSHER: Okay. I will open the floor for comments, but, just to -- Correct me if I'm wrong, but Alternative 1 is no action. Alternative 2 is a common pool allocation. Then Alternative 3 is also rolling over. Anyway, go ahead, Jon.

MR. REYNOLDS: I would strongly support no action on this. I believe that we have adjusted ACLs, and I don't believe that any more room for transfer either way is necessary, really, and so I would support no action on this.

MR. ROSHER: Any other comments?

MR. BURROWS: The one that makes the most sense to me is the carryover, which would allow for a bad year, for whatever factor, be it poor fishing or terrible weather or high fuel prices. I think that would be the most long-term significant option to the commercial industry, is just having a safeguard in place.

MR. ROSHER: Are there further comments?

MR. SCALISE: Just in the back of my head, does a good -- It sort of seems like a good commercial harvest translates into a poor recreational side, and what came first, the chicken or the egg? I mean, it's not like the participation from the recreational side, but it's a lack of fish, and what is causing that? Is it because there is more being caught, a higher percentage, on the recreational side? I don't know.

MR. NETTLES: I would agree with John on the Alternative 1. We have seen this allocation be changed and changed, and even though the council -- I kind of liked what Anna said before, about an effort and trying to have the availability of the fish, but we're still counting pounds, and the

ACL and the ACT and OY and everything else is based on almost a fictional number. We don't really know what the status of this fishery is.

There is no way to track that, as far as a body of fish, because it's such a highly-migratory fish, but what we do know is the percentage that recreational fishermen have historically caught and the percentage that the commercial fishermen have historically caught. Now, I don't want to put anybody out of business, but the recreational fishery, as I've said before, in south Florida is highly dependent upon that dolphin fishery coming through. It used to be that it would be from April until June or July or August that we had dolphin coming through, and it seems to now only be two months, or maybe two-and-a-half months, and then it tapers off. I could not support, personally, changing that allocation, just because of the importance of that fishery to us down there.

MR. ROSHER: Okay. Further comments?

MR. HOPKINS: I understand why you all are worried, but I'm like Ray. I like keeping everybody fishing, and this isn't changing the percentage of the quota, and we've got the 75 percent trigger now, and so what this is -- If they get, if I understand it correctly, if they get adding up all the numbers, at the end of year, it all of a sudden -- We have gone over by a few thousand pounds or whatever it is, or, if they get hard numbers and they're still -- Our commercial sector drops off dramatically after June, really, June and July, and, anyway, that's just -- What happened last time was because the paper didn't get pushed across the desk fast enough, the way I understand it, but you would make a trip and you would catch two or three dolphin, or eight or ten for the trip, and you have just got to throw them back. Dead or alive, you've got to throw them back, and I assume that's what this is designed to do.

I wouldn't push for a big percentage of -- I forget what the options were here, but some, just to be able to keep it going. I know you all's fear is that, as it develops or whatever, that maybe every year they will be wanting more and more, but we're not looking for -- Me personally, I'm not looking for a grab on the quota. I think what you all did last time was very equitable.

Like I said, everything is very new in this too. As far as once you all get your numbers coming in more accurately, there's no telling. All the fisheries I've dealt with before have always been critical and overfishing and on and on, but this is kind of fun here. There is nothing super pressing, but, all that said, I would support being able to give NMFS the flexibility of adjusting in-season quotas, if necessary, which I guess that was Option 2, and I would probably say for the two-and-a-half percent. Thank you.

MR. ROSHER: Okay. Further thoughts?

MR. REYNOLDS: I understand where Glen is coming from there. I definitely see that, especially with wasted fish. I completely understand that. I think where the fear from a lot of recreational guys and charter boat guys is that, historically, dolphin weren't targeted at the level that they're being targeted now commercially, and so, like from 2013 to 2014, we're talking about, over a steady amount of years, having commercial harvest be at a certain level and to jump up almost 700,000 pounds in a year, and that was a scary thing for us to see, and then that happened another year.

The ACL was adjusted already, and so it's already been heightened, and so I think that's where the fear is, definitely, that it will continue to -- Any transfer of allocation will continue in such an important recreational fishery for charter boats and for recreational guys, and I completely understand with waste of fish, though. I understand that notion, and the percentage would have to be extremely small, I think, for anything like that to even be considered, from our perspective. Thank you.

MR. HAMMOND: One thing to keep in mind, and correct me if I'm wrong, and you would know, is that the primary commercial fishery directed at dolphinfish occurs from about Jacksonville up to North Carolina. It actually would not impact the Florida fishery until the next year, and one thing to keep in mind is the estimated total annual mortality rate for dolphinfish has been placed as high as 99.7 percent. That is 99.7 percent of all the fry that hatch out in a given year will never see twelve months of age.

You are looking at largely an annual fishery, and so, in the case that when these fish are harvested, the impact would not be seen until the following year, but the spawning has already taken place all the way up the coast to that point, and spawning will take place around, and so it's real hard there, but the immediate removal of the fish would not be a problem for the south Florida fishery that particular year.

It would be more of an issue to those waters to the north of where the fishery is executed, and you're basically looking at an annual crop, and I have some problem with carryover of quotas on something that might not be there the next year. You don't know, because it is an annual crop. Anyhow, that's a little more to mull over and think about.

MR. ROSHER: One question. Is that carryover, if it were executed, would that affect the recreational ACL at all? In other words, is that just if -- Let's just use, for conversation's sake, there is 200,000 pounds not caught in one year commercially, and they get the rollover, and is it just like an AT&T rollover, where you get to use those minutes for one year, and, if you don't use them, you lose them? Is that the way it works and it will not affect the ACL for the recreational and it does not come out of the recreational ACL?

MR. HADLEY: That's correct. Essentially, the way it would work, and we'll get into this, is there is another action to -- Essentially, the next two actions accommodate what's in this, and one of those is revising the ABC control rule, and so with the idea being that you could have a temporary -- If you were underharvesting one year, you could have a temporary, one-year expansion in the ABC that would allow the commercial sector to harvest those additional pounds for that one year and not necessarily impact the recreational sector, and vice versa for the Alternative 4. That does the same thing for the recreational sector, and, as I said, we'll get into that a little bit. In the interest of time, I kind of wanted to go through it, and the SSC is going to be discussing that next week.

MR. ROSHER: Any other thoughts, since we've opened those points up? Okay.

MR. SCALISE: One question that I have is -- Somebody touched on it earlier, but, as far as we're looking at pounds and numbers of fish, and is there any data, as far as the average fish for commercial harvest and the average weight of a fish for recreational? Does that play into it? Then

we get into numbers with the recreational side, and, in the whole grand scheme of things, it's pounds. Do you have anything as far as that?

MR. HADLEY: That is available. MRIP does estimate the average pounds, or the average size of the fish, and I don't have that number for you, but that would be available. That is essentially the MRIP Program -- The way they calculate it, it's first calculated in numbers of fish. Then it's converted to pounds, based on the conversion ratio, which is whatever the average catch would be on a recreational trip.

MR. ROSHER: I am actually part of a pilot program where there is electronic reporting for for-hire vessels, and so it looks like the trend is going to be, and it makes a lot of sense in this day and age, electronic reporting, and that's one of the reasons that I brought up that point a few minutes ago about starting to adjust ACTs and OY, because the day may come, sooner than we think, where suddenly we're all, even recreationally, reporting through an electronic means, on our smartphones or who knows, and it could quickly go in that direction.

I already see the writing on the wall, not only in the South Atlantic for-hire, and it's coming, but what happens when it becomes recreational, and that's why some of these decisions today are so important, because we may be living with the results of those decisions. It's not that we can't campaign to change it, two years from now or three years from now, but I do believe that, and I think you guys will agree, Glen and Wendell, that the commercial fishery is usually a much higher average. You're catching them on heavy gear. When they come up to the Carolinas, they are a ten to thirty-pound average, would you say, on the longline fish?

MR. HOPKINS: Yes, a fourteen-pound average is about what we catch.

MR. ROSHER: A fourteen-pound average. Then, on the recreational side, if I had to guess on my charter boats, I would say they're a five or six-pound average, because the customers just want fish for dinner, and you're going to keep the first legal fish you catch, et cetera, and so that -- Even if you catch bigger fish throughout the day, all of that averages out, I would say, at five to seven pounds, and so, to answer your question, Tim, I would have to say that recreational might be half.

The tough part of that is that means the recreational are killing maybe more fish to get their pounds, and so that's an argument that can be used against you, in terms of recreational allocation, but, anyway, the point of the matter is we have got standards set, and I did remember what I was going to say.

To your point, and I totally agree. I am a very big opponent of fish sinking, whether it's red snapper or dolphin or anything. One thought that could factor in, and John could tell us if this should be addressed now or later, but there is a 75 percent, 4,000-pound rule. You could always consider a 98 percent, 500-pound rule, in addition to what is existing as a proposed action, to just keep -- If it's a very incidental amount of fish, and I mean I'm not going to tell you the numbers. That's something that you could produce, but there is that option of proposing any action like that just to keep retention, because, once you go to that 4,000 pounds a day, and, Wendell, I think you can attest to this, some of those boats aren't going to fish, some of the larger boats.

You're going to scale down to a more mom-and-pop operation, and I think that was the purpose of that action, and you could scale it down one more notch as you approach 100 percent, and so just think about that opportunity. I am a fan of that, again, keeping people -- Don't waste things.

MR. HADLEY: I will add to that. We have a good chunk of stuff to get through, to get to the next item, but one of the things that we do want to get to is a list of kind of management recommendations, and I would encourage you to bring that, if that's what the AP wants to pursue, to be sure to bring that back up.

MR. ROSHER: Okay. If anybody wants to either vote on these alternatives or propose a different action, now would be a good time, and, like John said, for the sake of time. We've got a lot more to go through. Would anybody like to pick an alternative and talk about getting a vote on that? We can do that on more than one alternative. We can do it on all of them, but, if there's a favorite, and that's your favorite, you could create a vote on that. Then, if someone else has a different favorite, we can vote on that. All we're really doing is sending information to the council to help their job become easier. Does anybody have an action that they would like to either create or vote on an alternative? There is no wrong answer, by the way.

MR. HOPKINS: **I was just going to say, as far as for the record, I vote for Alternative 2, whichever one it was that would be a 5 percent transfer.** I am wholly in favor of NMFS having flexibility, and I'm hoping that they will have the good sense to make it done justly and properly when transfers are necessary. Flexibility is the key to our business, and it would be nice for them to have the tools to be flexible, if it should come to that.

MR. ROSHER: Yes, and just keep this in mind. This is Alternative 3, and what he is proposing is Sub-Alternative 3a, which is the carried-forward balance shall not exceed 5 percent of the total commercial sector. If I understand it correctly, that is only going to apply if the previous year did not meet that amount of fish, and so you had a rollover, so to speak.

MR. HOPKINS: I must not have been clear. I wasn't looking for the carryover. I was looking for the transfer. I guess it was Alternative 2 and the percentage, I was just guessing at the -- It was the two-and-a-half percent, and so it would be Sub-Alternative 2b is my recommendation.

MR. ROSHER: Okay. I was reading the wrong page there. Sorry about that. I was looking at Alternative 3.

MR. HOPKINS: I understand there will be a bunch of different votes on this one, but, for the record, that's what Glen Hopkins is wanting.

MR. ROSHER: Okay. Why don't we vote on that, and then, if someone else wants to bring up a different proposal, let's go that route. Glen is proposing Sub-Alternative 2b for Alternative 2, which is set aside a portion of the total ACL that can be used by either sector as a common pool allocation. That allows for 2.5 percent of the total ACL to become a common pool allocation. The remaining total ACL is split between the recreational sector and the commercial sector according to the current allocation. Can we have a vote on that? The motion is to support Sub-Alternative 2b of Action 4. Can we have a vote on that? We need a second. Okay.

MR. HADLEY: You can make a motion or you could also pass along recommendations. It doesn't necessarily need to be in the form of a motion, and so it is up to the advisory panel. I will mention that a motion makes things much more specific and very clear, and the advantage of a motion is that it shows consensus of the AP. A list of recommendations kind of shows the varying opinions across the table, and so that's kind of the difference there.

MR. ROSHER: I think it should be a vote at this point, just so that we can, like John said, assess the opinion of the panel. **All in favor of this motion to support Sub-Alternative 2b of Action 4, we have six in favor; those opposed, four. It's six and four.**

One thing I would like to talk about is am I correct that Alternative 3 and 4 are carryovers that don't affect the other pool? Is that correct?

MR. HADLEY: That is correct, and so Alternative 3 being the commercial carryover and Alternative 4 being the recreational carryover.

MR. ROSHER: My position is that 3 and 4 represent kind of an equitable way to allow some cushion if you did not harvest your fish the year before, and my feeling is that what is good for the goose is good for the gander. If you did it for Alternative 3, if you did it for commercial, I feel like you should do it also for recreational, because, like we were talking about a minute ago, we don't know what is coming a few years down the road, and allowing that same flexibility, which does not affect the other category of fishing, is a positive, meaning you never know if the recreational -- With new accounting and new counting measures -- MRIP right now, we really don't know how accurate it is. If there is new means of counting and, all of a sudden, and John has mentioned it a couple of times. They're thinking that the numbers are going to go higher, and we could get pushed against the ceiling.

We would really appreciate, on the recreational side, which includes for-hire, being able to have some carryover, and so that's just my opinion, and, if someone wants to promote a vote on that, but my only opinion is that it should be for both 3 and 4, and you would have to define what percentage of rollover would be there as a cushion. Remember that amount would have to be uncaught the year before, before that can be added to the following year, and so, if somebody would like to talk about that, the floor is open.

MR. BURROWS: Could we adopt the same numbers for both 3 and 4 and vote on them together, as a package deal?

MR. ROSHER: Are you talking about the total pounds, meaning like 150,000 pounds or --

MR. BURROWS: I am just looking at the percentages.

MR. ROSHER: The problem with the percentages is the percentage of their ACL, which 1 percent of the recreational is a lot, versus 2 percent of commercial. That's why I mentioned the hard number, but let's just use, for conversation's sake, 300,000 pounds. It doesn't mean as much to the recreational sector as it does to the commercial.

MR. BURROWS: That makes sense.

MR. ROSHER: So just give that some consideration. In my opinion, the smaller numbers, the Sub-Alternative 3a and 4a, if you look at the pounds on 3a, it's 76,000 pounds, which bumps it up to not quite 100,000, obviously, and 138,000 pounds to the recreational, but, again, that's open for discussion. It's really up to you guys to make that decision, but I just wanted to kind of put that in front of you, that that does not affect the other category of fishermen, and so, if one group is not harvesting their amount, it does give them a little rollover cushion, and so it's your decision, if someone wants to create a vote on that.

MR. REYNOLDS: I would just like to state that I am completely against transference of allocation. I don't think throwing around one sector's allocation to the other sector is ever a good idea. This seems reasonable, as long as this is carried over in only the next fishing year, and I understand what Don was saying also about the fish reaching the next sector, but transference of allocation I don't believe is a good solution.

MR. ROSHER: I think 3 and 4 are talking about within your group. If you don't use it, you have one year to benefit from it, and it goes back to my earlier comments about keeping people fishing, and so I think that kind of accomplishes that task. If there's an extraordinarily good year, it allows for extra harvest in either group, but, again, you guys make your proposals. Would anybody like to create a vote on this or a motion? It doesn't sound like anybody wants to make that motion. Do you?

MR. BURROWS: **I would make a motion to adopt Sub-Alternative 3a, 5 percent of the total commercial sector ACL carried over.**

MR. ROSHER: Do we have a second? That 3a is affecting the commercial sector. 4a would affect the recreational sector, again giving them a cushion for the following year, and so would somebody like to second that motion?

MR. HOPKINS: I will second it.

MR. ROSHER: Okay. Can we generate a vote on that? **All in favor of 3a, which is a carried-forward balance shall not exceed 5 percent of the total commercial sector ACL, which is 76,724, all in favor, eight in favor; any opposed, two opposed.**

Any other vote on 4a or whatever anybody else wants to do? Is it wrong for me to make a motion? Okay. **I am going to make a motion that we consequently adopt 4a as an alternative, because that will provide the same benefit of a rollover, if we ever get up against the limit.**

MR. BURROWS: Second.

MR. ROSHER: Okay. Chris will second it. **Let's have a show of hands, nine for the motion to support Sub-Alternative 4a in Action 4, nine in favor; opposed, one opposed.**

All right. Now we're moving on to lunch. That is a proposed action, and we will recess.

(Whereupon, a recess was taken.)

MR. HADLEY: We will continue working through. I know folks are still working on their lunch a little bit, but we have a pretty good bit to get through here. Just as a reminder, the meeting is scheduled to end at 2:30. We can go a little bit after, but we are absolutely -- We absolutely need to be out of here, as in packed up and gone, by 3:00, and so we have a little bit of wiggle room there, but not very much.

To pick up where we left off, we have Action 5, which I will just kind of give a brief summary. This is to revise the accountability measures for dolphin. I won't go into detail here, the reason being that this is essentially accommodating what you just discussed, and so, if you were to make those different changes in Action 4, you would have to change the accountability measure to accommodate that change.

Alternative 2 is just adding the common pool ACL, if that were to be the preferred alternative, and then Alternative 3 would allow for the rollover of uncaught sector ACLs, and so that's, as you remember, Alternative 4 and Alternative 5 from the previous action. That would just essentially allow that to occur.

MR. ROSHER: That's what we just basically recommended.

MR. HADLEY: Yes, that would complement what was just suggested. Moving on to Action 6, here again, this is a -- There is a lot to this, but, there again, it's simply accommodating that rollover, and so you would have, as I mentioned, that one-year expansion, that temporary expansion of the ABC, to accommodate uncaught ACL, and this would occur for dolphin and wahoo. The ABC control rule -- Here is a table that summarizes the control rule and what would need to be changed.

Essentially, how this is set up, there is two different alternatives. The OFL for dolphin is currently unknown, and so that's Alternative 3, and this would allow the upward revision of the ABC, so both sectors could land their respective sector ACLs, and, as I said, that's under the OFL being unknown, which is the current situation.

The reason that Alternative 2 was added was just in case the OFL, for whatever reason, if we were able to do a stock assessment and there was new data, just to kind of cover your bases as far as what would occur if the OFL is known, and you can see what the different revised ABCs would be in relation to the OFL. There again, it doesn't exist for dolphin right now, and I am not going to get into too much detail on this. The SSC will be discussing it.

I would imagine, if this does move forward, you will probably see it again, and so it's in a fairly early stage at this point. In general, one of the discussion pieces is going to be whether or not to look at this just for dolphin or possibly tie in other species. The ABC control rule is being examined for golden tilefish, for example, and whether or not to just kind of separate this out and look at it in a comprehensive amendment strictly looking at the ABC control rule. There is not necessarily any action being requested, but just as an update. Again, that is addressing and accommodating what we had discussed in Action 4.

Moving on, this is Action 7. This would allow properly permitted vessels with gear onboard that are not authorized for use in the dolphin and wahoo fishery to possess dolphin or wahoo. As it stands now, under Alternative 1, no action, the following are the only authorized gear types in the

fisheries for dolphin and wahoo in the Atlantic EEZ: automatic reel, bandit gear, handline, pelagic longline, rod and reel, and spearfishing gear (including powerheads). A person aboard a vessel in the Atlantic EEZ that has onboard gear types other than the authorized gear types may not possess a dolphin or wahoo. Basically, if you have a gear onboard that is not on that list, you are not allowed to possess dolphin or wahoo, whether or not it is being actively used to land the animal or not.

Alternative 2 would specify -- You have the list of gears here again, but there is essentially an exception being added, and this is to accommodate the American lobster fishery, which is where this originally was requested from. As a little bit of background information, these boats are typically trolling on the way out and trolling on the way in. There might be a few dolphin out there, but they are not necessarily using the trap gear, but, since it's onboard the vessel, you are not supposed to have dolphin or wahoo onboard.

This would specifically address that request, with the addition of a vessel in the Atlantic EEZ that possesses both an Atlantic Dolphin/Wahoo Commercial Permit and valid federal commercial American lobster permit endorsed for trap fishing only is authorized to target dolphin or wahoo with a rod-and-reel while fishing for lobsters. In this case, you would have the vessel would be dually-permitted, properly permitted, to participate in both fisheries. If so, then the possession of dolphin or wahoo would be allowed, if it was caught with rod-and-reel.

The next two are looking at more of a generic approach to it, and I will get into this a little bit more, but I will go over the alternatives first. Allow the possession of dolphin or wahoo on properly-permitted vessels with gear types onboard that are not authorized in the dolphin wahoo fishery. The amount of dolphin or wahoo allowed onboard cannot exceed a certain percentage of the total commercially-harvested species onboard by weight. In this case, you're looking at almost a bycatch provision. It would allow dolphin or wahoo to be onboard if the vessel is properly permitted, but it would have to be a certain percentage of whatever the target species would be.

Alternative 4 would allow the possession of dolphin or wahoo on properly-permitted vessels with gear types onboard that are not authorized in the dolphin wahoo fishery. The amount of dolphin or wahoo allowed onboard cannot exceed the incidental limit. This would be a certain number of fish that could be onboard for either dolphin or wahoo when these prohibited gears are also used onboard the vessel.

As questions for the AP, for Alternative 3, does the AP have guidance on what would be an adequate bycatch allowance that would be based on a percentage of the total commercially-harvested species onboard, by weight or number? You don't necessarily have to provide this, but these are some discussion questions related to the alternative.

Then Alternative 4 is what do you think would be -- What do you think would be an acceptable incidental limit, commercial trip limit, for vessels with prohibited gears onboard that is landing dolphin or wahoo?

Finally, the third discussion question is some South Atlantic Council members have expressed trying to comprehensively accommodate commercial trips that have any trap or pot-type gears onboard, for example sea bass pots or golden crab traps or octopus pots. These are not allowable gears in the fishery, and so, rather than -- We had this request from the lobster fishermen in New

England to allow the gear onboard for lobster pots, but there are several other gears that might occur in the South Atlantic where this would also be the case, and so this is a little bit, I guess, going beyond the request. In this case, are there any other commercial trap or pot-type fisheries that you can think of that may occur in areas where dolphin are found at certain times of the year?

MR. ROSHER: I would say golden crab is one, although they are usually not buoyed, but they could be out there in the act of pulling their traps. It seems like this is similar to that law that talked about bringing fish back from the Bahamas. It's a lot of discussion about something that's really pretty simple.

They're pulling traps, and traps are not technically allowed to be -- It's not acceptable gear during the act of dolphin fishing or wahoo fishing, and so just, again, starting the conversation, but the Alternative 2 basically made the most sense to me, that it just basically says -- It allows an expansion of allowable gear. Am I correct? I would open the floor up for conversation.

MR. HADLEY: Just to clarify, Alternative 2 is basically specifically addressing the American lobster fishermen's request. If they have a valid dolphin wahoo commercial permit and a valid federal commercial American lobster permit, then they could participate in the fishery.

MR. ROSHER: The part that makes it seem kind of harmless, to me, is they're authorized to target dolphin wahoo with a rod-and-reel, and so we're not talking about a huge amount of fish, and more power to them. Have a nice dinner or sell a few fish or whatever, and so that's just -- I just figured that we would move through this, but do we want to go back to Action 6 and talk about that at all? We kind of went over Action 6, but we didn't vote on anything or offer any opinion.

MR. HADLEY: Unless the group would like to offer an opinion, and it's up to you. At this point, it's kind of very much in the development stage. I just wanted to mention that it is part of the amendment, but, if it does move forward, I would imagine that you will see it again, probably in a more developed state.

MR. ROSHER: Okay.

MR. REYNOLDS: After speaking with council members about this, I think that these guys are just like trolling while they're going to pull their gear and stuff, and I don't think it's like a directed commercial target of the fish or anything. I think they just -- They will see a set of birds, or maybe they're just trolling incidentally and catch a few fish, is what I understand of this. They just want to be able to keep them, because they're not allowed, because they have their gear onboard. Then someone got a fine or something, just incidentally, because they had their gear onboard.

MR. ROSHER: Yes, somebody got a warning, but, I mean, it's mostly the buoys. I remember the longliners used to catch a handful while they were pulling their gear in south Florida. That was pretty normal, and so I think this is very similar. Would anybody like to propose an action that they think is favorable?

MR. CONKLIN: Really, what we were wanting you guys to discuss is the golden crab fishermen and the black bass pot endorsement holders as well, because they too can run into the same issue as American lobster. I mean, it's not an allowable gear, and we all know that you're not going to catch a dolphin in a trap, but the sea bass endorsement holders may throw their traps on top of the

boat, after they get done trapping, and go offshore and fish and troll or whatever and end up with some dolphin or wahoo.

Then the golden crab is a species that is located pretty far offshore, and so I would imagine that some of those guys would probably put some rigs out and troll in and out, or even between pulling their hauls, and so we wanted to look, from you guys, on how to craft something that would keep this from being an enforcement issue, because it could come up. If someone wanted to be picky, or at the discretion of the officer, they could really make quite an example out of somebody for nothing. Thank you.

MR. ROSHER: Chris, can I ask you, is Alternative 4 the one that would allow various types of effort, different kinds of traps? I think it sounds like the only difference between 3 and 4 is 3 talks about the amount of dolphin or wahoo cannot exceed a certain percentage of the total commercially-harvested species onboard, by weight, and 4 is the amount of dolphin or wahoo onboard cannot exceed the incidental limit. Is that correct?

MR. CONKLIN: I am not quite sure where the incidental limit came from, if staff added that in or if we discussed it at the last council meeting, but I am -- I certainly am not for limiting any commercially-permitted vessel to an incidental take of whatever they can catch if they are properly permitted to, and especially if we're not harvesting the ACL and reaching OY on the dolphin fishery, and so just keep that in mind.

MR. HADLEY: Just to clarify that, I think you shouldn't -- I wouldn't be stuck on these alternatives. There will probably be another one, but I think the two discussion items are we have this request from the lobster fishermen, and do we address that request or, since we have an issue at hand that also applies to other commercial fisheries that do occur in the South Atlantic, and there hasn't really been a request, because no one has gotten in trouble for it, essentially. Do you address that single request or do you try to look at the big picture and accommodate other pot and trap gears?

MR. ROSHER: It seems like the simple solution would be to maybe make -- If somebody wanted to make a proposal that we allow various types of gear or make an exception for trap gear and don't place any limitation on their harvest, as long as they are using rod-and-reel. How much damage is there? It's really just a courtesy to them that allows them to be legal. It's kind of a technicality, but if somebody wants to make that proposal.

MR. HADLEY: If I could just add one more thing. In one of the discussion items, and I should have touched on it earlier, this has kind of changed several times, and one of the precautionary items that the council has been considering is, as far as opening up to any gear, you then have other gears that could ramp up the fishery quite a bit, and that's why they're kind of focusing in on the pot and trap gear, because that is not being used in the fishery, but say your gillnets and other -- That's why they were specifically focusing on the pot and trap gear.

MR. ROSHER: It sounds like just being specific about pot and trap gear and allowing harvest of dolphin and wahoo to be onboard, and, if anybody wants to make that proposal.

MR. REYNOLDS: I just have one more question. These fish are directly counted towards the commercial ACL? Okay.

MR. SCALISE: That was my question. I mean, we have two gentlemen here that represent the commercial fishing industry. How much is this going to affect you? You're the guys that are getting closer and closer to your ACL every year, and are these guys very small incidental? Is this already happening and then no one realized that they were not supposed to be doing it or what is the situation on that?

MR. HOPKINS: As far as I know, it wouldn't have a major impact, and I don't know if any of you all have ever dealt with enforcement and how nit-picky they can be on certain issues, which they don't even understand. They just call in and try to find out from -- You can be held up for an hour or two to relay information, and so I would be totally in favor of letting these guys go for it.

MR. ROSHER: Can you make a motion to that effect?

MR. HOPKINS: **I will make a motion that we allow boats with pot gear onboard to possess dolphin or wahoo, as long as they are legally permitted and caught with a rod-and-reel.**

MR. ROSHER: Does anybody want to second that? Jon Reynolds is seconding. I will read it. **It allows vessels with pot gear onboard to possess dolphin or wahoo, as long as they are permitted and fish are caught by rod-and-reel. Can we have a show of hands in support, nine; any opposed, none.**

AP MEMBER: (The comment is not audible on the recording.)

MR. ROSHER: Yes, a permitted vessel or possess required permits, whatever, but that sounds good. Okay.

MR. HADLEY: All right. Moving forward, we have one more action to get through, and this is dealing with the operator card requirement for vessel operators or crew to hold an operator card in the dolphin wahoo fishery. As a little bit of background and where the regulations stand right now, Alternative 1, no action, is an Atlantic charter/headboat for -- This is the name of the permit, and so it's a little wonky wording, but an Atlantic charter/headboat for Dolphin/Wahoo Permit or an Atlantic Dolphin/Wahoo Commercial Permit is not valid unless the vessel operator or a crew member holds a valid operator card issued by either the Southeast Regional Office or by the Greater Atlantic Regional Fisheries Office.

In Alternative 2, it would remove this operator card requirement for the for-hire sector, essentially. Alternative 3 would remove the requirement for the commercial sector. As a little bit of background, there is essentially two fisheries in the South Atlantic, or two FMPs, where this is required. One is in the Dolphin Wahoo FMP and then there are also operator card requirements for the rock shrimp fishery.

The feedback that we received is that this was put in place with the intention of -- Essentially, if someone was running a boat that was owned by -- If the vessel was owned by someone else and say the captain running that boat received a violation, if that permit was pulled, it would go to the vessel owner. Having an operator card, you could sort of direct that ability to fish towards whoever was operating the boat and not necessarily penalize the vessel owner.

With that said, we have also received a lot of feedback that it's not necessarily being used as such. It's not necessarily being checked by law enforcement. Our Law Enforcement AP is actually going to discuss this at their May meeting, but this was -- The intention was there, but the feedback so far is that the operator card is a formality to go through, but it's not necessarily being used for any kind of enforcement or data collection purposes.

The two questions are does the AP support removing the operator card requirement for the for-hire component of the dolphin wahoo fishery and does the AP support removing the operator card requirement for the commercial component of the dolphin wahoo fishery? Those are the three alternatives up above.

MR. ROSHER: Are there any comments on this subject? I think what John has mentioned is that -- I mean, the part that touches me, as the owner of three charter boats, is that the purpose of the card was to penalize the operator and not the vessel owner, and that makes sense. One question I have is could we propose an action that simply states that without the card? In other words, the card is almost like a -- You have to have it, but no one even honors it, in most cases, other than when you go to renew your captain's license.

It's kind of a burdensome thing to have to pay for and go downtown and get, and then, at the end of the day, you show it at an airport or many places and they kind of laugh at you, and so that's my only aversion to the card. Does it make sense to talk about making an operator -- I don't know how that works, legally. That's just a thought. I don't want to turn it into a big, huge thing, but I'm just asking.

MR. HADLEY: That is, unfortunately, a question I'm not sure I can answer. I am not sure. That's a law enforcement question, in how that -- I mean, I can follow up on it, but how that violation gets directed and how you could change how that violation gets directed, I am not sure.

MR. BELL: I am Chair of the Law Enforcement Committee, and, as John mentioned, the AP will be kind of looking at this again at their next meeting, but I know, in discussion with the council, a lot of council members felt that, particularly related to the for-hire sector, that they didn't necessarily see a utility in the card. I am not speaking for the AP, but I think, in just talking with individual folks within the law enforcement community, I think they still see there is potentially some use specifically in the commercial field, but they will be talking about that again next month, I guess it is.

You get kind of some mixed opinions, and the other thing is that the system that we have in place is not consistent in the country, and you've differences between how the GARFO does it and we do it, in terms of they don't charge and we charge, and some things like that. I think I would say right now, from the enforcement perspective, I think they feel that there is some utility in it, but the system needs to be tweaked, but that's what they are going to talk about in May, but I know, from the council perspective, that a number of the council members were kind of clear that they didn't really see any need for it for the for-hire sector, but that's just a little background.

MR. CONKLIN: At the last council meeting, Tony DeLernia from the Mid-Atlantic Council informed us that all the charter boat operators are required to have the operator card, and so I don't know what to -- If we change the requirement for here and not there, and it's the same permit, it

could be a mess, and so I don't know what you guys should do about it. I would let the law enforcement people hash it out.

MR. ROSHER: Would it be possible to -- I mean, it's not impossible to withdraw the requirement for it in the South Atlantic. If you go to the North Atlantic, you've got to have it. I know it does create headaches for people who cross the line, the boundary, and so --

MR. CONKLIN: It's not a requirement to hold the permit, to obtain the permit, but, when you have it, it's a requirement, as of now, and so, yes, you could separate it.

MR. ROSHER: Any other comments?

MR. HOPKINS: **It's just my opinion that it's just another picture ID. We have to have a driver's license on us when we get boarded, and it's just one more thing to have to remember to apply for and get, and I think it's fifty-bucks every three years or something. It's not that big of a deal, but you can forget, and it could cost somebody a trip if they get boarded, if it's expired and you didn't realize it, and I am for getting rid of it, myself.**

MR. REYNOLDS: I would second that motion.

MR. ROSHER: Now we're moving along. We're going to make a motion. I think Glen has made a motion to eliminate the need for the card, at least in the South Atlantic region. Jon Reynolds has seconded it.

MR. HADLEY: This is for the for-hire sector, and so it would be Alternative 2?

MR. ROSHER: I think Glen was recommending both sectors, and is that correct?

MR. HOPKINS: **That is correct.**

MR. HADLEY: Okay. As I have it up there, it would include Alternative 2 and Alternative 3, and so Alternative 2 being the for-hire component and Alternative 3 being the commercial component.

MR. ROSHER: All right. We're going to take a vote on it. **Support for Alternative 2 and Alternative 3 in Action 8, nine in favor of eliminating the need for the card; zero opposed.**

MR. HADLEY: All right. We're running a little short on time here, but this is -- We have this item to get through, which is a fishery performance report. We have three more items. We have this, the potential items for a future Dolphin Wahoo FMP, and electing a Chair for our next meeting. I would like to take at least fifteen or twenty minutes to discuss this, fifteen minutes or so, to discuss this.

The idea here is this is new for the South Atlantic, the fishery performance report. The Mid-Atlantic has been doing it for many years, and the idea is to discuss, with the advisory panel, about a specific species and how the fishery -- What are you seeing in a fishery, with the idea that this feedback will go to the council. It will also go to the SSC next week and the Socioeconomic Panel,

and so there is biological questions and economic questions, kind of market-related questions, as we'll go through.

That's the intention here. It's to provide kind of qualitative data on what's going on in the fishery, from you in your region, and to go with some of the statistics that we have, the qualitative data, and so hopefully to make the whole process more robust, and so, with that, I will -- I went over kind of the general questions, and we'll get into the specifics.

I included some information on overall trends in the fishery, and so we saw this earlier, looking at how the commercial and recreational landings have played out since 2005. You saw this table as well, as far as harvest versus ACLs. There is breakdown of commercial dolphin wahoo permits by state. As you can see, Florida is the dominant state for Atlantic for-hire permits, followed by North Carolina, South Carolina, and Georgia, and there are several in other states. You have them scattered throughout the Mid-Atlantic and into New England and also some Gulf-based permits. This is looking at the homeport state of the vessel.

Looking at the distribution of recreational landings, we kind of discussed this earlier. Here is how it plays out annually from 2011 through 2015. Typically, the majority of fish in the Atlantic are landed recreationally from the Florida east coast, followed by North Carolina, and then what is very interesting is you seem to see an uptick, and, in several years more data, we'll see if this is an ongoing trend, but what I found very interesting is an uptick in the Mid-Atlantic landings, as a percentage of the harvest, and an uptick in the landings in New England.

That is certainly starting to show up in MRIP, and, as we discussed earlier, kind of the more northward movements of those fish. You can kind of see a shift in the harvest, moving from Florida, in recreational anyway, and you see it showing up in the New England and the Mid-Atlantic.

Here is some information on effort, and I won't spend too much time on that. When you look at the commercial sector, the majority of permits, commercial permits, are in Florida, followed by North Carolina, South Carolina, and you have about 150 in the Mid-Atlantic and forty-seven in New England. The distribution of commercial landings, the majority do occur along Florida. You have North Carolina being a very large component of that, and, also, you kind of see a -- It varies from year to year, but, in 2015, South Carolina has a pretty large proportion of that. The Mid-Atlantic and New England have been fairly steady on the commercial side, which is different from what we have seen from the MRIP data on the recreational side.

Just how the fishery typically performs, you have commercial landings on this figure, and they tend to peak in May. The orange line is other commercial gears, and so mostly kind of rod-and-reel troll gear. You see the pelagic longline landings. They kind of spike in May and then taper off to almost zero by July, and so that's much more of a pulse fishery, whereas the other commercial gears tend to kind of -- You see that same spike, but you see a slower decrease in landings. You see more landings in July, August, and September.

Looking at the ex-vessel value of commercial dolphin landings, the red line is the ex-vessel value, and you've seen it tick upwards in 2014, and it remained fairly high in 2015. You have seen an increasing price, and so is an inflation-adjusted price per pound. It's bumped up since the 2000s,

but then, since the late 2000s, it's been fairly steady. When you adjust for inflation, it's just under three-dollars per pound.

I would like to move through these questions, and, like I said, this is kind of the first time we have run through this with our APs, and so, as a general start, maybe if we could just kind of go around the room, and, if you have an observation that you want to add for this first set of questions, and so looking at catch levels and demand, kind of over the past five years or so, if you can give a commercial perspective. Has the price and demand for dolphin changed, from a for-hire perspective? Are you seeing more demand or a change in demand for trips? The private recreational sector, are you see more demand for those trips?

Has there been a change in availability? Have you seen a change in the size? We're looking for trends here, and I know it changes from year to year, but are you observing any trends in the fishery or is it stable? Also, looking at effort shifts to or from dolphin.

MR. ROSHER: I was just going to say, maybe for the sake of take, for the first question, if maybe Glen and Wendell want to talk a little bit about what you've seen in the commercial sector and the value of fish.

MR. HOPKINS: Overall, the demand has definitely increased. The public has become more fish aware and wanting to eat fish, and mahi is very marketable, and it keeps well and everything else, and so the demand has definitely gone up. The prices have gone up, and I expect that it will continue to go up, but I don't know if they do a catch per unit effort on those, but that, to me, seems to be about the same as it's always been.

MR. ROSHER: Could you give me just a gut feeling estimate of what you think percentage-wise that it's gone up? Is it 10 percent or 20 percent, just a rough idea, just to kind of quantify it, so he can pass it along to the council?

MR. HOPKINS: I would say it's gone up 30 percent.

MR. HADLEY: This is for price?

MR. HOPKINS: Yes, in the last three years. It's probably 10 percent a year, and we'll see what it does this year. We are anticipating higher prices this year, the way they're talking. They are talking as much as five to six-dollars a pound to the boat for the start, but we'll see about that.

MR. ROSHER: What little exposure I have to it, I have seen very similar numbers, and, in Miami, it's kind of a hub for a lot of imported fish, and there are some guys who have real trouble getting enough imported fish, and so I see, for various reasons, water temperature, et cetera, that sometimes -- Maybe you would say, ten years ago, there was just almost a glut of imported dolphin. Today, you see it actually helping to drive the price up, and I don't know that you can say that there's a lack of fish, or I don't know what the case is.

It may just be more of a worldwide demand and better distribution, so it's not all going to some of the centers, like Miami, that it used to go. That kind of was the jump-off point, but, for a variety of reasons, I would have to say that probably similar numbers I've seen from the people that I have talked to in Miami. Any other comments on this subject?

MR. HOPKINS: I would just say, to your point, that imports play a major factor on any of our sales of any of our fish, and 80 percent of our fish is imported. If the imports are tremendous, then it directly affects the prices of it. As a matter of fact, I think it was three or four years ago, four years ago, that we got flooded and you couldn't hardly sell a dolphin.

MR. ROSHER: Yes, and so it's worth noting that it is very vulnerable to imported markets, but another thing that I have noticed that is helpful is the imports are dry a lot of times during the periods when our fish, our summertime fish, are here, and what it really did was allowed it to be a twelve-month menu item, because they are supplying those a lot during our offseason, is what I saw, and I almost felt that the imports actually helped create that demand, but that's getting a little deeper than the question asked.

MR. REYNOLDS: Just speaking of commercial demand, we're seeing extremely high commercial demand in our region and a rise in price, especially for local markets, and so I would like to have an opportunity at least today to discuss charter boat and for-hire fish sales again and the possibility of these, especially in the south Florida region. They're one of the most important local product availability resources that could provide this local catch to these restaurants.

MR. ROSHER: Can I stop you right there for just a second? Not to shut you down, but I think we can get to that in Question Number 5. It kind of asks us for anything else that we want to talk about. Let's just push through these questions. Sorry. I love you, brother, but I've got to slow you down.

The next question is how is the demand for charter/headboat trips targeting dolphin and how has it changed, and I would have to say, from what I have seen, the demand is -- I wouldn't say it has increased in my area, but it's pretty steady, and, recreationally, I see -- With lower fuel prices, I have seen maybe a little more effort in the last couple of years, but not a decrease at all in interest and demand. Does anybody else want to comment, John or anybody else from charter?

MR. HARRIS: I am up at Oregon Inlet, and I don't think we've seen any big increase in demand for it, because, in our area, even though we catch a lot of dolphin, the people want to catch tuna. They want to focus on tuna, and then we go and catch the dolphin afterwards, if there are not any. Sometimes when you've got a box full of tuna, it's like, well, let's not mess with the dolphin, and last year was one of those years when the tuna were abundant, and so we really didn't fish for dolphin until August.

Our catch would have been down, as far as that goes, in the reportings, but there were fish there, but we just didn't participate in the fishery. Very seldom do I get a charter, and I've been doing it for forty years, that specifically wants to go catch dolphin. They like to catch them, but they always say how many tunas can we get today, captain? I think the participation from the smaller boats is heavier than it is from the charters there.

MR. ROSHER: Okay. Any other thoughts?

MR. NETTLES: I talked to two charter guys in my area, and I mostly represent -- I mostly deal with recreational guys, but the two charter captains that I know, they're doing mostly sailfish charters, but their clients are also wanting to catch dolphin, and they were both very adamant that

they thought that there was an increase in fishery, because of what we're seeing. The number of outboard boats, smaller outboard boats, that are now fishing in the recreational fishery has really exploded over the past few years, and not only just the number of the boats, but the size of the boats. It's now commonplace to see boats with triple outboards that will run further offshore than we ever did before, for day trips, and so I see that effort increasing.

Another thing is, and I think we talked about this earlier, is in Palm Beach County alone -- I would like to know the number from say Ft. Pierce to Key West. In Palm Beach County alone, it seems, from approximately right now until the middle of July, there is a tournament every weekend for kingfish, dolphin, and wahoo, which is also increasing that effort on the fish.

MR. ROSHER: Yes, and I think we answered that third question, talking about the recreational. Any other thoughts?

MR. SCALISE: One thing I have noticed here in the past couple or few years out of here is you used to -- The thirty-fathom ledge is about forty-five miles, and, for years and years, you could just go there and you could catch an abundant amount of dolphin, but, in the last three years, you would have to run well into the Gulf Stream to catch fish.

Pretty much the commercial sector, you are going towards the commercial sector that is catching an abundant amount of fish, and so the recreational is pushing themselves to get towards them to increase their catch, and so I think that's one reason we would look back and see that the commercial sector is doing so well, is because they're fishing where the fish are, and the recreational fishermen are just trying to get there. I think Tim was talking about the big outboards that go -- There's some boats that are starting to do that now and increase their catch.

MR. ROSHER: I think Tim's comment kind of touches on the next question. Has the availability of dolphin changed? I would have to agree that it seems like there has been greater effort closer to shore. It's taking a little greater range to have good results, or something to that effect.

MR. BARNETT: I would like to add to the dolphin that a slinger doesn't really have any kind of commercial value, and so we don't just go out and just bring in a lot of little sandwich dolphin. We let them go, and the price fluctuates anywhere from like four-and-a-half down to two-and-a-half for about two months. Then it goes back up, but usually it's due to the longline boats coming in with a big glut of fish, but it usually works out fairly decent.

This fellow's comment about charter boats is you have to go out almost eighty miles now to get to the decent-sized dolphin, until they get some weight. If you go close inshore, you catch the small ones, and so you have to run out at least eighty or ninety miles, and one of the problems that South Carolina has is the main break does not cut into the inshore. It's 110 miles offshore, and so you're trying to get out there where the weeds are. Of course, that's where they are, because they're feeding and all that, so the charter boats just won't go that far, because it's just too far of a ride for them to get paid and come back with a bust. That's all I've got to say.

MR. ROSHER: I agree with that. I think Florida is a little different than a lot of the rest of the South Atlantic, for the reason. Effort shifts in dolphin fishing, I don't know that I have seen any effort shift. It seems pretty consistent. Does everybody agree or are there any comments about that?

Assessment of the current fishery, how would you rate the stability of the fishery? Any thoughts? I fished with a guy named Buddy Carey when I was a teenager, and one of the questions -- He was a captain in Miami for fifty-five years, and, at that point, it was about year-fifty for him, and I asked him what it was like forty years ago and thirty years ago, and he said that it went up and down. It fluctuated. I never forgot him telling me that, and I'm not saying that it wasn't overall better than we have today, but he mentioned great fluctuations from year to year, and I always thought that was interesting.

Then, as my years have gone by, I have watched it happen. Two years ago, it wasn't were you going to catch a limit in south Florida, but it was what were you going to catch next, what were you going to fish for next. Like you were talking about your tuna, our dolphin is what tuna is to you, and so then they shut it down on June 30. I said, oh boy, next year is going to be red hot. All these big, spawning fish are going to go up into the Carolinas and nobody is going to mess with them, and what happened last summer for south Florida? It was one of the toughest years.

I went from probably the second-best year I've seen in almost forty years to probably one of the slowest years, in one year with no commercial harvest from June 30 on, which tells you that the commercial is -- You can't blame it on the commercial guys. They were not harvesting it. I mean, there was some harvest prior to June 30, but the point is all these fish -- We talked about how fast they reproduce and blah, blah, blah. I just thought, man, we're going to be walking on them next summer, and we could hardly catch them. I want to say that, last summer, I maybe caught one limit or two limits of dolphin in Miami, and that's going -- We've got three boats.

Me, personally, and, of course, I run one boat about five days a week, and I think I had no more than two limits last summer, a year after June 30 shut off, and I mean I just -- To answer this question, stability of the fishery, I think it's way beyond us. I think that's a question that someone else can answer, but not us.

MR. NETTLES: I think it's very true that it's very cyclical, and it has to do with weather, and it has to do with not just high winds, but wind direction. In south Florida, if we get a couple of weeks of west wind, all the fish is over by the Bahamas. It's not coming up the straits right along us, where it's accessible. Like right now, there is fish out there pushing past Florida, but every day it seems like it's blowing twenty, twenty-five, or thirty knots. Nobody is going out, and so everybody is saying, oh, the fishing is bad, but they don't really know, because nobody is going out to really let you know.

I spent a lot of time in the Abacos last year, and everybody said that Florida had our worst year ever, but yet guys I know that were in the Abacos claim they had their best year ever last year, and so did the fish just take a different route or what is it? I think the stability, there is too many variables in that that we can't control on that.

MR. ROSHER: Yes, I couldn't agree more, but I think, this year, to your point about the wind, I think the Carolinas are going to have some fish, because we haven't touched them, whatever is coming by us. The few days we had good weather -- The last week, we started catching them pretty good. How would you rate the quality of the fishery? Again, I think what we just talked about is pretty much -- It's based on a lot of different things. Is it okay to move on? Okay.

Management measures, is the twenty-inch minimum size limit off the east coast of Florida, Georgia, and South Carolina for the recreational and commercial sectors appropriate? They grow fast. I am just going to give you my opinion. Twenty inches, for us in south Florida, believe it or not, we release a lot of fish under twenty, and so, when we catch them at twenty, it helps our charters.

Two years ago, I would have said that it could have been twenty-four inches, two years ago. Last summer, it could have been eighteen and I wouldn't have been mad, but that's the problem, is it's this very cyclical thing. I think the twenty-inch limit has done its job, and I have no problem with it not being in effect in North Carolina. The fish, by the time they get up to North Carolina, it's kind of a non-issue, and I don't see a need for any big action on this.

We have made a lot of rules in the last ten years towards dolphin that weren't there prior. When I started, there were no size limits or bag limits, and we killed a lot of them, and now, today, they are more protected than they have been in a long time, or ever in my life, but any other comments or thoughts?

MR. BARNETT: What about the small dolphin on the charter boats? Do you think there should be a size limit on them up here?

MR. ROSHER: You mean in North Carolina?

MR. BARNETT: Yes, and South Carolina.

MR. ROSHER: What I would like to know is how many fish do they see under twenty inches? I just have not fished -- I mean, I've been on a couple of charters in North Carolina, the Outer Banks, but all the fish we caught were big, well over twenty inches.

MR. BARNETT: I have seen them. I have worked on charter boats, and I know how they do it, and it's all about putting meat on the table, on the boat. Whatever is biting goes, you know. I think there should be some size limit on recreational, if there's not one.

MR. ROSHER: I mean, you are free to propose an action and we'll vote on it, and I don't disagree to your point.

MR. HADLEY: If we could, if we could save that maybe for the next item, just talking about what items you might want to add.

MR. ROSHER: In that Number 5?

MR. HADLEY: Actually, after this, I will bring up a list of items, and we will be able to put that in there, but I will make a note of that, to bring it back up, if we could.

MR. ROSHER: Okay. Is the 4,000-pound commercial trip limit effective after the 75 percent ACL and the ten per person and sixty per vessel? Anybody have any problems with those rules or anything you want to comment on?

MR. REYNOLDS: I think we should see how everything goes. I think that's a good move, some of the ACT measures and accountability for recreational and see how this works, and I think that's a good way to stick right now.

MR. ROSHER: Okay. I agree. I think we've got rules in place that haven't really played out. Other fishery management measures, do you want to get into Wendell's comments now? Would this be an appropriate time, and Jon?

MR. HADLEY: Let's just finish up this and then we'll hop right into that direction.

MR. ROSHER: Got it. Environmental and ecological, have you noticed a shift in the dolphin migration due to environmental variability, such as mild winters or shorter spring migration? I think Tim touched on that. We saw it last year, where southeast Florida was pretty dry. I mean, it was tough, and you saw good dolphin fishing and your friends saw good dolphin fishing in the Bahamas, but, as far as being able to identify what it's going to be in the future is almost impossible.

Two years ago, when we had such great fishing in Miami, Jon Reynolds said it was very tough down there in Islamorada, and so that goes back to Don Hammond's comments about the merging of the three migrations. I have never seen that before in any of his presentations, and it made a lot of sense. Any comments moving forward? Okay. Then where should the council focus their research priorities for the Atlantic dolphin? Any thoughts on that?

AP MEMBER: It sounds like satellite tags.

MR. ROSHER: Yes, satellite tags, I agree, and my recommendation, and I was going to mention this with Don, is I have put some satellite tags in blue marlin and swordfish, and the conversation I always have when we do it is how can we make the tags cheaper? That is really the struggle with satellite tags, is how to reduce costs. The bottom line is trying to research options of lower cost, because the data, as Don Hammond said, is irreplaceable. You can't duplicate that data, and so that would be the only thing that I can think of. Any other thoughts?

MR. SCALISE: I talked to Don earlier, and one thing is to somehow encourage people to tag more mature fish, and we sort of touched on that earlier, and we need to come up with a way to -- It's hard to convince a charter to let a twenty-pound dolphin go, but if somehow some incentives can be made or say if that fish is recaptured that you would get a thousand dollars or something. Your chances of that happening are slim to none, but it may encourage somebody to do something like that.

MR. ROSHER: I think that also touches on the next question, where should the council focus their research priorities for Atlantic dolphin, and I think those are all good comments that were made. Let's go back to Wendell. You were talking about instituting a twenty-inch minimum size on charter, and would it be recreational and for-hire? If you would just make a motion.

MR. HADLEY: If I could, I will bring that right back up. Could I just go through the list of what we have? We don't even need a motion. We can just make bullet points of what the group thinks is a good idea.

MR. ROSHER: Okay.

MR. HADLEY: Really quickly, potential items for the next dolphin wahoo amendment, and this plays into --

MR. ROSHER: I didn't see this page. Sorry.

MR. HADLEY: That's okay, and thank you all very much for that input. That's very helpful, and I will get it worked up into a report, and it will move on to the SSC and to the council. Like I said, to see the different regional inputs -- I mean, this a different fishery, depending on where you are. It's the same species, but that is very helpful.

Moving forward into the other potential items for a future dolphin wahoo amendment, I went through some meeting minutes and different documents that the Dolphin Wahoo AP had and also the council had and just pulled out some of the items that have been brought up and might be moved forward. Here is just the start of a list, and we can certainly add to it, and I believe we will, but, initially, allowing for-hire bag limit sales of dolphin by vessels possessing both an Atlantic dolphin wahoo commercial permit and an Atlantic charter headboat permit for dolphin wahoo permit.

MR. ROSHER: Can I say something? I have actually talked, at length, and co-chaired a meeting with Bob Jones from Southeastern Fisheries, and one of the things he had to say on this is he actually gave a written statement supporting that action, on one condition, that the quota would be taken from the recreational sector and not commercial. Jon, you can take it from there if you want to talk about that. It might be something we can do -- We don't have much time, but, if we want to make a little proposal.

MR. REYNOLDS: I appreciate you guys listening to this, and so what we see in south Florida with charter boat fish sales under recreational bag limits is we don't feel that there is any further impact into the fishery at all if they were implemented in this manner, to the recreational fishery or to the commercial fishery, especially if it was taken out of the recreational ACL. We're enabled to catch those fish under bag limits regardless, and so whether we're going to catch forty and fillet them for our customers or eat them ourselves, but the issue that comes up is we have a demand, especially in the Keys, for a locally-caught, fresh product.

We're not talking about a lot of fish here, but what happens is, for instance, if we go out on a charter -- We have two totally different style of customers down there. We have like people that hunt, that want to come down and catch all their meat for the year, and they want to get it processed at Islamorada Fish Company and they want to get it vacuum sealed and they want to ship it all home.

As Wendell said, for a commercial product, a larger fish is a lot more applicable for a commercial product, and so what we run into a lot of times is, on a day of fishing, we go out and we will hit our schools and maybe a couple of gaffers or something. Then, by the end of the day, we will encounter -- Throughout the day, we're going to encounter a couple of large fish.

For us to have any idea of the actual amount of fish that our people want, we don't really have a good idea of that. We're just going fishing for these people, and we're going to catch what we're

capable of doing within our recreational bag limits and that's it, but, at the end of the day -- We stick a couple of slammers in the boat, like larger fish, and, at the end of the day, the people look at you sometimes and say, all right, captain, we just want enough for while we're in town.

The first day you do that, that's okay. You have a lot of fish, and you give fish to your neighbors and you eat fish, but, throughout the period of dolphin season, trying to do that is insane. It's a waste of fish, basically, is what it comes down to, and so, to have the ability to just sell a few fish under recreational bag limits we don't feel would be doing any additional damage, but it would provide a very good product for all the local markets. It would provide extra income for the fishermen, which is also taxable, federal tax revenue.

As long as they're sold, as long as the vessel is dually-permitted and has the proper state license as well and the fish is taken -- A lot of the problem, over the years, with a lot of fish sales down there were that they weren't taken to proper markets and treated properly, and so, if these were taken -- We have developed -- A lot of us are commercial fishermen and charter boat fishermen and recreational fishermen in the same region, and so we've developed good relationships with these fish markets, and it would be a very positive thing for all of us down in the south Florida region if this was to go back into place or to allow us to do this.

MR. ROSHER: I hate to cut you off, but we're at 2:26. If we're going to make a vote on it or something, we've got to roll, but I think it's kind of like that lobster thing. It's a small amount of fish, but it means something to a regional group of guys. If it's not applicable to North Carolina or some other area, you could be -- This is open to the floor, and we'll just have to, I guess, hammer it out quickly, but what I was going to say is, if it should not be applied to other states, that could be put into a motion. It could be a Florida issue or it could be a North Carolina or all-encompassing or whatever.

MR. BARNETT: Are you talking about just boats for chartering? So you get revenues from the people on the boat and then you're going to sell the fish too? Of course, what happens is say it's \$1,500 for a trip and you say, well, if I catch 150 pounds of wahoo, you just paid my gas. What happens is, in return, is all your competitors get wind of what their prices are, and I feel like it's as bad for the charter business and together.

MR. REYNOLDS: I am not familiar with that experience at all, Wendell. I appreciate what you're pointing out, but that's just not the experience that we have. Generally these fish, at the end of the day, it's just kind of like, wow, what do we do with these fish that we didn't understand what exactly the people wanted, and you try to interview all your customers, or get an idea of what the necessity is of every single party, but, no, they're still charged full rate. They understand, and most parties are willing to just give you some fish.

MR. ROSHER: I am just going to chime in, real quick, for the sake of time. I'm sorry to rush through it. It's a big issue, but what can happen, Wendell, is there are times where people want to give you that fish as a gift or a tip or whatever at the end of the deal, and I understand the aversion. That's kind of where this prohibition came from. I think George Geiger was kind of behind it years ago, and remember that, prior to this being prohibited, it was legal for eternity.

It was something that was literally taken away from guys who held the permits, the dual permits, and so, in other words, they have paid the taxes and reported the trip tickets and the logbooks to

get that license and then the opportunity to sell that fish was taken away, and so that's why it's been a little bit of a sticking point, probably more for the guys in the Keys, because the dolphin are such a big part of their -- It was part of their income stream throughout the year, kind of to incentivize -- So you understand a little bit of how it worked on the charter level, the mates that were part of that, of course, they're hustling, because they want to make sure -- They are working harder than the mates do today, and I hate to say it. I have watched it for the last three or four years.

The mates used to have these nice bait boxes rigged up, and that's kind of our part to police that with our mates, but I'm just telling you how human nature works. They used to be -- In the old days, the mates were on it, because if they made that \$100 or \$200 or \$300 a day, it made a big difference at the end of their year. I'm not saying that's a good reason to reopen it, but it's just a proposal. We can vote, and the council is going to do with it what they would like.

MR. BARNETT: I know a couple of boats up in South Carolina that does the same thing he is talking about, and they normally get \$1,500 a trip for twelve hours, and basically what they're doing is they say, well, if I can catch a couple hundred pounds of fish, then it will only cost you \$400 or \$500, and I still disagree. That does reflect in the other competitors' price, because have one person charging \$400 and the other guy wants \$1,500.

It's bad for business, and I'm not saying he will, but they take the fish, and they don't have the full expense involved, and they are already getting money on the fish once. They're getting it now twice actually on the boat, on the trip. They're getting paid twice, and so the price of the fish they get, they don't really care about the price, because they've already got money from it.

MR. HARRIS: Is there some way that you can put it in the proposal for Florida? I just don't see North Carolina needing that. It's not that I'm against it, because I have done it in the past. I am a dual holder, but I think we have enough -- I call them day-boat commercial fishermen that are doing that, and I don't think we should affect their prices, whereas they don't in Florida, and I would like to see it done that way, if it's possible.

MR. ROSHER: Just for the sake of time, would maybe somebody make a proposal? Just so you know, one last comment, in the council, the last council meeting, and I think it was in Cocoa, that I went to, or it was actually a public hearing, but they talked about -- It might have been a private conversation with Ben Hartig. I don't remember, but they talked about Florida maybe being a good pilot project. Kind of south Florida did rely on that more than other regions, and so that might be the reason that this is more palatable to the council as a state-wide and not a South Atlantic-wide proposal.

MR. HOPKINS: Just real quick, I just wanted to go on the record to say, if that should take place, that absolutely it should -- Either give the commercial sector more or it comes directly out of the recreational. Like I said, we're close to our ceiling now, and that would be my only objection, but I will add that it probably would increase effort, and maybe not a lot, but if a party tells you that they want ten fish and you're in the meat, you're like, well, I can sell the other forty, and so go ahead and catch them real quick, and so I don't think it would be a major effect, but it would be an increase in effort.

MR. ROSHER: Just keep in mind, Glen, that there aren't that many boats, especially now that it's been out for three years or so, there aren't many boats that have the permits still. You're talking about -- Again, it's like that lobster thing, but one more thing that I wanted to mention is Bob Jones's biggest issue were two things.

One, it didn't come out of the commercial quota and, two, the fish had to be sold to licensed dealers, so that they meet all HACCP regulations, so that, in other words, it was a level playing field, and, of course, taxes paid on the money, because what has happened is, once the law was passed to prohibit it, there was some increased black-market sales, and that's what -- Just for the record, we're trying to help eliminate that and bring it out into the daylight.

MR. BURROWS: The Florida-only caveat, that doesn't really ring right with me. I understand its intentions, but the idea is to legitimize people who do things the right way and de-legitimize people who are doing this black market and like what you're talking about, Wendell, doing it on the side.

If they're doing it now, they're breaking the law anyway, and why not reward the people who have played by the rules and dealt with all the rigmarole of permitting and having their boats and their paperwork in good order? I see no problem. We used to do it. We had the permits to do it, and we did it legitimately, and I see no reason that you couldn't do the same thing in Manteo, if it was to your best interests.

MR. ROSHER: If someone would make an action, I think, just for the sake of time, because I still want to get back to Wendell's point about the twenty inches, and we've got to really roll.

MR. REYNOLDS: My last comment before I make a motion, but, like Ray was saying, this also takes a restricted species in the State of Florida, which there aren't even a couple of guys who even have this to be legal now. They have all expired, pretty much, and so this will be a very, very limited amount of men and vessels.

I would like to make a motion to reinstate charter boat fish sales for dually-permitted vessels, properly-permitted vessels, and with the proper state licensing as well to be able to sell bag-limit-only limit of fish to a licensed dealer. Does that make sense?

MR. ROSHER: Chris, did you want to expand the scope of that or are you good?

MR. BURROWS: That's fine.

MR. BARNETT: Is this Florida or are we talking about the whole east coast now?

MR. ROSHER: Florida, I believe. Are you talking about Florida or the entire coast? I lost that point.

MR. REYNOLDS: I think the direction that we were going with that would have to be the whole east coast, but this would draw the line in compliance, basically. If this is going on already, it's not in compliance. This would allow the people who have the proper licenses and permits only to do this legally and draw the line between any boats that aren't doing this legally.

MR. ROSHER: One comment, or actually two comments. One is remember that you can make two actions. If one guy has an opinion one way, we will vote on that. If another guy has an opinion -- It's no big deal, and it's actually quicker than just hashing back and forth. Just make two actions. We will vote on it and let the council sort it out. **Secondly, this should probably also reflect wahoo, since we're talking about a -- We manage both, and so it should be dolphin and wahoo.** As we all know, wahoo is not really highly targeted anyway, but it just makes it a little bit more proper.

MR. REYNOLDS: **So my action would reflect Florida only then and the quota would come from the recreational ACL.**

MR. ROSHER: Would someone second that?

MR. BARNETT: I've got a crazy question to ask you all. You all can sit in this big one state and authorize that and leave the other two or three out? You can do that? Okay.

MR. ROSHER: There has been some discussion with Ben Hartig that it is possible to do this regionally, within the South Atlantic, just like you have no twenty-inch limit in North Carolina, but South Carolina, Georgia, and the east coast of Florida does have, and so it's the same action. If anybody would second this, we will vote, and then we can make another motion.

MR. HARRIS: I will second it.

MR. ROSHER: Okay. We would like to take a vote on this. **The motion is, in Florida only, reinstate charter boat fish sales for properly-permitted vessels to be able to sell bag-limit-only quantities of dolphin and wahoo to a licensed dealer. Sold landings would come from the recreational ACL. All in favor, raise their hand, eight in favor; opposed, none; abstaining, two abstaining.**

MR. BARNETT: I don't agree with it in North Carolina, but --

MR. ROSHER: I just appreciate moving forward. Thank you, guys. Then if you want to make a motion, Chris.

MR. BURROWS: **I make a motion to repeat the same motion, minus "in Florida only".**

MR. ROSHER: Would somebody like to second that motion? Jon Reynolds will second. **It's going to reinstate charter boat fish sales for properly-permitted vessels to be able to sell bag-limit-only quantities of dolphin and wahoo to a licensed dealer. Sold landings would come from the recreational ACL. Can we have hands in favor, eight in favor; any opposed, two opposed.**

This is a very sensitive subject. We could go on all day about it, but, again, this doesn't mean that, one, it's going to be passed, and, two, we don't know in what form that it might even be passed if it does, but I think the goal that Bob Jones was really adamant about is trying to eliminate illegal operators, and there is those of us who are legal who are pretty bothered by having a permit they can't sell, but, anyway, whatever. I appreciate everybody's time. Wendell, I would like to get back to your point on the twenty-inch dolphin for North Carolina. Would you like to make a

motion that reinstates or establishes a twenty-inch limit for recreational and charter-caught dolphin?

MR. BARNETT: Isn't it active right now?

MR. ROSHER: There is no twenty-inch limit in North Carolina.

MR. BARNETT: There is no twenty-inch limit?

MR. ROSHER: No, sir.

MR. BARNETT: In South Carolina or North Carolina?

MR. ROSHER: South Carolina, Georgia, and Florida have a twenty-inch limit, the east coast of Florida. From Key West to the southern portion of North Carolina, there is a twenty-inch limit, and everything in North Carolina is no limit, no size limit, and you have a sixty-fish bag limit on the charter boats. Everywhere else, it's ten per person.

MR. BARNETT: (The comment is not audible on the recording.)

MR. ROSHER: Or sixty.

MR. HARRIS: You can have ten per person. If you've got four people, you can include the captain and mate. If you've got five people, you cannot include the captain and mate. You can keep up to sixty. If you've got two people, the captain and mate, you can keep forty fish.

MR. ROSHER: Got you. That is a little different.

MR. HARRIS: That may vary by state, but --

MR. ROSHER: Sorry about that. I was operating on hearsay and fuzzy memory. Sorry about that.

MR. HARRIS: You've got to have some rollover.

MR. ROSHER: That's right. All right. Would you like to make a motion recommending something to the council?

MR. BARNETT: No, I just -- For North Carolina, they will be too big by the time they get there, I imagine.

MR. ROSHER: All right. John, is there anything that I am forgetting or anything that we need to talk about beyond this?

MR. HADLEY: We have the Chair and Vice Chair.

MR. ROSHER: All right.

MR. HADLEY: If we're okay with those are the items that the AP wants to specifically express moving forward, very quickly, I will jump into -- The AP doesn't have a permanent Chair or a Vice Chair, and if we could run through and elect a Chair and Vice Chair, that would be fantastic.

A quick overview of responsibilities are to review and approve the agenda items for future AP meetings, facilitate the discussion and run future AP meetings, as Ray has done a very good job of doing so today, and attend the council meeting to give the AP meeting report, if requested, which may include some questions from the council on the AP motions, and then the Vice Chair would fill the role if the Chair is unavailable.

For one thing, if we could start off by what would be the term, and so how long -- When a Chair is elected, how many meetings would that Chair be Chair for? Does the group want to come to an agreement on how long that person would be named Chair for? Is length of term, by consensus, okay? Okay. Moving on, would anyone want to be considered for the Chair of the AP?

AP MEMBER: **I would like to nominate Ray Rosher.**

AP MEMBER: I second that.

MR. HADLEY: Very quickly, I'm not sure that made it on the record, and so, just to reflect, the term of the Chair will be for the term of whoever is elected to it. **The Chair has been unanimously voted to be Ray Rosher for the Dolphin Wahoo AP.** The Vice Chair, we still need to come to a conclusion on that.

MR. ROSHER: Who is my partner in crime?

AP MEMBER: **Can I nominate Chris Burrows? I nominate Chris Burrows.**

AP MEMBER: Second.

MR. HADLEY: Could we have a vote on that? **That was unanimous, and so Chris Burrows will be the Vice Chair of the Dolphin Wahoo AP,** and that's all from me.

MR. ROSHER: Thank you for everybody's involvement, and I think we covered a lot of good ground, and thanks for traveling. I know that we've all got other things to do, and I appreciate you being here. This concludes the 2017 meeting.

MR. CONKLIN: I just want to thank all of you guys for taking time out of your busy schedules. It means a lot to get your feedback, and the council does listen to you guys, and so thank you very much.

(Whereupon, the meeting was adjourned on April 21, 2017.)

Certified By:_____ Date:_____

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