

SOUTH ATLANTIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

DOLPHIN WAHOO ADVISORY PANEL

**Crowne Plaza Hotel
North Charleston, South Carolina**

April 20-21, 2022

Transcript

Dolphin Wahoo AP

Christopher Burrows, Chair
Chip Berry
Glen Hopkins
Tim Scalise
Michael Plaia

Jonathan Reynolds, Vice Chair
Richard DeLizza
Jay Kavanagh
Rom Whitaker III

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Mell Bell
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Dr. Mike Schmidtke
Suzanna Thomas

Attendees and Invited Participants

Rick DeVictor

Dewey Hemilright

Additional attendees and invited participants attached.

The Dolphin Wahoo Advisory Panel of the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council convened at the Crowne Plaza Hotel, North Charleston, South Carolina, on April 20, 2022, and was called to order by Mr. Chris Burrows.

MR. BURROWS: Thank you to those who could attend online, and I think we have two online. To start, let's just break the ice, and everybody introduce themselves, and I will go first. I'm Chris Burrows, and I'm from Brunswick County, Bolivia, North Carolina. I have ties to the recreational and commercial sectors. I have a history and charter and recreational fishing and commercial fishing, and, personally, I'm currently mostly in the restaurant business, and so we buy a lot of fish and sell a lot of fish, and I write for *Carolina Sportsman* as well, and so I'm not tied to any one particular sector, but I like a good discussion, and, if we could start on the left side of the room, and everybody go around and say where you're from.

MR. BERRY: Good afternoon. It's a pleasure to see you all in person. I'm Chip Berry, and I have dual residency. I grew up in Murrells Inlet, and I live in Wilmington, and I'm retired, and so I kind of go back and forth. My background has been in recreational fishing, and I once was a -- I was a full-time charter boat captain at one time, and so I'm pleased to be involved with you all. Thank you.

MR. PLAIA: Hi. I'm Mike Plaia, and I'm from Connecticut, and I'm a newly-appointed member of this panel. I run a charter boat out of Rhode Island, and I've fished out of Rhode Island for twenty years now, and I fished out of Montauk for the twenty years before that. I'm also an advisor to the New England Council, the Mid-Atlantic Council, and the ASMFC, as well as the South Atlantic Council.

MR. HOPKINS: My name is Glenn Hopkins, and I'm a commercial fisherman from North Carolina, mostly longline.

MR. WHITAKER: Hello, everyone. My name is Rom Whitaker, and I run a charter boat out of Hatteras, named Release, and I've been doing it for about thirty-five years, and I've been involved with this -- Not with dolphin wahoo, but I've been on the King Mackerel AP, and, also, I was on the HMS AP for fifteen or twenty years, too long. Thank you.

MR. REYNOLDS: Jon Reynolds, and I'm a full-time hook-and-line commercial fisherman and charter boat fisherman, mainly charter boat fishing these days, out of south Florida, from Miami and the Florida Keys. I grew up recreationally fishing at a young age, and I got into charter boat fishing and commercial fishing in my teens, and I've been on the Dolphin Wahoo AP, I don't know, for probably five years now or so. Thanks.

MR. SCALISE: My name is Tim Scalise, and I'm from here in Charleston, or, actually, Mount Pleasant, and I charter fish and recreationally fish, and I've had my master's license, I think, since 1984, and so mostly out of here, but I've traveled to the Bahamas and the Caribbean and south Florida a good bit.

MR. BURROWS: Online, we have Jay Kavanagh. Jay, if you'll pipe in there.

MR. KAVANAGH: Okay. Jay Kavanagh, charter boat fishermen out of Hatteras Harbor Marina in Hatteras.

MR. BURROWS: Richard DeLizza, if you'll give us some input there.

MR. DELIZZA: Sure. Richard DeLizza, south Florida, recreational angler, second stint on the Dolphin Wahoo AP. I don't believe they came up with the term limit rule specifically for me, and so I don't take it personally, but I have clocked my time, and now I'm back on. I've been fishing down here in south Florida for forty-some years, and I serve on the board of Beyond our Shores, which is the umbrella organization for the dolphin tagging research project that many of you are familiar with.

MR. BURROWS: Thank you, and thank you to all of the council staff who are here today and helped put this together. Thank you, John, for working with me, and this is my first time trying to chair a live meeting, and I am not Ray, and so please go light. I will ask that, when anybody speaks -- Online, of course, you're going to put your hand up. If you're present, when you speak, if you could just identify yourself again, so that the notes reflect this and the minutes to go form, and I think, at this time, we have approval of the agenda. Is there anyone that has any opposition to the agenda we have before us today? Seeing none, the agenda is approved.

I hope that all of you read the 114 pages of the minutes of the last meeting, and so what's before us now is the approval of those minutes from October of 2020. Is there any opposition to the approval of those minutes? Seeing none, the October 2020 advisory panel minutes are approved. Now we have reached the public comment section, and is there anyone in the room, or on the webinar, that would like to provide public comment before we get started with the council chair remarks? Seeing none, we will proceed.

MS. MARHEFKA: Hi, everyone. My name is Kerry Marhefka, and I am the committee chair of the Dolphin Wahoo Committee for the council. Spud Woodward is my co-chair, and I know there are several council members online listening today, and so we'll sort of be in the background, taking into account everything that you say here, and, of course, John will compile a report, so that, regardless of whether or not we heard what you had to say today, the entire council will be informed of your remarks.

I wanted to say a couple of things. First of all, I really, really appreciate you all being here. I was an advisory panel member before I was a council member, and my husband was an advisory panel member. The first rule of being an advisory panel member is that the -- It's always slick calm on the days that advisory panel meetings are scheduled, and there's just no way around it, and so I know it's a sacrifice, and I have personally sacrificed for it, and I thank you all for being here.

I also wanted to say that this, I believe, AP has not met in person since 2016, and I know we have new members, and so I just kind of wanted to say that, you know, we're all kind of starting from a starting point, and it's my first time as chair of this committee, and so please don't hesitate. You're here to speak your mind, whatever it is, and so the best kind of advisory panels are the most vocal advisory panels, even if it's in disagreement of what the council is doing or in disagreement with each other, and we do our job better when you all have a lively discussion, and so please don't be here and be shy, because maybe you're new to this process, or the advisory panel, and none of you are new to this fishery, and that much we know, and so you're already an expert, and so please, please make sure that you are vocal about that today, and I just thank you very, very much for being here.

All of, I'm sure, you guys know our council information is -- Our contact information is public and on the council's website, and, personally, I would like to say that reach out to me, as the chair of the committee, any time you all have any comments or questions about the fishery, and, again, just thank you for being here, and I'm very excited to hear your discussion today.

MR. BURROWS: Thank you, and next will be John Hadley for the second attachment, Update on Recent Regulatory Changes and Status of Amendments.

MR. HADLEY: Thank you. Give me just a second here to queue this up. All right, and so usually this is a very brief item, but I wanted to take a few minutes to go over some of the recent changes for the dolphin wahoo fishery, both on the federal and state levels, the reason being is that there's really -- Well, it's been a while since we've met, and it was October of 2020, and so a lot has taken place since then, and then, on top of that, there is -- You know, there are several actions that are going into place very soon that I think affect the AP's discussion down the line here on the agenda, and so, without further ado, I just wanted to mention that, as far as recently implemented, or submitted, amendments, Amendment 12, which the AP did review, would implement -- Well, it would include, rather, bullet mackerel and frigate mackerel into the Dolphin Wahoo Fishery Management Plan as an ecosystem component species.

This was effective as of last year, and, really, there's no regulations that go along with this, but it does heighten the importance of bullet mackerel and frigate mackerel, as they are known forage species for dolphin and wahoo, particularly wahoo, and another -- This sort of lays the groundwork for the Mid-Atlantic Council, potentially, to take this and run with it and to add these two species to their omnibus forage amendment, and so that sort of was an interest of theirs, and that was a request of the South Atlantic Council, and so that did go through, and I believe we will see how that moves forward in the future, but that's one of the amendments that went into place since we last met.

The other is Amendment 10, and, as you recall -- I think the AP reviewed this twice, and this has been in the works for quite a long time overall, and it really implements a long list of things, and I will go into them a little bit more in detail, but, overall, everything that is mentioned, that's covered in this amendment, is going to go into place as of May 2, 2022, and so this is -- We're talking weeks out, as far as this becoming effective.

Overall, this amendment really looked at revising the total annual catch limits for dolphin and wahoo, to reflect the updated catch levels recommended by the Scientific and Statistical Committee, and, really, this does two things overall. It brings Monroe County recreational landings into the mix, as far as accounting for those landings in the ACL, and it also updates the units for accounting for the recreational landings to the Fishery Effort Survey, or FES, units, and so really implementing what has been deemed the best available science into the fishery overall.

Really, overall, with the new accounting of recreational landings, you are including Monroe County, and you just have -- Essentially, the historical landings are estimated to be higher, and the sector allocations were revised accordingly. Overall, from a percentage perspective, the allocations increased for the recreational sector and decreased for the commercial sector. However, when you look at crunching the new ACL numbers, the commercial sector really did not lose anything on the poundage front. In fact, it gained a little bit for dolphin, slightly, with the

idea that to maintain the commercial sector where it is, from an ACL standpoint and a pound perspective, and allocate the rest to the recreational sector.

The amendment also implements what are viable accountability measures for both dolphin and wahoo for the recreational sector. Previously, these accountability measures really were not viable, and they depended on one of the triggers being an overfished status for dolphin and wahoo, and so that was addressed in the amendment, and that language was removed, since there isn't a stock assessment for either species, and that language was -- Well, both species are not likely to be deemed overfished. Therefore, that overfished language was really removed from the accountability measure.

Then there were kind of catchall sort of nuts-and-bolts management items that were in Amendment 10. Generally speaking, vessels that were fishing trap, pot, or buoy gear were not authorized to retain dolphin or wahoo, and so this was really a request from lobster fishermen in New England that wanted to retain these species, small amounts of these species, relatively small amounts of these species, when pot gear was onboard.

The council kind of increased -- Made it a little bit more of a broad spectrum, to fish trap, pot, or buoy gear, and that, if these gears were onboard, and this vessels are properly permitted, up to 500 pounds of dolphin and 500 pounds of wahoo can be possessed, provided that those fish are caught by rod-and-reel.

Then the last two items, there is the removal of the operator card requirement, both for the commercial and for-hire sectors, and so, as of May 2, the operator card will not be required for the dolphin wahoo permit to be valid, and so heads-up, in case your renewal is coming up pretty soon. Specifically speaking for dolphin and wahoo, that will no longer be required, commercially or for for-hire.

Then, last, but not least, there is a reduction in the recreational vessel limit for dolphin that's coming up, and so the retention limit of ten dolphin per person -- So the bag limit is going to remain in place. However, the vessel limit is going to be decreased to fifty-four fish per vessel, and then the existing exemption for headboats will remain in place, where this no vessel limit, but the limit is ten dolphin per paying passenger.

This is something that was -- I know that the AP discussed quite a bit, and then, also, the council really had a lot of back-and-forth on this, on where to end up, and there are certainly some regional differences, as far as what needs to be done with vessel limits, and so they ended up with fifty-four fish per vessel, rather than sixty, and so that's all for Amendment 10. I will take a break, really quick, because I know that that's kind of some upcoming rule changes very soon, and are there any questions on that? All good? All right.

MR. PLAIA: Could we just ask if you could send a copy of this presentation -- Because I will guarantee you that nobody in New England has ever heard of this.

MR. HADLEY: Sure. Yes, absolutely, and so this is in the briefing book, and so it's available online, and do you want -- I guess what would be the best avenue? Send it to the --

MR. PLAIA: Well, I went through some of the background materials this morning, and I did see some of this, but I think that the presentation that you just went through sums it up very nicely, and I would like to use that to try and educate -- Especially, I have a New England advisory meeting coming up sometime in late May or early June, and, if possible, I would like to tell all of those guys about it.

MR. HADLEY: Duly noted. I'm just making some notes to myself here. Absolutely, and so just kind of this short summary of what's going to -- What's coming down the pike, so to speak. Perfect.

MR. BURROWS: Anyone else have clarification needed or a question related to this?

MR. HADLEY: All right, and then, moving forward, and so the upcoming actions -- We have Regulatory Amendment 3, which looks at extending the applicable geographic range of the minimum size limit for dolphin and also potentially changing recreational retention limits for dolphin, and I won't go into the details of this very much right now, because this is something that we'll get into quite a bit later on in the agenda and ask for the AP-specific recommendations on these actions, but just kind of a heads-up that this is currently what's on the council's workplan and in development.

Additionally, there are a couple of -- There is a postponed amendment that focuses on pelagic longline, the pelagic longline fishery for dolphin and wahoo, and, in development of Amendment 10, the council had considered several actions that would essentially align vessels fishing longline gear without the HMS permit for dolphin with those vessels that do have that HMS permit, and so kind of having a level playing field for all vessels that are fishing for dolphin and wahoo with pelagic longline gear, and that's kind of what that was aimed at.

In development of that, the council decided to pull that out of Amendment 10 and focus -- Come back to it at a later date, since there is a forthcoming biological opinion from the National Marine Fisheries Service, and so this covers protected resources, and there may be some recommendations that come out of this biological opinion that would necessitate further changes to the longline fishery, and so, in summary, basically, there's sort of unsteady ground, so to speak, for now, known unsteady ground, as far as what may be required in the longline fishery for dolphin, and so that's sort of -- The work on that has been suspended and will be taken up pending the biological opinion, or revised biological opinion, updated biological opinion.

Then, last, but not least, this isn't necessarily a federal action, but it's a state-based action, and it's something that I think will come into play, there again, in discussion of Regulatory Amendment 3 and which avenue to go, but, as a little bit of background, at their March 2022 meeting, the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission took action on rules that would essentially reduce the bag limit for dolphin, from ten to five dolphin per person, and this covers Atlantic state waters only.

It would also reduce the private recreational vessel limit from sixty to thirty dolphin. There again, this applies in state waters, and it also clarified that for-hire captain and crew are prohibited, state-wide, from retaining a bag limit of dolphin, and so these regulations will become effective on May 1, and so one of the situations that this sets up is, as of May 1, you will have varying regulations in federal waters and state waters for dolphin, for off of Florida, specifically, and so it's something

to think about, and, there again, I will bring it back up, when we get into the discussion of Regulatory Amendment 3, but that's sort of what -- Some of the underpinnings of what the council is considering in that amendment right now, and I will be happy to answer any questions, before we move on.

AP MEMBER: This is a pending piece of legislation, right, for Florida?

MR. HADLEY: It's pending, in that it's not applicable just yet, but my understanding is that they did take action on a final rule at their March 2022 meeting, and so it's all but a done deal, and it just hasn't been implemented, and so, as of May 1, the regulations that you see above will be applicable in state waters in Florida.

AP MEMBER: That's just out to the three-mile jurisdiction?

MR. HADLEY: Correct.

AP MEMBER: It doesn't involve waters, correct, at all?

MR. HADLEY: It does not.

AP MEMBER: Thank you.

MR. BURROWS: Anyone else, before we move along? Seeing no one, next we'll have Julia Byrd, for an update on the Citizen Science Program.

MS. BYRD: Hi, everyone. I'm Julia Byrd, and I run the South Atlantic Council's Citizen Science Program. Give me just a second, and I will up a quick presentation to walk through with you guys. I know some of you all are new, and so, just to give a little bit of background on the Citizen Science Program, the council started this program a couple of years ago, and we had been hearing from fishermen, for a long time, that they had been wanting to get more involved in kind of collecting the data that are used to manage their fisheries, and so kind of the aim of this program is to kind of work with fisherman and scientists and managers to develop projects that meet kind of identified research needs of the council.

Today, I just wanted to give you guys kind of a quick update on what we've been doing in the program and talk about a couple of our projects that are underway, and so, first, just to give you an update on what's been going on, sort of program activities, the Citizen Science Program has specific identified research priorities, and those were updated by the council in December of 2021.

We update those every two years, and they kind of guide the different projects that the program will kind of develop or support and pursue, and so, to update these, we basically listen to kind of ideas that come up during advisory panel meetings, or council meetings, look at kind of the council's overall research and monitoring plan, and then we also have two citizen-science-specific advisory panels, and Jon actually serves on one of those, that provide input on these research priorities, and so they range from everything to collecting more information about kind of fish that are released back in the water to collecting more information on kind of fishing infrastructure, working waterfronts, to kind of shark depredation is a new one that came up this year. Those kind

of topics basically help us figure out what types of projects we want to work with people to kind of build and pursue.

We've also, if you guys are interested in keeping up with what's going on with the program, we try to provide updates, and the council's South Atlantic Bite newsletter that Kim Iverson puts together every couple of weeks, and we also post stuff on the council's social media, and so, if you subscribe to the newsletter, or follow the council on social media, you can kind of keep up with what's going on in the program.

Also, this January, we submitted a new grant for a new project called SMILE, and this is a project where we'll be working with a group called REEF, and it's a non-profit organization that does citizen science work with recreational divers, and this grant is really to try to collect more length data from some of our data-limited species, and REEF is developing kind of a tool that's an underwater stereo camera that a recreational diver could use to take video, and then that video could be analyzed to get length of different fish species, where there's not a lot of information about them, and so, if we're successful with this grant, it would be to kind of develop this tool and then test it down in the Florida Keys for a number of different activities that REEF has in place, and so we should be hearing more about that grant in the next kind of month or two, hopefully.

Then the last thing that I just wanted to mention is we've been working with some colleagues to put together a special issue of a magazine called *Fisheries* that's focused on citizen science and kind of more non-traditional data sources and how they can be kind of integrated more into management decisions and that sort of thing.

Then the last kind of program-level thing that I wanted to update you guys is something that we've been working on with someone named Rick Bonney, and he's kind of our -- He has been a citizen science expert advisor to us, and he works up at Cornell University, and he's helping us -- We want to figure out how to evaluate our citizen science program so that it is doing what the council wants it to do, and so what we're working with him on right now is to try to collect kind of baseline information about kind of the knowledge and the attitudes and the trust levels of the fishermen and scientists and managers in our region, so that, in the future, we can go back and ask these similar questions, to see if kind of attitudes, or trust levels, are kind of changing over time.

He's put together kind of an evaluation plan that's a multistep plan, and so the first step was conducting interviews with a small group of fishermen and scientists and managers to kind of gather information, so that we can do kind of a broader survey to collect this sort of information from folks throughout the South Atlantic region, and so we'll hopefully be kind of sending an online questionnaire out later this year, or early next year, to kind of help us collect some of this baseline information, to make sure -- Help us figure out if the program is doing what we want it to do, moving forward.

Next, I just wanted to update you guys on two of the projects we have underway, and the first one is called FISHstory, and this is a pilot project that's trying to document kind of for-hire catch and length compositions, using old, historic photos from the 1940s, 1950s, and 1960s, and 1970s, and so, before, when kind of the catch monitoring places came into play -- So that we have a better idea of kind of what was being caught back then, to help us better understand what's going on today, and so, for folks who have been on the AP for a couple of years, and I know I gave you

guys an update on this a couple of years ago, and so I just kind of wanted to update you guys on where things are with this project now.

The project has kind of three components, and the first component is trying to kind of digitize and archive these historic fishing photos, and, for this pilot project, we worked with a retired fishermen out of the Daytona Beach, Florida area, Rusty Hudson, and so he has kind of been his family's historian, and he has all of these photos from his family's fishing fleet, from that kind of time period, and so we worked with him to digitize those photos, and then we had two kind of analysis pieces.

The first was we were trying to look at for-hire catch composition and analyze kind of what was in the photos, and so we did that using an online platform called Zooniverse, and so you can load the images online, and then you can train members of the public to help you count and identify the fish in the photos, and then the third piece is we were developing a method to estimate the size of fish in photos based on using kind of the lumber and the leaderboard where the fish were hanging as a scale, so you can get an estimate of how big the fish were, and so the pilot project is wrapping up, and so we digitized over 1,370 photos, and Rusty really did the hard work of scanning in all of those photos and providing us with background information on all of them.

For the for-hire catch piece, we had over 2,100 volunteers that helped us kind of identify and count fish in over 1,000 photos, and they made over 35,000 individual classifications, and then the third piece is we developed this method to estimate the length of king mackerel. Based on some of the analyses we did, we think we're getting within an inch or two of the size of those fish, and so we measured king mackerel in all of the photos that we had, and so we can put together kind of a length composition, to see kind of what was the size of the fish that were caught back then.

The next steps for FISHstory is we submitted kind of our grant report recently, and we're developing kind of outreach materials summarizing our findings that we can share with folks, and then we're trying to look for more funding, because we would like to continue this project, and one of the things that we're really interested in doing is exploring other ways to get more of these historic photos. I think they're really valuable, and they can tell you a lot about the beginning of these fisheries before kind of we had monitoring programs in places, and so we're thinking about ideas like having kind of a photo-scanning night at an AP meeting, or at a council meeting, or that sort of thing, to try to find more of these kind of historic photos that can tell us a lot about the beginnings of these fisheries, and so that's FISHstory.

Then the next project that I wanted to give you guys an update on is one that SAFMC Release, and this is a project that works with commercial, for-hire, and recreational fishermen to collect data on released fish using a mobile app that's called SciFish, and so, as you all I'm sure are aware, there are a number of fisheries where the number of released fish is increasing in the South Atlantic, and even along the Atlantic coast, and so it's becoming more and more important to learn more about released -- The portion of the population that's being released, and a lot of our sampling programs sample back at the dock.

We don't have a lot of observers, and so there's really limited information on these released fish, and so it's really fishermen who have this on-the-water kind of knowledge of released fish, and so we're hoping to work with them, to learn more specifically about kind of the size of fish that are being released and then getting information on how many -- To help us better understand how

many of those released fish survive, and so things like the depth the fish was caught, whether a venting tool or descending device was used when that fish was released, that sort of thing.

This project initially was collecting information on kind of scamp grouper releases, and we learned, very quickly, that people don't release a lot of scamp grouper, unless they're undersized, and so, last year, we expanded the project to collect information on all shallow-water grouper species, and so black, gag, red, the strawberry grouper, yellowfin, yellowmouth, and then, just last week, we expanded the project to collect information on red snapper as well.

The project basically collects information on kind of the date, the length of the fish that are released, the depth the fish was caught, and you can put in a location, but it's optional, and then it collects information on descending device or venting tool usage and then shark predation. If you guys are interested in checking out kind of the data that have been submitted through the project, there's a link in this presentation that will take you to a newsletter that we put out in January that summarizes the data we've collected thus far.

Then we're really interested in doing a lot of kind of outreach and recruitment, and we would love to get more fishermen involved in the project, and so we have started visiting tackle shops, and we're really excited. Next week, we're kind of partnering with a couple of charter captains in Charleston and a local tackle shop to put on a seminar, and the captains are going to be talking about kind of effective bottom fishing and show folks how to rig descending devices, and then council staff will be sharing information on best fishing practices and kind of this Release project with folks, and so we're really excited about that.

Just the last slide I had is I know you guys are here to talk about dolphin and wahoo this week, but I know that some of you guys may bottom fish too, and so I just wanted to throw out there that, if you're interested, we would love to get you involved in any of citizen science projects, and specifically the Release project, and so, if you are interested in joining the project, in this presentation, there is kind of an online form you can fill out to get a Release account.

There are links to download the app, or, if you guys have any suggestions on what we could do to kind of help recruit fishermen, or help promote the project, we would be all ears. If there are certain kinds of fishing clubs, or contacts, that would be good for us to reach out to, we would love to hear from you guys, and so that's a lot of information in a short amount of time, but I would love to take -- I would be happy to take any questions, or, if you guys have any suggestions on how we can help recruit fishermen, to get them involved in this project, I would be all ears. Thanks.

MR. BURROWS: Any questions, before I ask a convoluted one? Anyone online? I can't see right now. Well, thank you so much for that. The FISHstory really intrigues me, and what I would like to know is are there any unofficial conclusions that you can draw on the length of king mackerel? I know you're looking for more funding, but what have we learned? How much bigger were they in the 1950s than now?

MS. BYRD: Actually, if you looked at the mean size, and so the average size over time, they're not -- It's not that different to what we're seeing today, and so a couple of caveats are all the photos are from the Daytona Beach, Florida area, and so it's one area, and these species kind of migrate, and so maybe that's not as big of a caveat, but, you know, we are still doing a little more analysis, and so I'll make sure -- If you guys are interested, John can share it with you, when we actually

have the size distribution, and we'll include some graphs showing kind of what the mean size was from these photos and what the mean size was from the latest assessment, but there weren't large changes.

MR. BURROWS: Is there anybody in this room who has been maybe commercial king mackerel fishing for a long time? Does that jibe with what you think?

MR. WHITAKER: Yes, and I think king mackerel -- I mean, we're catching them right now off of Hatteras, which is totally unprecedented, and some of the guys are catching ten to fifteen boxes, and so it just kind of distorts my theory of king mackerel as -- I've got certainly many comments for the dolphin, but what -- I just sometimes don't think that you all know what's going on out there, and you have to go on the best available science, and I understand that, but sometimes it's not very good.

MR. BURROWS: Thank you, Rom. I don't want to derail anything, but I just -- That's a concept that really intrigues me, and I wanted to see if there was a little cohesion in there. Sorry.

MR. WHITAKER: Well, I can get you some pictures though. If you want to look at them, I can get you plenty of old pictures.

MS. BYRD: That would be great, Rom. I would love to talk with you a little bit more about that, on one of the breaks maybe, and follow-up with you, but, yes, I think the FISHstory project is really cool. When we launched it, we heard from a number of other folks that they have kind of old photos like this that they would love to share, and so we're really interested in trying to gather more, and I guess I will say one other thing too, is I think we've certainly heard a lot of frustration about some of the data that are available for different fisheries, and that's one of the reasons we started this citizen science program, is to try to develop projects with scientists and fishermen together, to kind of collect data that people can trust more, maybe, than some other datasets, and so I just wanted to throw that out there, too.

MR. BURROWS: Thank you, Julia, and thank you, Rom. I didn't want to volunteer you, but you saw where I was going, and thank you for that. Sorry to derail things, and thanks again, Julia. Anyone else? By all means.

MR. HADLEY: Regarding -- Do you have any suggestions on some of the contacts? I mean, I know that -- I guess one of the ideas is to kind of get out of the typical circle, communication circle, of the council, and I don't know if you all have any ideas, either now or down the road, of just how to get the word out, and hopefully get some more anglers using this program, because this is the kind of thing that can definitely help with stock assessments and just gather more information down the road on releases.

MR. BURROWS: I will take a stab at it. Julia, I think you're right on, and you said that you were sending people to tackle shops, and I think that is probably the way to do it, get the staff involved, and I know we talk about incentivizing things all the time, and it doesn't have to be financial to make them feel special, get people involved, and I think the -- I talk a lot about mistrust, and we've got to break that, some way, somehow. We're sitting in this room today because we're fishery managers, in some regard, to some degree, you full-time and some of us part-time, but we've got

to break mistrust, and going to finding users and explaining what we're trying to do is the only way this works.

AP MEMBER: Tournament data, for sure. People that fish tournaments have been fishing them for a long time, and, most of the time, they've seen a lot of change, and then you have data, and you have weights, digital scale weights, on fish too, and so that's good.

MR. BURROWS: Good comment, and that makes a lot of sense. Anyone else?

MR. WHITAKER: Well, all I would say is incentives are certainly -- You know, you send a guy a hat, and he'll send you some pictures. I'm not -- You all would know more about reaching out to, you know -- I mean, I guess boat ownership, and you all can certainly get registrations on boats over twenty-five feet, would be people looking for dolphin, I guess.

MR. BURROWS: That's a good comment, Rom. Don Hammond used to incentivize people to realize dolphin with orange spaghetti tags with t-shirts, and I had a bunch of them. I miss getting those free t-shirts in the mail, and so good point.

MS. BYRD: Thanks, guys, for all of those. I know I was talking with other people, with some tagging programs, and they said that people will do a lot for a hat or a t-shirt, and so thanks for that, you all.

MR. BURROWS: Anyone online? All right. I think we're -- John, you're going to be up there for a while, and so fishery performance update on dolphin, John Hadley.

MR. HADLEY: All right, and so, just to kind of orient everyone here, the idea for this agenda topic is essentially to discuss dolphin and dolphin fishing and your observations sort of on the water and in the marketplace and what's going on with the dolphin fishery. I will jump into it, and I have some background information that I do want to present to you on what's been observed from a high-level macro-fishery perspective, if you will, but, to just give you a little bit of background on -- I certainly encourage everyone to speak up on this, and these fishery performance reports are something that we've been working on with advisory panels, and they have been of tremendous use for just getting all kinds of information that otherwise oftentimes isn't available for specific species, and this has been used -- It's certainly taken into account by the council, when they're thinking about some of the effects of different management measures.

It's also being incorporated into the council's allocation decision tool, and so that's one of the other outlets of it. Dolphin and wahoo don't have stock assessments right now, but, in the future, if there were efforts, and that could come together, to have a stock assessment for dolphin or wahoo, this could certainly be a wealth of information, or a starting point, on observations in the fishery and sort of what's been going on.

The point being that this is an exercise that has become extremely useful to the council and others in general, to kind of go through and get some information on these different species and really take some time to chat about what you're seeing in the fishery and what's going on with the fish.

Without further ado, I have some discussion questions, and I'm going to start off by going over some background information, and, if you want to follow along, this is a link in your agenda and

overview, and I will give it just a second to load here, and so I will start off -- I will start off going over a little bit of biological data, and I'll jump into landings within the fishery, and then I'll present a little bit of kind of high-level economic information.

In general, dolphin are a fairly short-lived species, with a fast growth, and they exhibit very fast growth. If conditions are right, they can grow up to an inch a week, and you can kind of think of that as, when conditions are right, they grow about as fast as your lawn does in the summertime, which is pretty impressive for any fish, but particularly for a fish that grows so big and is such an important fish, really, overall.

Displayed here is an age-at-length, and so you can see, in the early -- By age-one, on average, you're looking at about thirty-five inches, and there is a fairly steep growth curve between one and two years. It flattens off, and then the maximum -- What's thought to be the maximum age of dolphin is five years.

Moving on down, length-to-weight -- There's a length-to-weight relationship, and so, on the vertical axis here, you have whole weight in pounds, and, on the horizontal axis, you have fork length, and you can kind of see how different sizes -- It's almost linear, but, as the fish grows -- If you have a forty-five-inch fish or so, it's up around twenty-five pounds. Fifty-inches-plus, you're talking about a thirty-plus-pound specimen, and so it's pretty linear growth there overall.

One of the other things about dolphin is they do mature at a very early age, and almost all are mature at age-one, and it depends on the study that you look at, but around eighteen inches is when you have 50 percent of males and females become sexually mature, and so they do -- They grow very fast, and they mature at a very early age.

Switching gears, we'll go over some landings information, looking at 2000 through 2020, and this is the commercial landings overall, and you can see they have kind of bounced around in the 500,000 to a little over a million-pound range. It has decreased in recent years, kind of towards that lower bound, and I will note, and you'll see, in 2020, for both the commercial and recreational sectors, you saw landings drop quite a bit, and I will be interested to hear a little bit more about that, if it is a true drop or if it is a result -- You know, we had the COVID issues in 2020, and you didn't necessarily have sampling, and you didn't have access to the Keys from the public, which is a major dolphin fishery in the springtime and the summer, and so there's some aspects going on there in 2020, but, overall, landings kind of had a little spike in recent years, the 2014 and 2015 years, and then have dropped off since.

When looking at state commercial landings, in the earlier years, or in the early 2000s, Florida dominated -- Landings in Florida dominated the fishery, and then followed by North Carolina and South Carolina, and so that blue part of the graph there is North Carolina and South Carolina, and the pink, reddish part of the graph represents Florida and Georgia, dominated by Florida, really, and it's interesting that, in recent years, you see more landings occurring up in the Mid-Atlantic or New England regions, and these are, again, commercial landings, and there is not information on dolphin releases.

Switching over to recreational landings, you see landings have really bounced around, and they kind of bounce around quite a bit, and they typically stay within that ten to fifteen-million-pound range, and there was quite a spike there in 2015, and 2014, 2015, and 2016 were on the higher end

of the range, and then landings have since kind of bounced around there, but dropped towards the lower end, in the ten-million-pound range.

Then a similar graph here, looking at landings by state, and this is for recreational landings, and, there again, blue is representing North Carolina and South Carolina landings, green representing the Mid-Atlantic and New England, and then the red is representing Florida and Georgia, and you can see those landings have -- The proportion has stayed somewhat the same, and it's interesting that, in recent years -- In 2015, for example, you had a lot of landings coming from the Mid-Atlantic and New England, and so you have some green popping up quite a bit, particularly in the latter years. Then this is a look at the recreational releases of dolphin, and this is in numbers of fish.

AP MEMBER: That previous slide, are those numbers of fish, or are those pounds?

MR. HADLEY: These are in -- I think it's in pounds, but let me double-check that, really quick. It should be. Yes, it's pounds.

AP MEMBER: Thank you.

MR. HADLEY: This is certainly in pounds up here, and so all the landings are in pounds, and the releases are in numbers. Any other questions on the landings info, before I move along a little bit? All right. Moving forward, jumping back over to landings by month, and so looking at kind of the seasonal -- The seasonality of the fishery, what is shown here are the distribution of landings by two-month wave, and this is average landings from 2000 to 2022. You can see there is really sort of a spike in landings there in the May-June time period, and then it drops off considerably throughout the rest of the year.

Moving over to recreational landings, you see a similar spike, but it's not quite as steep of a takeoff, if you will, and it doesn't come down quite as steeply in the latter months, but, there again, you do have the overlap of, not surprisingly, the May-June time period, where you see the majority of dolphin landings.

Moving over to the ex-vessel value of dolphin landings, in general, these have decreased over time. As you saw in the graph in recent years, commercial landings have decreased, and so along with the revenue from those landings has decreased, and a similar trend, but not quite exactly the same, and the ex-vessel price for dolphin has ranged between really -- Well, \$2.90 to \$3.40, variable by year, but it has been on the lower end of that range in recent years. Of note, the ex-vessel price is certainly dictated, to some extent, by imported dolphin, particularly from other regions, and other oceans, really, the Pacific as well.

Then, last, but not least, looking at some economic impact information, and so this is looking at the economic impacts of commercial dolphin landings, and this tracks very closely with the ex-vessel price, and that's not really too surprising there, but, in general, it has ranged from \$35 million to around \$10 million for sales impacts, supporting about twelve-and-a-half-million to two-and-a-half-million dollars in income, and, in general, the model outputs of that estimate to support about 450 to around a little under 100 jobs.

Moving over to the recreational side, looking at the economic impacts of trips, directed trips, for dolphin, and so these are trips that essentially targeted, indicating targeting, dolphin or kept dolphin. In general, those numbers range between about \$400 million to around \$320 million, and so it's a considerably high there, and there's a considerable amount of effort for dolphin, and so that certainly isn't too much of a surprise. The income impacts range from about \$100,000 to \$120,000, and then the estimate for the jobs supported ranges from about a little under 2,000 to a little over 2,300. That's all the background information that I have, and I'm happy to go back and look at anything else, before we get into the discussion questions.

MR. BURROWS: Anyone out there have a question or a clarification? I see no one online right now.

MR. WHITAKER: Well, the only thing I have is, in the -- As you go back, and I think it's under recreational value, and you had it going way down in 2020, and it hasn't -- It hasn't for me, and it has stayed pretty damn steady, and so, anyway, I just wanted to make that point, and I think I speak for all the charter boats in North Carolina.

MR. BURROWS: I was going to say something about please state your name, but --

MR. REYNOLDS: The same thing, and 2020 was probably our busiest year since I've fished, and, I mean, it's twenty-four years professionally charter boat fishing now, and we have not had a busier season than 2020, and so the same thing.

MR. BURROWS: John, fire away on that one.

MR. HADLEY: I think one of the things that you might be seeing here is likely -- So these sales impacts track whatever the recreational effort estimates are, and so, in the early 2020s, spring of 2020, I think we all remember that everything was kind of shutting down, and along with that came the recreational sampling, and so there's probably some noise, if you will, in the data for that, and so that may not be reflective of reality, but duly noted, and I appreciate those comments, that that's not -- That's kind of what -- When I was looking at this, that kind of stood out to me, and I kind of suspected that maybe there's a sampling issue that's not necessarily reflecting reality, on the effort front anyway.

MR. DELIZZA: One of the reasons that I think Jon and the charter guys may have had such a great year in 2020 was, recreationally, in south Florida -- First off, the Keys got closed to visitors for a period of time, and marinas were closed, to where we couldn't even access our boats, and public ramps all over south Florida were closed, and so there was a number of months where a recreational guy with his own boat couldn't fish, and so the only way to go fish was to fish with a charter guy that had his boat in the water, and so it might be some of that that shows a drastic difference, too.

MR. HADLEY: That's a good point, and that's something that we saw in the Charleston area too, is all the local boat ramps shut down for a little bit, and they were out of luck for a little bit, but duly noted, and I appreciate that, and that's probably part of what's showing up there in the effort data, and then, down the road, what shows up in the economic impacts.

MR. BURROWS: Anyone else, before we move along? Back to you, John.

MR. HADLEY: All right, and so this is the point where I turn it over to you all to kind of work through some of these questions, and the idea is to try to get -- We're going to go through a series of sort of fishing, fishing behavior, get some economic and social information, and then, you know, from an ecological perspective, what are you seeing out on the water, what do you think is going on out on the water, that sort of information, and so, with this, this first section, it focuses on changes in catches, and maybe changes in fishing behavior, and so we're looking for discussion, and I will try to fill in bullet points here as everybody speaks, but looking at when are where are dolphin available, and has that changed in the recent years, looking at the seasonality, timing, geographic range of catches, and has the average size of fish changed? If so, how? Do you think the abundance of dolphin has changed? Looking at the past ten years, have there been effort shifts to or from the species, and has there been a considerable change in fishing techniques or gears used to target dolphin?

MR. BURROWS: Jon, have at it.

MR. REYNOLDS: All right. I just wanted to start with this, and there's been a lot of kind of discussion about abundance of dolphin being a south Florida issue, and maybe like a change in the center of abundance or something like that, and that's not reflective of data, and there's definitely a higher increase, even in the data, a higher increase in effort, all the way up the coast, and reduced landings, and I just wanted to read this, from a South Carolina guy anyways.

Here's a good conversation topic, and me and a buddy were talking about how hard we've been working to catch fish the past few years, and we've been friends for over thirty years, and we found some pictures the other day of what we caught back in 2006, and now we're thirty-six, and, back then, we had no idea what we were doing, and no business being sixty miles offshore, and thirty-pound-plus mahi was not uncommon. All we had were our friends and a twenty-two-foot boat, and so here's where we talk about gear and technology, and a borrowed hand GPS and a set of batteries.

Fast-forward to now, and we have a \$100,000 boat, \$8,000 in electronics, a lot more know-how, money, gear, and fuel to travel 200 miles in a day. We halfway understand temperature breaks and what to look for, and we're lucky if we catch eight or ten gaffers in a day. Now, there's a boat or two that has a hell of a day, if you can catch my drift, but that's about it. We fished a tournament two weeks ago, and we came in second, with an 18.6-pound mahi, and first was twenty-two pounds. Has anyone else seen a drastic change in fishing lately? By the way, this is out of Charleston, South Carolina.

I mean, that's just another testimony of someone else, and I'm just clarifying that, and then most of the commercial landings now are coming from up north, and so, if the commercial landings are decreasing as well, and there is said to be a different center of abundance -- I'm a commercial guy, and there is -- When you're going for it, and you get opportunity, you're going for it, and so, if there's a reduction in landings in both ends, and there is a giant increase in effort as well, then I think it's pretty fair to say, even backing up all the data, that there's a pretty good reduction in stock going on, and we don't have a stock assessment, and so we have to rely on fishermen and data and catch data, and all that is showing a reduction, and so I just wanted to point that out. Even with faster boats, more boats, more effort, all the way up the coast, we're still seeing less fish and smaller fish.

MR. BURROWS: Thanks, Jon. What are you seeing, personally?

MR. REYNOLDS: Definitely a lot less fish and a lot smaller fish. I mean, the size of fish isn't anywhere near what it used to be, and it's not even close. The size of schools -- I mean, you know, and we tower fish down there, and so, to the average guy that was in a center-console boat, he might get excited if he gets to a piece of debris, and he might yell, you know, oh my god, there were so many fish, but we're looking at it from a realistic counting numbers and choosing sizes, and, I mean, there wasn't many days where most charter boats, even just more trolling and not even like running-and-gunning, and these were on twelve-knot boats back then, for the most part, and one is going twelve knots, but you were catching multiple slammers in a day, even just trolling large fish, twenty-five to forty pounds, and then the guys that were more aggressive were catching racks full of big ones.

Now, it's -- You know, it's rare to find very many large fish, and we're talking -- It's just like any other fish, you know, and you're looking at spawning aggregation, and, I mean, these fish spawn at certain water temps, and so, if we're looking at the overall catch rates of when we're catching all these fish, well, we're catching them in peak spawn, and, I mean, the tagging data shows the same circles going around.

I mean, the fish are moving, and it's like a conveyor belt full of luggage, except, for now, a lot of the big bags are off the belt, you know, and so the more these fish are spawning together in those -- The larger fish are grouping up and getting hit wherever, up and down, and then there's less fish, and you're just going to have less stock, and, I mean, that's like Science 101 to fisheries.

MR. BURROWS: Thank you, Jon. Who is next?

MR. WHITAKER: Well, I will start out, but one of the reasons that I got back on the advisory panel for dolphin wahoo is because it is my biggest source of income. Most of my customers come to the Outer Banks to go catch -- They come to catch meat, and they like to eat it, and they like to fish, and they like to catch it, but they also like to eat it, and, yes, I agree with Jon.

In our traditional dolphin places, in May and June, we're not seeing anything like we were seeing ten years ago, but, by the same token, I used to catch forty or fifty white marlin a year, and, in the last five years, I've not caught one in five, but, yet, you look at some of the numbers up above me, and they tell me how many -- How great the fishing is, and so I am -- I don't think it's fair to throw me in, and I can tell you, with five-dollar gasoline, and an inlet that we struggle to get out of, that, if I call my customers from Ohio or Pennsylvania or West Virginia or Michigan or all over the Northeast, they have to book my boat six months in advance, and they get one day, to choose that day, and they like to come down, but, if I call them up and tell them that I can only catch thirty dolphin, then they're not going to book my boat, mine and many more.

Jay is listening, and I'm sure that he would agree with me, and I've talked to several of my constituents about it, but -- I didn't catch more than thirty dolphin a whole lot of times last year, but they come with thinking they have the opportunity to catch that, and, if they can, they take them home, and they eat every daggone one of them, and, a lot of times, they call me in October and say, are you catching dolphin now, and I would like to come, but, back to the dolphin.

No, we're not seeing them traditionally like we have, but, by the same token, the last two years, I have caught what I call nice bairlers, four to six-pound dolphin, and I don't know exactly what size they would be, but they're eighteen inches or better, most of them, but there are big schools of them, but we see them in July, August, September, and October. We're not -- We're seeing them at a different time of the year, and, in fact, a lot of the boats are not booked then, just because it has not been our prime season, and so don't throw me under the bus.

Jon -- I agree with him, and I don't think that -- I mean, a lot of times, and I will give you a prime example, that I call boats in Wilmington, boats in Morehead City, and I like to know what's coming up the line, and, lots of times, they say, no, we're not seeing nothing, and we might catch four or five a boat, and we go out there the next day, and there are lots of dolphin.

No, there are not many big ones. I would be -- My citation rate has gone from maybe twenty a year to maybe three or five, and so, yes, I'm concerned about dolphin, but I guess what I'm arguing is that there are -- We do have the opportunity to catch them, and I certainly don't want -- From what I am seeing, I am a little bit encouraged on what we're seeing out there the last couple of years. I'm hoping you all are going to see it in Florida, and I know you have a -- Maybe this year will change, and I hope it does, but I think we need to look at it before I get some draconian measures put on me. Thank you.

MR. BURROWS: Thank you, Rom, and, Michael, you were getting ready to speak there.

MR. PLAIA: In the Northeast, basically, our fishery is strictly a summer fishery. It basically doesn't start until July, and it's over by the end of September. Let me start with the ten-year history type of thing, and I'm not sure if the timeline is exactly right, but it used to be that we only caught dolphin in the canyons, at the end of the continental shelf, and we never caught dolphin inshore, and, back then, we were mainly trolling for tuna and marlin, and so, when you did catch a dolphin on a troll, it was always a fairly large one, because they were going after a big lure, and they were swimming very fast to catch up to the boat.

That has changed somewhat in the last few years, and you can blame it on global warming, or you can blame it on additional fish being around, but, more recently, there has been a run of dolphin inshore of the canyons, and dolphin are not targeted by anybody, at least back historically, when it was a canyon fishery, and it was just too far to go to catch a couple of little fish, and, I mean, we were tuna fishermen and marlin fishermen, and, to us, dolphin were just a tasty bycatch, but no one was going to go a hundred miles each way to catch dolphin.

Now, there is a developing a targeted fishery with the fish that come inshore, and, by inshore, I mean fifteen to twenty miles offshore, and we have a lot of lobster gear in the water, all the way from fifteen miles or so offshore all the way out to the canyons, and, as Jon alluded to earlier, one of the reasons why the lobstermen were getting upset about it is because, out in the canyons, the mahi congregate around the lobster pots, and that's -- We don't have a lot of floating debris, generally, and so they congregate around -- The lobster pots are typically marked with three big orange balls and a high-flyer, and so that's where they congregate, and so I can understand why the lobster fishermen were upset that they couldn't keep dolphin.

Lately, there has been a few -- I wouldn't say a lot, but a few private boats that have started to target mahi within that fifteen to twenty-five-mile range, and it's strictly -- That is basically an

August and maybe early September fishery, and it doesn't go on -- The water has got to get warm enough for them to come inshore, and that doesn't happen until sometime in August, and I guess that's my contribution to the discussion.

MR. BURROWS: Thank you, Michael. It's good to have a different perspective in the room. We haven't had that in this group before, and so thank you for that. I do have two questions. These inshore dolphin that they're starting to target more, first of all, what's the size of those, and is anybody bailing dolphin up there? Is that a thing north of North Carolina now?

MR. PLAIA: I'm sorry, and I didn't quite understand the question.

MR. BURROWS: I'm trying to figure out the size that these inshore dolphin usually run.

MR. PLAIA: In the inshore fishery, I would say they probably are less than ten pounds. In the canyon fishery, as I said earlier, when we're trolling for tuna, typically, if we get a hit, it's a larger fish, and it's a twenty-pound fish, or better, and I've seen forty-pound fish come up, too. The other thing is, in the canyon fishery, most boats will carry lighter gear suitable for dolphin, and, when you're running a boat from up in the tower, you can see the dolphin under the lobster gear, and so, when you're running the boat, and, if you see the dolphin, you break out the lighter stuff, and you catch a bunch of dolphin before you go back to tuna fishing.

MR. BURROWS: Thanks again, and, for these inshore dolphin that you described, what techniques are they generally using?

MR. PLAIA: Generally speaking, in the canyon fishery, and in the inshore fishery, they are using basically spinning gear, so they can cast, and sometimes it's artificial, and sometimes it's bait, and everybody, you know, picks their own poison, but, in the canyon fishery, usually it's artificial, because you don't have a lot of bait aboard, unless -- Now I'm going to get into a lot of the gory details, but, if you're fishing in August or September, you have bait aboard, because you're going to chum fish at night for tuna, all right, and so you might cut up a couple of butterfish, or a couple of mackerel, or whatever you have, into chunks, and you fish that, but, generally speaking, most guys prefer artificial, and the fish -- You know, again, even in the canyon, and inshore, a ten-pound fish is a big fish, if you're doing it that way, if you're catching them on spinning gear.

MR. BURROWS: Thanks. That's exactly what I was wanting to know.

MR. BERRY: I guess I will shoot off the hip here, if that's okay. Boy, the more we talk, the more complex it gets, and I want to kind of back up to just the overall -- I've been keeping up with this stuff for the last year or so, and just all the comments that the council gets, and friends of mine say, and everything else, that I think everybody wants bigger fish and more fish, and I guess how do we get there, you know, including like Captain Rom and his customers, you know, and I don't know if they want more fish or bigger fish, or probably they would prefer both, and I think that's just everybody's goal.

I want to back up, since I'm probably one of the elders in here, I should say, and I fished a lot of blue water, strictly blue water, from 1978 basically until about the mid-1990s, is where I spent most of my time. I can honestly say that I was mostly out on the edge of blue water, hunting weed lines and the shelf break out there, and I spent a whole lot of time in ninety foot or a hundred foot

or 120 foot of bottom in there, back in the old days, hunting dolphin. We just went and did that, and I would jump to say that, real quick.

I do see a more targeted fishery, in the last fifteen or twenty years, especially ten years, inshore, fishing that hardbottom in ninety foot, or 110 foot, of water, just those terraces, and people are fishing those hard, I mean for dolphin. I mean, they're fishing them hard, and they're using all kinds of techniques that I never used, and I was all top water every day, and I was blue marlin fishing, primarily, and dolphin just happened to be another species in the mix, and they were always big dolphin offshore, and I see a lot of smaller dolphin inshore, but I see them being targeted, and they're using everything they can, and they're even using planers, and I never even fished with planers, myself, for dolphin, but that's what they're doing off of Wilmington and down through the Murrells Inlet area.

I used to see -- I think, and just looking to other people that were fishing out there, and I think there used to be more fish and bigger fish, and the one thing that Captain Jon said, from that letter he wrote, yes, these people have got all kinds of technology these days, and we used to sit around a fax machine waiting for a report to come in, because the internet didn't even exist, and we would sit by the fax machine to see where the water was, where we were going the next day. These guys just pull it up on their iPhones, and you can just pick out all those water breaks, and it's just a lot easier.

I guess what I'm getting at is it seems like there's a whole lot more people out there fishing, and they've got a whole lot more advantages, including techniques, and you can go on YouTube and learn how to rig a ballyhoo or a swimming lure or something, but, anyway, it seems like a whole lot of targeted effort and getting less than in the old days, and they are catching more fish targeted inshore, and I know that, but, like I think both of you captains said, last year, like off of Wilmington, Murrells Inlet, and maybe not Charleston, and I'm not sure about this far south, but it was like -- Everybody was talking about it being a banner year for dolphin, and I know it's got its ups and downs, and then, also, things seem to happen in spurts, and things are more common now than spread out more evenly, like in the old days. Do you know what I mean?

Like Captain Rom said, you go out for one day, and you find the fish, and you go back for several more days, and there's no fish there, and where did they go, and it used not to be like that, and I know it can be, you know, climate change and different things. Anyway, I will shut up. I could ramble on. Thank you.

MR. BURROWS: Thanks, Chip. We're fishing the same waters, and so I see a lot of the same things. We've got a lot of big, expansive water, from a hundred feet to 200 feet, that's wider than you see at the Outer Banks or you see in south Florida, and there is fish in there, but you're working harder to catch them. Mike.

MR. PLAIA: It's really more of a question than a comment, and has there been any science done to determine what happens to the dolphin that come up to the Northeast during the winter? I mean, I know, for example, we get a lot of tropical fish that come up on the Gulf Stream and work their way inshore, and they're around, and, I mean, you can catch all kinds of tangs and butterflyfish and whatnot around the docks inshore during the late summer, and I'm told by the scientists that they all die, because they can't handle the winter, and I just wondered if the same thing happens

with dolphin, or do the dolphin actually migrate back down south during the -- When the water gets too cold?

MR. HADLEY: I think the answer is it depends, but, based on some of the tagging data from the Dolphinfish Research Program, and they've done some satellite tags, and those fish are probably kind of doing the whole loop around the North Atlantic and back down, and so they're not necessarily -- They're not like the tropical species that are stuck, so to speak, once the water cools down. They can move, and they tend to kind of basically follow the Gulf Stream over, and then, if they make it, come back around and end up down on, potentially, the eastern edge of the Bahamas and the Caribbean and that sort of thing.

MR. PLAIA: So they're like cold-water bluefish.

MR. HADLEY: Kind of, yes, and so they do sort of a clockwise -- They tend to do a clockwise migration, rather than a north-south migration, like a king mackerel or a Spanish mackerel or that sort of thing.

MR. BURROWS: I miss Don Hammond. He could have answered that and told you exactly where they went. He was using satellite pop-up tags, and so I think John handled that really well.

MR. HADLEY: All right, and if there -- I don't know if there are any other observations on the fishery. If not, we'll jump into some of the -- I don't know if this captures everything pretty well, and I will go back and probably re-listen to this conversation and add some to this, and maybe move some of those sections around, but I tried to take notes sort of on-the-fly there, but we can always come back to it, if there's anything that comes up. I think there were some points made that might come up in some of the other questions that I wrote down here, and so I will reiterate those.

Moving kind of out of the fishery realm and into some of the social and economic influences, we'll focus first on demand for dolphin, and so starting off looking at it from a commercial perspective, and how is the dockside, as well as the retail or restaurant, price and demand for dolphin changed, and how has it changed over time, and what sort of indicators? Is it strong or not so strong, and what may be impacting some of the prices?

Moving over to the recreational side, how has demand for trips targeting dolphin changed, looking at charter trips as well as onboard private vessels? Among the species you target, how important are dolphin to your overall business, and I think Rom kind of did a good job of mentioning that earlier, and so duly noted on that, and then, finally, how important are dolphin to trip satisfaction on recreational trips? I will turn it back over to the AP.

MR. BURROWS: I am going to start calling on people here shortly. Hang on. I see a name up there. Glenn, please.

MR. HOPKINS: I haven't chimed-in yet. Anyway, for the commercial sector, I was even amazed at one of the graphs that showed the ex-vessel price was just -- Nobody would fish for that, and so I would just make a note that that was way off. I mean, we're -- People are begging for mahi, and, the last two years, back to the other subject, was it's been relatively slow, and we target whatever, and our tuna and swordfish has been really good, and so we haven't switched over to actually

target mahi in the last two years, because there is fish there, but it's just not economically -- Or you've got a better option, in other words, but demand for fresh mahi is off the chain, and, I mean, we've got as much as \$6.00 or \$7.00 a pound to the boat this past season, and so that part -- This is extreme demand, local demand, for mahi.

It doesn't seem -- Our price has always been dictated by imports too, and I assume that imports have been less in the last few years, and so that's part of the reason, but the quality -- You know, everybody is quality conscious these days, with the health movement and everything else, and so, from the commercial side, demand is very high, and ex-vessel prices are extremely high. What else was on there?

As far as target species, I think I covered that, and we have excellent tuna and sword fishing, and so -- The prices on that have been very, very high, and so there's not been much incentive to target the mahi, and I would also go back to your graphs earlier about -- There is a lot of up and down, and that's probably the nature of the life cycle of the fish, only being five years from being born to being done reproducing, and, if you look at the graph, you see it, and was it 2015 or 2016 or something, and we just -- I tend to think of, well, damn, that was a great year, and Ray Charles could have caught mahi at the inlet or whatever, and so we tend to remember those really phenomenal days and trips and everything else, and you will notice there is a peak, and then there's the decline, and there's a peak and a decline, and that's just my opinion, it's the cycle, and it's a short cycle, and so hopefully it should be better.

MR. BURROWS: Thank you, Glenn. One clarification that I was wondering about. When you mentioned price, were you referring to the 2020 graph?

MR. HOPKINS: Yes.

MR. BURROWS: Thank you. Yes, I thought that was off myself. Jay Kavanagh.

MR. KAVANAGH: I can address Sections 3 and 4. There's no question that dolphin is our number-one most important species, and it's extremely important. It's the number-one most important fish for trip satisfaction, and I would venture that most North Carolina charter boats would say the same thing.

MR. BURROWS: I would agree with that. Jon Reynolds.

MR. REYNOLDS: As far as commercial demand, I mean, we've had all of our restaurants in the Keys write letterheads and letters to the council, asking for charter boat fish sales to be reinstated. I mean, we do not -- We do not have a longline fleet, and we survive off of hook-and-line commercial fishing, and it's putting all the guys out of business, and, look, this is a shared fishery. These are the same fish up there and down here, and we've got to find some way to meet that commercial, and there's like 2,300 permits out there, and a lot of them are in south Florida, and, you know, those fish have to reach us, and so we've got to figure that out.

The way we fish down there, it's different, and it's a very small, localized fishery, and so that, but, yes, demand for that, but imports -- It's terrible, and the big fish houses are kind of controlling the market, really, is what's going on, and it's big loads of fish coming in, from Ecuador and South America, for the most part, and it's killing us, and hopefully we can do something about that.

From the charter and recreational point of view, there is no doubt that dolphin is number-one on the list, and people want to catch bigger fish. From the memory standpoint of good days and bad days, that's what I've been trying to work on with Julia, is we put together a large file, so that we're not working off of memory, and we have years attached, and, I mean, racks with fish, and sizes of fish, and, you know, it's very clear that it's not just up and down, and this is an overall trend, but, yes, the demand is way, way up. I mean, there is no -- If people could catch dolphin year-round on charters, they would do it, because they love eating them, and, you know, it's all-around ultimate recreational and charter fish. Thank you.

MR. BURROWS: Thank you, Jon. Great points.

MR. WHITAKER: To address 2, 3, and 4, I think it is, but has demand for trips targeting dolphin -- I think I speak for I know boats in our area, but the majority of boats in North Carolina, and it has increased. The demand for dolphin has increased, and one of the reasons is that yellowfin tuna used to be one of our staples out of Hatteras, and, for whatever reason, they have taken different migrations patterns now, and they seem to bypass us, and they go right on by us, where it used to be, in May and June, we would be catching lots of yellowfin tuna in April, May, and June, and now it's occasionally a catch, but it's definitely -- In my opinion, the demand for dolphin, catching dolphin, has increased.

For 3, how important, I think I said that before, how important it is to me, and it is my number-one reason that I book charter trips out of Hatteras, is because of dolphin, and so I need them, and I think you all realize how important they are to us, and I think the fourth one -- I mean, they're good to eat.

When people spend fifty-cents a pound to have them cleaned, and then another \$3.00 a bag to have them vacuum packed, so they can eat them for almost a twelve-month period, then they're serious about it, and people think that all those fish are wasted, and, no, I can tell you that they're eaten. Those people love them, and, to add to John's part a little bit, I do understand some of the guys do commercial fish, and that local market is very important, not only for them, but for our -- Just to be able for our restaurants to advertise local seafood I think is critical to that industry. Thank you.

MR. OWSLEY: I would like to echo, on Number 1, to what Glenn said. I kind of was thinking back in my head and trying to think of the average dollar per pound on some trip tickets when I had a boat targeting dolphin commercially, and I thought that price was -- It seemed really low to me, and I know the demand has always been high for the fish houses to get dolphin and just restaurants, and what Jon Reynolds say too, and they were always --

Everyone wants the fresh, local-caught fish and stuff, and especially in, you know, Georgia, and tourism and stuff, and people come in, and they want to eat -- They go to a local restaurant, and they want to eat local-caught fish, and they're kind of somewhat offended for some imported fish, and so I thought that number was off, and I was thinking that I was around \$5.00 a pound, and, of course, we got them a little earlier, before they came to South Carolina and North Carolina, and so the market was flooded with fish, and so I was able to get a little higher price before everyone started catching them.

One of the things too that I would say is, back in 2015 and 2016, I used to see more commercial boats specifically targeting dolphin off of Georgia and northeast Florida, and I'm trying to think back in memory, and I don't know when I've seen a commercial dolphin boat, and I think, kind of like maybe Glenn said, there's some stuff that is better worth the effort, and maybe the dolphin -- The juice isn't worth the squeeze, when there's another species that they could target.

Point number two is I charter fish and fish privately, and I fish whenever work will really allow me, but I think the demand for people who want to go fishing for dolphin has increased, and I think that's probably -- Someone mentioned technology and stuff, in terms of cartography and temp charts and bathymetries and just Instagram and Facebook, and so everyone wants to go fishing to catch dolphin, and my thing is, you know, it's weather dependent and stuff.

Out of Georgia, it would probably be, questionably, one of the longest runs to that fishery, out of anyone in this region, short of the canyons up in the Northeast, and so it's definitely a big demand on that, and I had -- If you could scroll up, I've got three -- I could talk about those other ones too, or scroll down, to -- With dolphin, it seems like, when I'm wahoo fishing in tournaments, and everyone wants to go catch wahoo, we always try to persuade them into waiting until we have the dolphin here, because wahoo is a good bycatch when you're targeting dolphin as well, but it seems like dolphin is -- Everyone wants to go catch dolphin, and I always -- We talk about recruitment and getting more people into fisheries and stuff, and, as an offshore species, I don't know of -- There's probably some comparable ones, but dolphin is a really, really good species to introduce a child to fishing.

I've had from probably six-year-olds out on the boat, and they just absolutely love fishing for dolphin, and so that kind of -- 3 and 4 is kind of the same, just with trip satisfaction, and they want to catch dolphin.

I don't necessarily have -- I know that Rom stepped out, but it sounds like the majority of his clients are strictly meat hunters, and I think I've had a lot of people that they enjoy the meat and the fruits of their labor, but they also really enjoy the sport, and so I've kind of got kind of a different maybe clientele, or opinion, on that too, because, you know, a lot of people are just wanting something to do, to get outside and so on and so forth, and so that's all I have. Thanks.

MR. BURROWS: Thank you, Dan. Jon.

MR. REYNOLDS: Just to kind of quantify it, just because this is -- We get a lot of data from the Florida Keys Tourist Development Council, and so just the Florida Keys alone, okay, ocean recreation and tourism account for 58 percent of the local economy, and that's \$2.3 billion in annual sales a year, okay, and that's supporting like 33,000 jobs. Between 2007 and 2008, there were 400,000 visitors, and two-million of them participated in recreational sportfishing in the Keys, and that's a big economic point, and I just wanted to put that -- We can talk about how valuable it is, but quantifying it into like data through the development council is a big deal. Thanks.

MR. BURROWS: Thank you, Jon. One point I wanted to make, when we talk about the economic impact of dolphin being pretty entrenched in the restaurant business, and, with the seafood side of that, when it comes to dolphin, we can't get enough. We can't get enough fresh fish, and we can't get enough consistency with what we get. The demand for it is insatiable. You could have it as a

special every night of the week and sell it all, especially during the summer, when we're at or above capacity, and I shouldn't say that, and I will probably get in trouble for that, but we can't get enough. Anyone else? Then we'll move along.

MR. HADLEY: All right, and I certainly appreciate this discussion. This is -- I mean, this is great, and it's exactly the kind of information that we're looking for, and so thank you. Moving over, from a community perspective, what communities are dependent on the dolphin fishery, and have changes in infrastructure affected fishing opportunities for dolphin, like docks, marinas, fish houses, and, also, how have fishermen and communities adapted to changes in the dolphin fishery, if there are any observed changes, in general?

MR. OWSLEY: For (b)(iii), I think the fishermen and communities -- I know the fishermen have definitely adapted to using technology, whether it be like Chip said about the old ROFFS fax, and, I mean, that's kind of a little bit before me, but I know that, nowadays, you've got the charts on your phone, or Hilton's, and I know I use that, and, if I'm tournament fishing, I'm using ROFFS, and then I call off my sat phone to get an update midday, and so I know that technology has really been used to -- There's a lot of people fishing, I think, and a lot of people have access to that technology.

MR. BERRY: I might answer to that community question, and I was just thinking about -- You know, I live kind of dual from Murrells Inlet to Wilmington, and Wilmington has really become a dolphin city, come to think of it. I mean, the sport is growing, and people spend money like crazy. The restaurants want them. If you go into a restaurant that has good, fresh seafood, I mean, there's dolphin prints all over the wall, and, I mean, they're glorified, and I think it's reflected in the sport, the beauty of the fish, the meat, the whole -- I don't know, but the whole culture around the dolphin, in terms of sportfishing, and like Captain Rom and all in Hatteras, and I mean things like that are -- I don't know what else I can say, but it's got a big impact on the communities, and the sport and the people in it, and you can see it everywhere, I think. Thank you.

MR. BURROWS: Thank you, Chip. I am going to put somebody on the spot here and just -- I'm going to put three of you on the spot, and I know, Jon, I know you live in a place with a really strong historical dolphin fishery, and, Glenn and Rom, you do, too. For part two, there's been a lot of changes in infrastructure, and, Rom, you had some comments on the inlet earlier, and I think that applies to this, but I would like to know what you all think, as far as what's changing, or is access diminishing?

MR. REYNOLDS: I would say, in our area, there is more access. With the growth, and, you know, the Keys was kind of like a gravel road almost going in there when I was growing up, and it was a little asphalt road, and you wouldn't see many cars. Now it's built up, and the docks, the marinas, and there's a lot more access for boats, for private boats, for people coming down, and a lot more charter boats, and a lot more accessibility, for recreational fishing, a lot more houses on the water, and so there's a lot more accessibility.

I would say, as far as the community dependence, I would have to echo Chip on that. Dolphin is -- Culturally, in south Florida, it's iconic. You know, there is no more important fish, and I would say, for kids, and for getting into the fishery, that's giant, but, yes, infrastructure -- I would say that's probably -- You know, a lot of the docks and marinas are switching over, and things are just becoming like nicer overall, and higher dollar.

MR. BURROWS: Thank you.

MR. WHITAKER: I would echo pretty much what Jon says. Now, in Hatteras, we are very limited by, number one, an inlet that's been treacherous for the last four or five years, and so that's very much limited a big boat from coming to Hatteras, I would say, over forty-five feet, and, of course, we do have a few boat ramps there, but nothing like what would be available in Morehead City, or even up in the Manteo area, and Glenn could speak to that.

I mean, the techniques have gotten better, and the electronics have gotten better, and the boats are faster. The fishing equipment is better, and so all that has to be taken into consideration, and maybe I should do it under environmental, but I think, and I can't speak for Florida, but I can speak for North Carolina, and the shark population has -- I think it has had a devastating effect on the tunas, and now we're starting to even see them start eating dolphin, and so I think HMS, who manages the larger sharks, the sandbars and the duskies, are finally starting to look at it, but they are very, very slow from looking to an actual something getting done, and I think something needs to be done immediately, myself, but that's all.

MR. BURROWS: Thank you.

MR. HOPKINS: Concerning the infrastructure, I think it more or less really pertains to the commercial industry, because there is no infrastructure, hardly, anymore, and, I mean, it's just the nature of the beast. Waterfront property is at a premium, and fish houses are -- You know, if it's not in the current generation, the next generation, and it only makes sense to sell out, and so we're blessed, in our area, but a big conglomerate just came in and bought up a lot of the stuff here just recently, and so guys are scrambling for places to tie their boats up, but, back in the day, I used to travel as far down here as Shem Creek, and the infrastructure in between -- We were used to being at home, and, you know, you would get ice and fork lifts and all that stuff, freezers for bait, yada, yada, yada, and, I mean, you come down and try and travel up and down the coast, and you can't even hardly get fuel or a place to tie up anywhere.

I was blessed to spend the month of February in the Keys, and, like you say, every square inch of waterfront has got a boat in front of it, and the guys are fishing, and so I think it pertains more to the commercial thing, and, I mean, the infrastructure for sportfishing is great right now, it looks like to me. What was the other question?

I will have to agree with Rom on the shark situation. Holy cow, and I think everybody in the room that fishes would agree with that, from everywhere, and the importance of dolphin -- I mean, it's simplistic, but, anywhere on the east coast that there is dolphin caught, it's an important part of the community and the economy, and so --

MR. BURROWS: Thank you.

MR. BERRY: I thought Captain Rom earlier said something that was really interesting, because I haven't really thought about that in a while, but thinking about all the kind of directed fishery and how important dolphin is, yes, we used to have yellowfin tuna so thick out there that we would pick up and run from them sometimes, when you're like marlin fishing, because you stay hooked

up with the yellowfin tuna all day, and I think it's a migratory change, hopefully, for the most part, but they haven't been around for a while.

The other thing that has happened, and I see it a lot, but there's a lot of people moving here from the north, and the New York area and just up in the Northeast, and they're moving down here, and a lot of those guys and girls fish, and they're jumping into the sport, and so that's just more people wanting more dolphin, and especially when the tuna aren't here, and so I thought that I would just point that out. Thank you.

MR. BURROWS: Thank you, Chip. Anyone else? Would now be a good time to take a quick break and let everybody collect their thoughts?

MR. HADLEY: Absolutely.

MR. BURROWS: Let's do fifteen minutes, and so, at 3:35-ish, we'll be back.

(Whereupon, a recess was taken.)

MR. BURROWS: All right. Let's everybody take a seat and get this rolling again.

MR. PLAIA: I would just like to make one comment overall concerning this, and not necessarily addressing these questions, but if this is the right time, or if you want me to hold off, and it's up to you.

MR. BURROWS: Go ahead.

MR. PLAIA: Getting ready for this meeting, and I was sitting outside before, and I looked up the MRIP numbers for the New England states and New York, and every one of them had a percent standard error well over the 50 percent mark, which, in MRIP terms, means you should not use that for any management decision, all right, and every state, from New York on up to -- Well, Maine and New Hampshire had no reported landings, but, from New York to Massachusetts, all of them were in the 60, 70, 80 percent PSE range, and so, I mean, there's a whole bunch of caveats to be taken from that.

MR. BURROWS: There is some good debates out there about MRIP numbers, and I just got back from one of those, and that was a lot of fun, and it left my head spinning, and so you're absolutely right that there's a lot of arguments there. John, did you want to --

MR. HADLEY: Sure. You know, I appreciate that, and it's duly noted on the MRIP numbers, and I know that they can be fairly high for some of the Mid-Atlantic and New England states, for dolphin in particular, but, jumping back into some of the questions, to kind of wrap up the fishery performance report, we have two other major topics to cover, one environmental and the other getting some feedback on management measures.

I know we had a discussion of the increase in sharks, which I certainly think falls under this category, but some of the other topics that could be covered are are there any unique effects of environmental conditions on dolphin? What are you seeing now, in terms of recruitment? Where are the small fish? I know, Rom, you were talking about some of the small fish that have shown

up later in the year, kind of late summer or early fall, but are others seeing that, or are they not seeing that? Have you noticed a change in the species caught with dolphin over the years, and we've talked a little bit about the yellowfin fishery, and rather the lack thereof, and so maybe a change in the yellowfin fishery has impacted dolphin, or the demand for dolphin. Have you noticed a change in the typical location?

That's something that I know, for New England in particular, and, Mike, I appreciate those comments, and that's duly noted on particularly the inshore fishery in recent years, and that's pretty fascinating stuff, but I think that certainly falls under here as well, and so, with that, I will turn it over to the AP.

MR. REYNOLDS: In the last few years, I guess there's a lot more sargassum, and there's a lot of bait in the sargassum. We're still seeing current -- You know, the current in the same locations, and recruitment -- I mean, with the fish going in a loop like that, we even affect when the fish show up in recruitment. If we're whacking these fish, they're not alive to be here, and they're not spawning, for those small fish to be here, and so, you know, even harvest can affect how the whole scheme of things goes.

Then the smaller fish -- You know, they don't have as high of a recruitment, and so, if you're dealing with more sargassum and more predator fish -- Like now we have tons more almaco in the weed, all the time, and so, if you get larger fish, they were eating those, and now it's kind of like a reverse food chain thing. I mean, if smaller fish that are spawning less -- Now you have really, really, really aggressive jacks, building in a larger amount of sargassum, and they're probably killing a lot of recruitment as well, and, you know, it's like a snowball effect.

There's a lot more on the debris, and you're seeing a lot more trash fish, like triggers, almaco, filefish, all that kind of stuff, and then, if there's a few dolphin, and they're trying to spawn, then a lot of their eggs are probably getting eaten, especially if they're not larger fish, with heavier and larger recruitment, and so that's what we're seeing. We're still seeing the debris on time and stuff, like we usually do, from the storms, and the debris usually comes in the fall, and our fish float up certain times of the year, and then we see the migratory fish at different times of the year, you know, where you can have debris where the fish aren't even on it, and so those patterns seem to be the same.

Depth and location, I don't know, and it's typical, I guess, typical depth and location. Usually, on the way out, you're seeing, you know, a few blackbirds on really small fish, and then, when you get out there a little bit deeper, then you have a better chance of probably catching larger fish.

We are seeing a lot more FADs floating up in our fishery the last few years. There is a lot more FADs. We're seeing commercial FADs on a regular basis, every single summer now, and they're big, and they're yellow buoys with Spanish writing on them, and they have a big, giant rope coming down from them, with a big -- We pulled one of them, and it has a big giant like triangle, triangular, heavy like piece of steel on the bottom of it, and, in the last few years, that's a regular occurrence, to see those floating up down there.

AP MEMBER: I just want to ask Jon a question. Are you seeing dolphin around those FADs, or jacks, or what are you seeing?

MR. REYNOLDS: Some, but not -- You know, they would be loaded. Normally something like that would be loaded. Some you catch a few fish on them, and there is some bait on them. You know, you might catch a few wahoo on them, and so there's fish like on them, but not where you would think.

MR. WHITAKER: I do agree with Jon about we see float -- We're not seeing the FADs in our area, not like what he's talking about, but we do see float. There's been a lot of grass lately, but it seems to me that it's been much more scattered. Occasionally, we get a pretty grass line, but not like -- Not near as much as we used to see them, but -- When we find a float, a log or a timber or some bamboo, or maybe an old -- We do see some what looks like maybe lobster pots, or not lobster pots, but conch, or maybe stone crab pots, just like a bullet float, and it will be holding jacks, little jacks, and maybe they're almaco, and they're about this long, a foot long, and you will see some dolphin.

Sometimes you may see twenty or thirty dolphin, but you literally cannot hardly get a bait to them for the jacks, and they just -- They eat everything you put back there, and you just finally give up, or get frustrated, or occasionally you can figure out to get maybe a hundred yards away from it and get the dolphin going and catch some of them, but, in the last couple of years, I do think that further offshore, and sometimes I don't fish in the twenty to thirty-fathom range, where you normally maybe would look for target dolphin, out into the deeper water, over 100 fathoms, and I found some what I call big schools of dolphin, and I mean 200 or 300 fish, by my count, and maybe 500.

I usually underestimate, but they've been -- In the last couple of years, nice, what I call nice, bailers, and that's been encouraging to me, and I don't know exactly where they go, but, to add to that, and Glenn maybe, or Jay, can expand on this, but our summer water temperatures are maybe the same, or slightly above, in the past, but our wintertime water temperatures, in my opinion, have been significantly higher than they have been in the last ten years, and I think, for whatever reason, the Gulf Stream either stays in closer or pushes up further north, for whatever reason, but it seems like we're maintaining seventy-five-degree water all winter, where, before, that seventy-five-degree water might be out there forty miles south of Hatteras, and now we hardly see it past twenty miles. That's as far as typical location, and, you know, they typically -- I mean, I won't agree with that, and I think I've seen more dolphins in the deep water lately than I have in the shallows. Thank you.

MR. BURROWS: Thanks, Rom. I will throw it back to you for just a second, Jon. What depths are you finding these FADs in? That just piqued my interest.

MR. REYNOLDS: The one that lingered for a few days last year -- There was a few days where the current really slowed down, and that one was in about 400, but 400 to, in the rips, 400 to 700.

MR. BURROWS: Are you ever just wandering out there in the deep and seeing what can be seen, as far as dolphin goes? I know you can get to deep water real fast down there.

MR. REYNOLDS: Yes, and there's a lot of -- Especially with, I mean, now the fast boats, and everyone is going for it, and so, yes, you're covering a lot of ground, and, fishing on the line, there's the Bahamian line there, the imaginary line, and so a lot of guys are making it to the line

these days and trying to look out there, and so 1,500 to 2,500, like that, and that's about as deep as we get.

MR. BURROWS: When you get that deep in your area, what's the dolphin fishing experience like?

MR. REYNOLDS: It used to be that there was giant schools out there, especially when you were sword fishing, but you wouldn't target them as much. You would just be sword fishing, and you would see a set coming down you, you know a set of birds, and there would be, you know, 500 or a thousand fish or something, probably, a big, big, big school. I mean, now there's still -- There's still some big schools out there sometimes, and, I mean, a couple of years ago, and I think it was 2017, there was some better schools out there, but, yes, it's getting away from the crowd too and the pressure, and, I mean, probably -- Most of the time now, whereas, in the past, you might make it to 700 or 800 feet, and now you're almost starting in like 600 to 800 feet, really.

MR. BURROWS: Thank you.

MR. SCALISE: I have noticed, probably in the last five or six years, more focus offshore, as far as people dolphin fishing, and it's for a number of reasons, and I guess boats are faster, with triple and quad engines, and they can just blow out there and try and get away from the crowd, and you want to find something floating, and you want to be the first person to find it, and that's going to make your day.

That and probably access to technology and like the Rutgers seawater surface temperature app. If you get a good shot, you can look, and you can sort of -- You're not flying blind, and you can just say like, oh, I think there's going to be a hard break there, and I can run to that, but, I mean, not long ago, you could just stay in thirty fathoms all day, and you were going to catch dolphin. You were going to catch a box full of fish and make your trip, and you really didn't have to go much further than that, and now it just -- Right now, you could make a trip out to the ledge, and you're probably going to catch a couple of wahoo, and maybe some blackfin and stuff, and maybe a dolphin.

I did catch one this past Saturday in 180 feet, which was sort of unusual, but, overall, the focus is a lot further offshore than what it was, just because there is -- You know, it would be once in a blue moon that you would go way out in the deep blue, and now it's like it's where you have to go.

MR. BURROWS: Thanks, Tim. That's a good snapshot there.

MR. OWSLEY: I have been seeing -- I guess I didn't think a whole lot of it, but I have been seeing a lot more grass, and it's real scattered, and so it is frustrating to pick through the salad, so to say, and then, also, to echo Tim, my name of the game is I used to go to the ledge, at thirty fathoms or so, and definitely be there early in the morning, because I like to catch wahoo, and I was also getting a lot of dolphin in there, but it seems like that occurrence has gone down tremendously, and so I always stopped at the ledge in the morning, to try to get the wahoo bite, and then I would head east and continue going east, and further east, until I find something really worth fishing that holds fish, or sometimes we would find something that holds fish, bunched up weeds, and then it just breaks apart and gets everywhere, and then we're kind of looking to get away from the weeds

and trying to find maybe some cleaner water or something that we can fish a little easier, without all the work of getting the grass off the hooks.

MR. BURROWS: Thank you. Mike, I'm going to pick on you again, if I can. Actually, we'll come back to you. Chip was getting ready to speak.

MR. BERRY: I like talking weed lines and water breaks, and I've been watching it for the last two years, like almost daily, and, talking about that scattered grass, I have noticed, like from north Florida to Hatteras, on any given clear day, when you can see down the whole southeast branch there, and there's always about four or five big eddies rolling up north, right on the western wall, and it goes counterclockwise, and it throws those bands of blue water, and it kind of comes back into itself, and I just noticed that there was a lot of those out there.

The other thing that I noticed, from maybe Cape Fear down to north Florida, which is the area that I look at, is I don't think the water, in the middle of the stream, got any lower than seventy-eight degrees, and I don't know if that's high or low, but not all winter. It didn't ever get below about seventy-seven or seventy-eight, or maybe seventy-nine.

MR. BURROWS: Thanks, Chip. That's a good lead-in to the question that I was thinking of for Michael, because he has very different water than we do, and I was wondering, first of all, have your water temps changed that you're seeing, and, second of all, are you seeing grass in your region as well?

MR. PLAIA: We've always had a fair amount of sargassum out at the edge, and we usually don't get big aggregations of sargassum inshore, but, when you get out to the canyons, and I don't know what causes -- Probably the currents, which are not well understood out in the canyons, but there are occasions -- Occasionally, you've got to run away from it, because you just can't fish anywhere near it, especially if you're trolling. I mean, you could just go from one line to the other and just keep clearing it all day, and it just doesn't stop, but, yes, we do see mats of sargassum, ranging from say the size of this table here to -- The worst I've seen has been like a couple of miles across, and we just had to run away from it, but we do see it, yes.

MR. BURROWS: Do you think the water is warmer up there now than what you saw in the past?

MR. PLAIA: I was amazed, listening to you southern boys talk about the water temperatures, and, I mean, if we see seventy degrees, we're happy, you know, and that's where we're heading, and, talk about seventy-five or seventy-eight-degree water, and, I mean, we never see anything like that, and, I mean, I think the highest temperature that I ever remember seeing in the canyons was like seventy-four, and even that was unusual, and it was a big warmwater eddy that came off the stream.

MR. BURROWS: Thank you. Jon.

MR. REYNOLDS: To the water temp thing, we really -- Since there was a lot of talk about that, we started paying attention, like heavily, and so everyone with like temps on their boat, we were really -- We were taking pictures of the screens, and so we were pretty heavy into -- Last year, in May, there was a pretty good amount of fish coming through, like around Memorial Day and stuff, and, most of the time, we were seeing the bigger schools, and it was eighty-three or eighty-four

degrees. I mean, it was warm, but the abundance of fish was still there, and then, in years past, I mean -- I mean, dolphin fishing was almost a year-round thing, and, I mean, you would catch your limit, a lot of times, in January, or like December or something or like, and there was a lot of big gaffers or slammers on the edge, when you were sail fishing. When sails were showering, there was always like big fish mixed in too, and it was cold. I remember doing that in a jacket or something, but just for water temp talk.

MR. BURROWS: Life in the tropics, right? Seeing no one else -- Sorry, Glenn.

MR. HOPKINS: That's all right. Just on this topic, from my experience, and Rom already brought it up, is the sharks in our area, and I don't know how much they're eating them free-swimming, but I know, if we get them on our gear, they're gone, and, if we target the mahi, where we normally would fish for what we do, anywhere from thirty to eighty fathoms or something, you can really get -- You've got to be super careful. I mean, not only will you lose all your fish you catch, but just the shark too, and so it's becoming more and more and more of an issue, as far as our type of fishery is concerned.

Also, talking about water temps, it's the same thing that Rom was saying, and the summer temperatures seem to max out about the same, but just like, right now, my boat is out there, and they're getting ready to set gear in seventy-six-degree water, and here it is -- It hasn't been a very warm spring, but the water is not cooling off like it used to in the wintertime, and there is a lot longer period of warmer water in our area.

MR. BURROWS: Thanks, Glenn.

MR. HADLEY: All right. One of the last major topics -- We're going to get into discussion of the recreational retention limits in a little bit, and we'll talk about the bag limit and size limit, but, overall, do you feel like the general recreational and commercial retention limits are appropriate? There are some kind of concise ones listed up there of ten fish per person, and it's soon to be a fifty-four-fish vessel limit, a twenty-inch minimum size limit from Florida to South Carolina, and then, on the commercial side, no trip limit until 75 percent of the ACL is landed. However, there is a 4,000-pound trip limit once that trigger is met.

There is the 200-pound sort of exception limit for vessels fishing 39 degrees north of 39 degrees North latitude, and so, essentially, that's an incidental catch for vessels that interact with fish and don't have the commercial permit, and, also, that 500-pound trip limit for vessels fishing trap, pot, or buoy gear, and the use of longline gear is prohibited in areas where it's not allowed for HMS species, and so such as off of east Florida, and, again, the twenty-inch minimum size limit does apply to the commercial sector.

Also, do you feel the allocations are appropriate, and it's currently recreational -- What will be 93/7, and so I don't know if there's any discussions on the management measures or feedback on that. There again, we will be getting into the recreational side here shortly, and so I'm happy to -
- Certainly let's hear it now, but we'll be getting into it again here in just a couple of minutes.

MR. BURROWS: I thought that every red light would go off. Jon, do you want to start this out?

MR. REYNOLDS: Well, if we're about to start talking about -- I don't know what we're going to start talking about recreational, and, I mean, this is what Amendment 3 is about, right, is -- Okay, and so I don't think we need to get too deep in that now. I mean, I think we can find a better happy medium, and maybe even think about crew limits, and maybe less in Florida, and, you know, I think our fishery is probably, and our clientele is probably, closer to what maybe Dan was saying about -- You know, they want their meat too, and, I mean, we're talking people that -- I've got guys from Montana and Ohio, and these guys hunt, and they want a freezer full, and they hunt, and they fish, and that's it. You know, they want their meat, but it's a split.

They also want to sportfish, and so I think we're a little on the high side with the vessel limit, for where we want to be, and I think Florida wants to be lower overall, and we're sharing the fishery, and I think what we affect goes up to you guys, and then what you guys catch affects us, and it's a -- You know, it comes around like that, and so I think we need to talk about a happy medium, maybe, or we need to kick it around a lot.

Commercially, you know, I can say, for us, and, I mean, Glenn can probably speak to the fact that there's been -- I know, from the guys I know, there's been more of a targeted effort on longline gear for dolphin, you know from the guys I know, and even guys going up there more often and doing it that, that used to hook-and-line commercial fish more in the Keys, or have charter boat fish sales in the Keys, and have it as kind of like both -- You know, they were like dual-purpose guys, and then more of the fishery went up there, more of a targeted effort, and I don't know how important it is to you guys, you know how crucial, but I know that, for charter boat and for rec guys, it's crucial.

This stock is absolutely crucial to business, and so, you know, I don't know all the aspects of what that's going to be and what we can -- If we're seeing -- If everyone is talking about a decline in stock already, and, you know, I think we need to think about lessening some catches and hitting them quite as hard and figuring out some better management measures, and that's where we're at. That's where I'm at.

MR. BURROWS: Thanks, Jon. I don't see any red lights, but we have, online, Richard.

MR. DELIZZA: I'm going to just dovetail off of what Jon was saying, and I'm recreational, but he and I fish in the same area, and so much of what he has said on all of these subjects is exactly what I've been seeing, and so I've been quietly listening to almost everybody on this call talking about how there is fewer big dolphin, and fewer fish in general, and large schools are harder and harder to find, and so, when you ask the open question of are the management measures effective, it's blatantly obvious that they are not anything close to effective.

They're the same as they were fifteen years ago when I was on the AP, and I am rather -- Well, I am flatly disgusted with the lack of changes that have been going on to these restrictions, and the council has accomplished virtually nothing, other than to drive a fishery that was once thriving into a degree where people down here on the recreational side are just giving up on trying to catch dolphin.

I am sure this is going to make me wildly unpopular, but the special treatment of the North Carolina charter fleet is absolutely ridiculous, and I would love for somebody to explain to me why that influence is as strong as what it is. To think that, to a charter business, it depends on going out

and catching sixty dolphin that have no size limit, under twenty inches, you need to find better fishermen, or you need to be a better fisherman, because, down here, we can't catch sixty dolphin.

You have all -- Most of you have probably seen the statistics, and there aren't recorded trips in Florida of anybody catching more than thirty dolphin, other than less than 1 percent of the trips that go out, and the average trip down here you're catching three or four dolphin, and, for there to be a knock-down-drag-out battle over Amendment 10, to come up with a reduction of six fish, from sixty to fifty-four, is embarrassing, and so, no, not a single one of those measurements are appropriate, not one of them, and the carve-outs for North Carolina need to come to an end.

MR. BURROWS: Thank you, Richard.

MR. WHITAKER: Well, I take exception to that. I think I'm a damned good fisherman, and, you know, if Florida wants thirty fish, then fine. I want them to have thirty fish. I mean, the real increase in effort seems to be coming from the recreational sector. If they want to go to five and thirty fish, that's fine with me, but for you to tell me that it's not going to affect me, you're way off base. It is going to affect me, and I've got two boys that will grow up that want to be fishermen, and they are fishermen, and that -- Even though I don't catch sixty fish, when people from Ohio or Michigan or wherever they're from in the United States -- They get one opportunity, and they don't have 300 days a year that they can go out there and catch fish.

They're not five miles away from the beach, where they can go fish every day that's pretty, and they don't have a \$200,000 outboard to get in and go out there and catch them, and so to tell those people, all that fishing population in the U.S., that they're not entitled to catch ten dolphin a person, then I totally disagree with you, and, furthermore, I mean, these people are spending \$3,000 to come down there and go fishing for one day, just one day, and the charter boats of North Carolina were the ones that instigated the limits to start with, the sixty fish, and we have lived with that, and we used to catch -- I mean, before me, they would catch 200 or 300, but I think this tiny amount of fish that is -- I mean, Florida catches 65 percent, to start with.

The charter boat industry only catches 17 percent of the total catch, and then, if you break that down into catches over thirty fish, it's down to about 3 percent, and so we're talking about a very small amount of poundage, but yet you want to put me, and several other charter, plenty of charter boats, in North Carolina -- Maybe not out of business, but we'll be totally -- It will hurt our business, and I will lose customers if they know they don't have the opportunity to come catch sixty dolphin.

I mean, it might only be 200 or 300 pounds, but, to them, like I said, they get them vacuum-packed, and they take them home, and they eat them all year, and so I think -- I agree with Jon that there's a happy medium that we can meet there, but that is very important to us in North Carolina, and don't say we're up on some pedestal, because we've done -- We were the first ones to put limits on yellowfin tuna, and we started catching three, and, the next thing you know, the state adopts it, and the federal government adopts it, and so don't act like we're the bad guy here. We're just trying to make a living. Thank you.

MR. BURROWS: Thank you, Rom, and I see Richard.

MR. DELIZZA: No, and I'm just waving my hands around. Let me lower that.

MR. REYNOLDS: I think size limit though -- You know, I mean -- Like I fished these guys the other day, right, these guys from Jersey, and he says, Jon, there's guys going out up here to some small -- Maybe it's what Michael is talking about, and maybe it's like buoys, and maybe it's deepwater lobster gear, or what we would call deepwater lobster gear, and he says, you know, they're catching -- You know, they're catching like twelve-inch fish.

He says these guys are catching twelve-fish, and they're whaling on them, you know, and they're small, and so size limit -- I think we need to get there, all the way up, and I think we need to get the size limit, and, in Florida, guys are calling for a much larger size limit. I mean, if I had to speak for like the recreational people in Florida, and I'm trying to get this from every perspective for Florida, because, look, I mean, I'm a part of it all, and I have a lot of people in it all, you know, commercial, recreational, and charter.

From the charter perspective, guys are ten, thirty, ten, thirty, ten, thirty, and that's where they want to be. The rec guys are looking more at five, but there's a whole other perspective to that, where -- That's exactly like what Rom was saying, where people are coming down once a year, and they're booking a trip, and this is their day, and then they're like, where we live, the rec guys have access all the time, and, I mean, we're talking about -- They call it grocery shopping, and they can hop in their boats and go a lot, and so it is different, you know, and there are different -- It really is. When you really start thinking about it all, it's different, but, size limit, I have to say that I believe that we need a size limit all the way up, no matter what, on that at least, and I know that.

MR. BURROWS: Thanks, Jon. Michael.

MR. PLAIA: I've got a number of things to say about this. First of all, our experience in the Northeast is that we very often have different regulations in state waters than in federal waters, all right, and sometimes the states are more liberal, and sometimes the states are more harsh, but we're willing to live with it, and it's not a showstopper, especially in terms of what a fishery management council should be doing in federal waters. The states can go their own way. If that's what they want to do, that's what they want to do.

I've got to agree with Jon that you need size limits, and, personally, I do not believe that we should be killing any fish that has not yet had a chance to spawn, and it's that simple. I mean, I'm an advisor to the Mid-Atlantic Council for scup, and we just raised the size limit for scup from nine inches to ten inches, due to that reason, and we had to cut back on the recreational scup harvest, and one of the ways to do that was to increase the size limit, and, at nine inches, something like 50 percent of the scup were sexually mature, and, at ten inches, 100 percent are sexually mature, and scup is another good example, because what the states adopted was the same thing, and it was a one-inch size increase, but it was not enough to meet the target for the recreational harvest limit for federal waters.

We're looking at a situation now, and I was just reading the public register notice this morning, where the feds are going to shut down scup fishing in federal waters, while the states are going to be open at ten inches, all right, and that's another good example of each going their separate ways.

Another point, not specifically addressed to bag limits, but my reading, my background reading, this morning said that the recreational harvest limit on dolphin was only getting 70 percent

fulfilled. The recreational are only catching 70 percent of the RHL and, well, fishery management policy always dictates, especially at the federal level, that, when you set an RHL, the goal of the regulation is to meet, but not exceed, that RHL, all right, and so why would you increase bag limits if your RHL is not being met to start with? I mean, that just does not compute to me. If your object is to meet, but not exceed, why are you cutting back on the bag limit? I should have made notes, because I had more to say, but I don't remember what it was right now.

MR. BURROWS: Thanks, Michael, and we've got time, and so we'll get back to that, and I see Jay is online.

MR. KAVANAGH: (Mr. Kavanagh's comments are not audible on the recording.)

MR. BURROWS: Jay, we can't hear you. Jay, we can't hear you at all. If you want to text it to me, I can read it, or we can come back to you. It's up to you. We'll come back to you, Jay. Glenn.

MR. HOPKINS: I will make a few comments. I guess, to what Jon said, the implication that I took was maybe the commercial sector should give up something else to help, and, I mean, we just gave up 3 percent of our allocation most recently, and another perfect thing with that is those are actual landings. Whatever commercial landings are, it's logbooks, and it's poundage, and it's, you know, to the pound, and so we know what we're harvesting.

I don't see where -- If you're talking about the size limit for commercial, we're fishing with a hook this big, and we don't catch any whatever the size limit would be, you know twenty inches or whatever it is, and that's not an issue.

Getting back to North Carolina charter guys, I know they fish less days than the guys off of Florida can, and, I mean, it's just the nature of the weather, and those fish aren't necessarily accessible in abundance as many days either, also, and them guys do depend on the fish, and there's certainly not the number of boats, at least now -- Shoot, there's getting to be more and more boats up there, but especially the charter industry is increasing slightly, but not much, and so, anyway, I'm not a charter guy, but I know these guys depend on this fish, and they depend on the system they've got set up, and they're a very conservation-minded group. I mean, the whole area has always been conservation minded.

When I was there back in the day, you would put as many in the box as you could get, and it was like, this is not beneficial to us, and there's all of us, and, if somebody was exceeding the self-imposed bag limit, they caught enough grief when they get to the dock, and they were ostracized, and so, anyway, I just trust that these guys know what's best for them, and, if Florida wants to cut back, and hopefully make a difference, but I would just say the access to the fish is not there, and obviously the landings -- If you believe any of the recreational landings information, they're already getting most of the fish anyway.

I would also say -- I guess Amendment 10 just passed, right, and so we haven't even had a chance to see what the effects are going to be, and here we are already talking a bunch about another amendment, and let's see if there is any difference with what -- There's certainly no science, real science, to back anything up right now, and so, anyway, that's all I've got.

MR. WHITAKER: I echo, you know, about Glenn's comments, but, as far as size limit goes, and I'm just saying this from being out there for thirty-five years and catching a lot of dolphin, and I looked back, and, somewhere in these papers, I think North Carolina's average size limit, for the last five years, has been somewhere around twenty-three inches, and so, obviously, we are doing a pretty good job, and, when I go out there fishing, I like to blue marlin fish, and I like to go look for something big, a blue marlin, and maybe go drop for a swordfish.

I catch dolphin, because that's what my people like to eat, and I enjoy catching them, and they're pretty, and they taste good, and they're everything good about fishing. Sometimes I get out there, and especially in the twenty to thirty to forty-fathom range, and I'll be running out and get a pretty current edge with grass on it, and I stop, and, yes, I see these twelve -- We call them vinegar dippers, and I catch about two of them, and I'm like, no, we're not doing this, and so I pick up, and I keep on going.

Unfortunately, there is one or two boats that may stop and catch those things, and it's kind of like Glenn says, and they get chastised at the dock, and I say, boys, that's ridiculous, and you do not need to catch that kind of fish, and so, in my perfect scenario, I get out there maybe another five miles and find a pretty grass line and stop and catch thirty or forty nice bailer dolphin, four or five-pounders, and I would say they would be eighteen to twenty-four inches, just guessing.

Then I go blue marlin fishing for the rest of the day, or sword fishing, or big tunas, or some kind of big fish, and I may catch ten more dolphin that day, and I may catch twenty more dolphin that day, and be glad to have them, but it's more or less trolling, instead of bailing, targeting, but my only problem with setting a minimum is let's say that I go out there, and I stop, and I'm catching eighteen or nineteen-inch dolphin. Well, how damn many am I going to catch and release and kill to try to find me thirty twenty-inchers?

I am telling you that you're better off just letting me go catch them, and, obviously, we've been pretty good, if our average length, for the last five years, has been over twenty-three inches, and just let us do what we've been doing, and we've been policing ourselves, and so, like I say, I'm happy with the fifty-four and the twenty inches, and just don't make me worry about that. I think I'll kill more dolphin worried about a twenty-inch minimum than I will trying to abide by the law. Thank you.

MR. BURROWS: Jay, I think you're back online? We still can't hear you, Jay. He's saying that he's in listen-only mode. How do we fix that? Try again. Jay, can you try to unmute on your end, and Rom is calling you as well.

MR. WHITAKER: He just said, on the phone, that he wanted to echo my comments.

MR. BURROWS: Thanks for doing that, Rom. Jon, you were next.

MR. REYNOLDS: I mean, my idea -- There are some guys with that same line of thinking in the charter industry down where we're at, with killing fish, and I can tell you, from practice -- I mean, we -- I pull away, like you, a lot, but we got good at de-hooking over the boards and just not -- Those guys will bring fish in the boat and squeeze them and measure them and kill them, and, you know, I mean, it happens, and so my idea, through all this time -- This discussion has been up a lot, and I don't think a slot for dolphin is even -- That's not even realistic, and there is no way, but

I do think that there's an opportunity, possibly, if we're not going to get to a size limit, and I know there's a lot of support for it though, and, I mean, there really is, and there's a lot of science and a lot of support for it too, but maybe it's like you can keep ten fish under twenty, and that's it, something like that.

I mean, I'm just throwing that out there, because then, when you're working -- In our realistic world, when we're working, and you kill that one, it's like, well, he's dead. Okay, but we're going to keep going, guys, and let's look for some nicer ones, and then, if you kill a few undersized -- For the most part though, what it does is it kills the effort of the massacre of small fish, and that's what we're looking for. I mean, from the guys that I know, and the guys that I talk to, and the overall -- You know, we've got to stay in reality here, and the realistic thing, that we've already been talking about this whole time, is we have a stock problem. You know, we can't get away from that.

We've all said it, and we know the abundance is down, and we have a stock problem, and so what are we going to do about that? If the measures right now aren't working, and that's what we're getting out of this, and, I mean, they can't be working, and we have an issue, and the stock is down, the size is down, the abundance is down, and so what are we going to do about it, and so workable and effective, right, and our goals, right, our goals, and we looked at objectives and goals, and so what can we come up with that's workable and effective, and we already have the size limit.

Like I was just saying about the guys that I'm talking about going up there off the Jersey coast, or anywhere, and killing -- Or North Carolina up, that doesn't have a size limit, and they're killing forty, fifty, sixty shakers, you know, and it's -- That's not good for the stock, and that's not good for recruitment. These fish aren't even reaching sexual maturity, and they can't spawn, and so how are we going to improve the stock, if that's going on?

That is an idea that I've had, and I've thrown it out there a few times. A lot of our guys in our area tend to agree with it, because some of them agree more with Rom, to be honest with you, but that's kind of a happy medium, that, if you're killing a few, and they're already dead, instead of a dead discard, or whatever you want to call that in management, that it goes in the box, but we're not focusing on that targeted effort of small fish.

To speak to Glenn on that, I think it's more -- It's more along the lines of that dolphin, in the longline fishery at least, were more of a bycatch, and you guys were sword fishing and tuna fishing, in an overall sense through these years, and it's become more of a targeted effort, and so a trip limit is more -- Not giving up a quota and letting the stock rebuild, and, if we're having this much of a problem, it's hard for anyone else to say, okay -- I mean, say you look at a 2,000-pound trip limit, right, and that's a hundred twenty-pounders, man.

You know, and so, if everyone else in the fishery is saying that we're not seeing large fish, but then that's still allowed, and then Florida is who sees the back-half of what you're fishing for, and we're not receiving those fish, and now Rom is saying it's not like it used to be, and Tim is saying it's not like it used to be, and everybody is saying it's not like it used to be, then we're trying to cut down on overall large catches, to rebuild the stock and get it back to -- I know one of the goals and objectives of this fishery right now is to have a more steady -- I forget what the wording is, but it's steady, and it's reliable, on an annual basis. You know, instead of those waves, we're

looking for steady, reliable fishing, and, if we can get to that, then I think everyone is going to be happy, and so I'm just clarifying that, too.

MR. BURROWS: Thanks, Jon, and thanks to all of you too for keeping it as civil as it has been so far. Glenn.

MR. HOPKINS: I would just like to respond to that, and so you're saying that the commercial guys -- That we got 7 percent of the total allowable catch, and you think that we should do more, and, I mean, we're not even reaching that, and you guys are probably exceeding you all's poundage, as far as recreational is concerned, realistically, but I just can't see why you would -- I mean, we've already -- I don't know, and I don't get the logic there, and we get 1,700,000 pounds, and you get almost twenty-three million pounds, and we're going to make a difference? I see what you're saying about everybody working together, but, by that same logic -- You know, if you all are willing to come down to two-million pounds, then maybe we would want to do something different, too.

I have a hard time grasping what you're saying, and we don't have those big catches, or we haven't had, for the last few years, and we've got a stop-gap if we should exceed -- If we get within 75 percent of this meager quota, then we will have trip limits, but, as far as doing trip limits at this point, we might not have but one good trip like that, possibly, for the whole season, and who knows, but, to take away the options -- Especially in the commercial industry, taking away the options right now is not a -- That's not an option for us, but that's it, and I just wanted to just say that, as far as I just have a hard time, when we've got such a meager part of the problem, that we should have to do anything other than what we're doing, and we're heavily regulated already.

MR. BURROWS: Thank you, Glenn. Michael.

MR. PLAIA: I finally thought of the other things. Let's talk about boat bag limits for a minute, and this ties back to what like he was saying over here about the expectation level of a charter boat customer, and, I mean, we've been through the discussion twenty times in New England, about cutting back bag limits, even though the bag limits were not being met, and everybody agrees that, when you're trying to sell a charter, it's not what you're actually going to catch, or what your average catch is, that the customer focuses on, but it's what the potential catch is, all right, and, back in the days when we had twenty codfish, the average catch was nine, but everybody insisted that we cut back on the bag limit.

When they cut back the bag limit to ten, the average catch was still nine, but now the customer didn't -- They said, nah, it's not worth it for ten fish, and so, I mean, you're up against that kind of psychology, when it comes to the charter fleet, and, to tie right back into that, we don't have boat bag limits at the federal level anywhere in the Northeast, and not in the Mid-Atlantic, and not in the New England states, but the State of Rhode Island put in a boat bag limit for tautog.

They put a boat bag limit of ten fish per boat, whereas the -- You're allowed five fish per angler, but the boat limit was ten fish, all right, and so, in other words, if you had two anglers, you were allowed ten fish. If you had three anglers, you were still limited to ten fish, and, of course, they could see the impact on the charter fleet, and there's a big charter fleet in Rhode Island for Tautog, and they exempted the charter fleet from the bag limit requirement.

This is the only time that I've seen a federal bag limit requirement, and this is the only time that I've ever seen a bag limit requirement that didn't exempt charter and party vessels, all right, and I think it's doing a disservice to the charter and party fleet.

From what Jon was saying, it seems like the problem, and, admittedly, I'm new at this game, and I have not been involved in dolphin wahoo management before, but it seems to me that what everybody is addressing is the perceived decline in biomass, all right, and, if that's the case, that's not this panel's responsibility. That's up to the SSC. They're the ones that set the limits, that are supposed to scientifically set the limits, and to impose catch limits above and beyond what the SSC is recommending is not -- It's not sound fishery management science.

I mean, at the federal level, the RHL is supposed to be -- The regulations are supposed to be designed to meet, but not exceed, the RHL, RHL being the recreational harvest limit, and so it strikes me as being overreach to try to usurp the authority of the SSC to meet a perceived, which may not be real, perception, all right, and then one more comment, and then I will shut up.

Slot limits, and I'm an advisor to the ASMFC for striped bass, and I can tell you that slot limits do not work. All they do is they allow the harvest of just barely breeding fish, while doing almost nothing to protect the older, more fecund fish, and anybody can go out and catch a twenty-eight-inch striped bass now and keep it, and, if you catch a thirty-six-inch striped bass, you've got to put it back, but that's after you mishandle it and take the pictures and throw it back in the water off the jetty. The fish dies anyway.

The way we recovered the striped bass, back twenty years ago, was we had a thirty-six-inch size limit, and that worked. This slot limit is not working, and I've seen the numbers, and it's going to be very interesting to see if -- The ASMFC is committed to a rebuilding plan, and it's going to be very interesting to me to see if they keep the slot limit under a rebuilding plan, but that's just an editorial comment on slot limits, and I'm done.

MR. BURROWS: Thank you, Michael. Next?

MR. REYNOLDS: We don't have a stock assessment. We don't have a stock assessment, and we're setting all this, and that's why we're here. That's why we're talking about all of this, is we know we have a problem, and we don't have a stock assessment, and so that's why. You know, it's like it's doing the right thing, Michael, and that's what we're talking about here. It's trying to preserve a fishery, and save a fishery, where we don't have data, and we're not following the best science available, and we don't have the last fourteen years of data, while we're all talking about a decline in the management measures, and so how do we have any idea -- The charts that were shown up here, and John is putting the charts up here, right, and everything is in a downward trend since 2015.

Every single chart up there shows a downward trend in this species, and every single man in this room, that's been doing this their whole life, is saying the same thing about the stock. Everyone is saying additional pressure. Everyone is saying additional effort. Everyone is saying reduced catch, and everyone is saying reduced size. We don't have a stock assessment, and so that's why we're trying to implement new measures. I mean, you know, it's simple to me, and it makes sense, and so we're trying to take it upon ourselves, if we're conservation-minded, and we're saying that

about ourselves, to see what we can do for the stock and to think about the bigger picture here, to think about the next generation, to think about, ecologically, what this fish.

It's the sardine of the ocean that is one of the biggest like species out there that's a food, like food chain, for every other large pelagic, and that's just like what we're leaving out there, because it doesn't seem like we're leaving much out there, because we're hitting them pretty hard right now.

MR. BURROWS: Thanks, Jon. Rom.

MR. WHITAKER: My follow-up, and I do agree with Mike's comments, but, you know, unfortunately, sometimes I think we get too much government, and, you know, in here, in one of these reports, it says that dolphin reach, can reach, sexual maturity at fourteen inches, and almost 100 percent of them have done it many times by twenty-four inches.

Well, our data is telling us that we're already at twenty-three inches, is pretty much the average, and, in some years, it's way over that, and so, I mean, why do we have to have another amendment, or law, or whatever you want to call it, that makes me start measuring these dolphin, and, hey, suppose we only -- You know, I'm looking at a twenty-inch minimum, and I have to kill, or catch, 200 to find thirty twenty-inchers, and I'm still going to kill some dolphin, where, if you leave me like I am, I'm pretty much abiding by the law and doing what I'm supposed to, and here you want to put another -- It's just another restriction that I think we're already doing it, and why do we have to have a piece of paper that says I have to do it, and then, if I come in with an eighteen-inch dolphin, I've got somebody down there writing me a ticket.

I just think -- I mean, yes, we all want -- I'm not -- From what I've seen the last two years, I've got pretty good feelings about dolphin, and, no, I'm not seeing as many big ones as I used to see, but I'm seeing a lot of bailers, and a lot of good-sized bailers, not the twelve-inchers, but I'm talking about the twenty to thirty-inchers, but, anyway, that's what I wanted to add. Thanks.

MR. BURROWS: Thank you, Rom. I see that Jay is back. He just texted me some comments that he would say that almost every bailer he catches is over twenty inches, and the females have roe in them. Thank you, Jay. That's one way of getting it through. Go ahead, Jay.

MR. KAVANAGH: A couple of things. You know, I pulled out my tape measure here that I have at my desk, and I'm with Rom, and I don't think we see a whole lot of twenty-inch bailers, and a point that I would like to make too is they all have roe in them. All the females have roe in them at that size, and so, you know, we're not catching fish that aren't sexually mature.

I think we're in a unique situation on the Outer Banks and, in North Carolina, that, you know, we get more of the water that is concentrated going by us, and so, you know, we have access to a bigger population of fish, and, like Rom said, we're not doing anything wrong, and don't make us change. That's all I have.

MR. BURROWS: Thank you, Jay. I have a comment and a question. At my core, obviously, I've got some conflicting emotions on this, but, you know, when I talk about what's at my core, and what's in my heart, I am a North Carolina charter boat guy, and I think Rom made a really good point, earlier in this discussion, that the very reason we're sitting in this room today is because, before this was a fish that had any limit at all on it, the people at -- Not just North Carolina, but,

more specifically, Hatteras, and I think -- Rom can speak more to this, probably, but, specifically, Hatteras Harbor Marina were the ones that first started any conservation measures that I am aware of on dolphinfish.

The reason we're having this debate in this format today, to me, the roots can all be traced to that, and so I know there's a lot of angles to this, and I'm appreciative that everybody is bringing that up, and people are not afraid to speak what's in their heart, but I think we need to look long and hard at how different these fisheries are and the fact that any conservation at all started there, and am I right on that, Rom? That's where that started? You guys did it internally, to not just preserve the fish, but to give validation to the industry, and that was the Hatteras Charter Boat Association, correct? Okay, and so I think that just needs to be mentioned.

Shifting gears, and don't think for a second that I am taking away anybody else's -- Like Jon Reynolds has done a ton of work with this, and he is thinking of way to hybridize a solution, and that makes a lot of sense, in a lot of ways, to me too, but I think, obviously, there's a lot more discussion that needs to go into this, but don't think for a second that I don't think his effort is anything less than stellar, but I had a question for Glenn too, because he's the commercial guy in the room, and, everything I know about Glenn, he's HMS permitted, and he's above board, and he does it right, and I feel like there's a lot of people that are commercially longlining dolphin now that do not have the same degree of permits, or these guys that have been in the bottom fish industry, that have been forced off the bottom, and I was wondering if you could speak to that, and I think there's maybe another way of looking at this.

MR. HOPKINS: I guess what you're referring to is what we call the council boats, and they just get a dolphin wahoo permit and use pelagic longline to target them, and there's a few guys in our area that do that, and I've got no problems with it, from a personal standpoint I mean, but it's -- The guys of us that do have all the -- We have to have two cameras on our boat, with VMS, and we're limited to 16/0 hooks, 16/0 circle hooks, with observers, and these guys operate without any of that, and most of them are good guys, and they're people that I know, and they're just trying to make a living, and I did see that that was passed up on Amendment 10, as far as addressing that, because of a future biological opinion or something.

I mean, it is what it is, and I brought it up years ago, when it started seeming like it was getting out of hand, those couple of really good years, and they were starting to come out of the woodwork, and I guess maybe that's what Jon was referring to. That's not happening now, and I can't think of anybody right now that is -- Because the last two years were -- There is weeds, and they wither, and, when the situation is right, they'll come out of the woodwork again, I suppose, but I don't really understand why it never has been addressed for as long as it has, but, right now, there's really not much of that going on.

If we have a big run this year, then there will probably be some guys that get into it, but it is a lot of stuff that we've got to do, as far as especially the cameras, and it's a pain in the butt, and the observers are a pain in the butt, and VMS, and it all costs money, and so I never understood why HMS did what they did on that. Does that answer what you were looking for?

MR. BURROWS: Yes, and I think it answers a good bit of it. My personal experience, where I live, has been, starting seven or eight years ago, whenever I go offshore, I found myself picking around what I presume are council boats, picking around their gear, and it seems, to me, that there

is a little bit of an unequal playing field, when you have to go through that whole rigorous process of getting your boat right, and they don't, and it's not like they're paying you any different on the dock for the same fish, and it's like you pointed out earlier, and you guys have 7 percent of the ACL.

I think there's a disparity there that I think may be addressing the problem, and I think the problem, for some -- For a lot of the recreational guys, is that they see localized depletion when they're on their season and going after the same stock of fish, and, you know, you're permitted to the hilt, and I know what Rom has to go through to get permitted to the hilt, and I know what Jon has to go through to get his permits in order, and it just seems like there's a disparity there, and I think maybe we need to discuss that in greater detail, because it's like you said, and you get 7 percent of the ACL, and that's it. Recreational, which includes charter, gets 93 percent. Is that fair that they get the same quota as -- They're fishing off the same quota as you are.

MR. HOPKINS: Obviously, I don't think it's fair, and why it hasn't been addressed like ten years ago, whenever they first came up with dolphin wahoo permits, and it's beyond my scope. I used to be on the HMS advisory panel also, and everybody scratched their head about it. Right, Rom? I mean, and they could talk about targeting, and they would use smaller hooks and everything too, and it's totally legal right now, but I think that's beyond --

I don't know, and maybe it is beyond our scope, but, like I said in the reading materials, I saw that it was put off, for whatever reason, and I don't know, but, here, as of late, I mean, we had the one year where we did reach our quota, and that would have been an issue then, because we got shut down early, and we could have continued to have caught some more fish, but, since then, it hasn't really been an issue, and, like I said, part of it is all the variables, really, and there has been less fish the last two years, but all the variables with the sharks and the markets and the availability of something else easier to catch, and that's why it's been what it has.

Getting back to -- I just did some quick math too, and, getting back with Jon, and I am not being personal to you, but, you know, I get, with the numbers, this many pounds or whatever, but I just did some quick math, simple math, and, at a twenty-pound average, which I would say, realistically, our longline fish are more like a sixteen to eighteen-pound average, but, if we said a twenty-pound average, that's right at 86,000 fish for the commercial quota.

If we back it down to say a sixteen-pound average, that's 107,000 individual fish, and, in comparison, the recreational -- If we did a twenty-pound, that's 1,142,000 fish, and I don't think it's a twenty-pound average. If went to a ten-pound average, which is probably fairly realistic, that's over two-million fish, 2,285,000 fish, and so I went fishing, and I spent part of the winter in Florida this year, just having fun, but it looks like -- I don't know how many boats fish on a given day out of Florida, a thousand, or 2,000, and, I mean, there's a lot of daggone boats, and each one of them catches five fish.

Somebody mentioned the MRIP earlier, and, you know, with years of dealing with that, and nobody believes that, not even the people doing it, and, in other words, I just took exception in talking about the amount of fish and that we need to give some up, but I just don't think -- You know, it's a big difference.

Me, and the commercial industry right now, we're trying to provide food to the public, and, of course, we're trying to make a living, but, right now, and we're not throwing stones about whose fault it is or whatever, but I don't think we're in the situation right now where we can cause it, and, if we did have the good fortune to catch our quota, we're cut off just like that. All right.

MR. BURROWS: Thanks, Glenn.

MS. MARHEFKA: I don't want to derail this conversation right now, and it's the end of the day, but, if tomorrow maybe, if you all could -- It would be helpful, for me as a council member -- I have been dealing with dolphin wahoo, in my previous role, since this plan came online, but I still am confused about the issue with the, quote, unquote, council boats. I know that we have a lot of new council members who will also be confused about it, because my understanding is, you know, it's not that they're doing anything illegal.

These are boats that have a dolphin wahoo permit and are longlining legally for dolphin wahoo, and maybe they don't have the same gear, because they're not also fishing for HMS, but I would love some clarification on that, and I think, to the extent that you can all talk about that, that may help -- Or just define what that looks like, and it may help us talk about it.

To the extent that that is an issue, as far as maybe not necessarily, quote, unquote, council boats, but you're worried about a good year and increased efforts, does the industry -- Has the industry ever talked about limited-access permits? Right now, it's an open-access permit, and is that something that is of interest or a tool that can be used?

At some point, that would be helpful, to have that conversation. Again, the council has moved that to a later -- We have a lot on our plate, and so I'm not saying, by having that conversation, that's something that is going to speed up, but it will help inform decisions as we move forward and inform those of us, new council members and council members who don't necessarily understand the difference between this council boat issue and whatever the other boats are, and so I would appreciate that conversation, at some point.

MR. BURROWS: Jon.

MR. REYNOLDS: Just briefly, to that, some of the goals and objectives were that so new fisheries develop, and that was a newly-developed fishery, and it's taking a toll on the -- I mean, it is taking a toll, I mean just that being said, and so -- That definitely is a newly-developed fishery with a lot larger intense effort on dolphin directed.

MR. BURROWS: Rom.

MR. WHITAKER: I will get off this -- I will quit talking, and I've probably talked too much today, but I went back and talked to the DNF people at North Carolina, just to kind of confirm my observations, and I want -- I especially want John to hear, but I want everybody to hear that the number of offshore charter boats in North Carolina I think has gone down in the last five years, just because -- Well, five-dollar fuel, and we have a long way to go, and you've got to have a big boat, and we have to deal with weather, and we don't --

In a good month, like May or June, I might fish for twenty days. This month, I've only fished three days, due to weather, but, for many reasons, a young guy -- I mean, he can't afford to go buy a daggone charter boat. A simple charter boat, now you're talking about \$700,000 or \$800,000, and you can -- There is no way to make the math work, and so, you know, I'm just -- My boys, they run half days, and they might want to do -- My oldest boy wants to do offshore, and that's why I'm here, to try to -- You all say look at the future, and I'm trying to look at the future for him and make it to where he can still sustain going offshore, and I know what I'm asking for sounds - - It's just a very small amount of fish to preserve our industry and what we've worked hard to attain and keep.

On to the longline issue, and Glenn has put it pretty eloquently, but I think the South Atlantic did drop the ball there, and the reason I say -- I'm just -- I don't know everything about it, and I'm probably going to step on some toes here and make some people mad, but I'm just going to have to do it, but Glenn and a lot of my other good friends, like Dewey and Jeff Oden, a lot of my very good friends, have all the permits, and the trifecta, I think they call it, to participate in longline fishing, and that's what they chose to do, and they're good at it, and they've done well with it.

Through the years, the charter/for-hire fleet has been able to work very close to them, and we've tried to work with each other and not step on each other's toes, and, all of a sudden, that changed, and I don't know -- Whatever you want to call them, the council boats or whatever, but it seemed like every boat around that had a commercial fishing permit also had a longline spool, and he was setting everywhere, and, I mean, you couldn't even get near a grass line, and so I don't know the answer to that.

I mean, they're just there trying to make a living, and I would really never degrade somebody for making a living, but I think that, had the South Atlantic kept it among the trifecta boats, I am not sure we would be -- That we would be here arguing, or not arguing, but trying to solve this problem. Thanks.

MR. BURROWS: Thanks, Rom. Michael.

MR. PLAIA: You used a buzzword, a couple of minutes ago, of "localized depletion", and I would just like to make a couple of comments about that. Localized depletion has only been accepted in fishery management twice, and once was by the ASMFC for menhaden in the Chesapeake Bay, and they went ahead and put a cap on the Chesapeake Bay harvest of menhaden, but yet their scientific community could never support, could never prove, that there was in fact localized depletion, and then there was a more recent case, just within the last year, and the New England Council bought it. They bought that there was localized depletion of Atlantic herring because of the pear trawlers operating within three miles of shore. They passed a regulation pushing the pear trawlers ten miles offshore, and the court just threw it out, because there was absolutely no scientific basis for localized depletion, and so take that for what it's worth.

MR. BURROWS: Thank you, Michael.

MR. OWSLEY: Someone said something about limited access on these permits, and like they've got the snapper grouper limited access and stuff, and I was just coming back from a trip, and I did a four-day overnight trip out of the Gulf, fishing the Pulley Ridge, and we were talking just with different people about charter and so on and so forth, and I think what Rom said -- One of my side

of the family is big into farming, and, for some reason, I thought that I wanted to be a farmer, and it is cost prohibitive, as it is to begin with, and, you know, we talk about -- One of my biggest things is with my kids and take a kid fishing, and just recruitment of -- You know, I'm probably one of the youngest ones in here, and teaching future generations of fishing and conservation and everything.

One big thing about -- A lot of people know that I'm a veteran as well, and, for a lot of vets and people coming back and trying to get reacclimated into the civilian lifestyle and stuff, I'm a big proponent against the limited access into a fishery, because there's already so many limits, and doing something, whether it's going fishing, and, like Rom said, just the cost of a boat, or, nowadays, trying to get into farming, and the cost of tractors and stuff, and just the cost per acre to buy a piece of dirt, and it's -- You know, it's like Glenn said about providing fish to a growing nation, and people have got to eat, and so I think that, kind of like what Jon and a lot have said, there's a happy medium and stuff.

I think the dolphin wahoo permits though already had like a moratorium, or a date established, for many years, about all permits that were issued post this date would be subject to retraction anyway, in case that was a -- Maybe I am misspeaking about that, but, yes, I'm totally against the limited access stuff, because of like, if I wanted to start a landscaping business, and who can tell me that I can't go buy a lawnmower and cut grass and stuff, and so I just -- I think there's probably another method that we can do for a stock, versus just saying, hey, you know, we're not going to issue anything else, and that's like a drastic measure, and maybe it's just an easy out or something, but I never think the way to do something is just to stop all of it.

MR. BURROWS: Thank you, Dan. Jon.

MR. REYNOLDS: Just real quick, and we're going to discuss this more, and I think we need to hear more from the rec guys, like strictly the rec guys, on limits too, and just like call out some guys whenever.

MR. BURROWS: Agreed. Tim.

MR. SCALISE: Just to circle around back to the size minimums, somebody told me, a long time ago, that you only can kill a fish one time, and, to me, I just don't think a fish under twenty inches is -- The yield on it is -- If you have people coming down who want meat in the freezer, I mean, a fillet on an eighteen-inch dolphin is going to be freezer burnt. You know, it just -- To me, I think twenty is probably too small, in my personal opinion, but I think that, and it would decrease the brood stock.

MR. BURROWS: Thank you, Tim. Chip.

MR. BERRY: Thank you. I just am processing all of this, and I'm learning a lot, and I was kind of prepared to come in here and just say like this is what I think, but everybody is right though, and everybody has got a point, and everybody has got a really good point. The charter boat folks, the for-hires, they've got a point, and the conservation people have got a point, and I always have felt like a conservationist, and I always want to be on the conservation end of things, but then we start talking about, well, it's kind of hard to tell exactly where they go without having a true stock assessment, and so then you start thinking about that, and then I started thinking that, well, I've

got even some more technical questions, like let's say that you just went to -- I read some of the dolphin research stuff that was submitted under the comments for Amendment 10.

I read them all, several times, but, you know, they made a pretty good case of having a fish, a twenty-three, and I think it was twenty-three, because of the way it was described, and I think because of the benefits you get from multiple spawns, and you know what I mean, and I've kind of -- I don't know what I am really thinking, but I was thinking, at one time, that maybe -- But there's a lot of other issues there too, but maybe thinking about, you know, maybe the recreational side, because that's 80 percent of the catch, and is that correct?

That's what I thought I heard you say earlier, and I'm thinking, you know, there's a lot of recreational people that don't have to make a living, like Rom does, and the charter people, and I was kind of thinking, you know, maybe there should be a size limit difference between a recreational vessel limit and a for-hire, you know, and let the majority out there take a little bit of the brunt, if we need to go to the real conservation side, and I kind of like that, but, I mean, I will be honest with you that I don't think I've ever caught fifty-four dolphin in one day, and I fish in South Carolina, mainly, but I've had good days out there, but I don't think I've ever caught quite that many fish, and so I'm not sure what that does.

Anyway, I'm just going to throw that out, since you asked for my comment, and I was just processing a lot of stuff, but, you know, I see both sides, but, without a stock assessment, I'm not sure what the right answer is, and I don't know. I don't know that, even with the minimum size limit, but, from what I understand, basically about 100 percent of the fish spawn once at twenty inches, right, but, if they went to twenty-two or twenty-three inches, what benefit would you get, if you -- But then I do understand too that you take a small fish, and there's only small fish out there, and it might be even under twenty inches, and you're going to want to put something in the boat, and I see the dilemma there, and I like a lot of what Jon was saying too, and so I'm just thinking this out too, and I didn't mean to take so long, and I'm just processing stuff, and so thank you.

MR. BURROWS: Thank you, Chip. I think "process" is a good word, and I think we're at a time where we probably need to call it a day and let everybody process, and we'll hit it at 9:00 in the morning. John.

MR. HADLEY: I appreciate that, and I appreciate all the discussion, and we'll kick off with Regulatory Amendment 3, and so, tonight, certainly think about what could be a workable and effective measure, but also something that everyone can live with and keep moving forward with. With that, for those in the room, if you wouldn't mind sticking around for a couple of minutes, I have a couple of things to go over, but, otherwise, we're going to end the webinar.

(Whereupon, the meeting recessed on April 20, 2022.)

APRIL 21, 2022

THURSDAY MORNING SESSION

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The Dolphin Wahoo Advisory Panel of the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council reconvened at the Crowne Plaza Hotel, North Charleston, South Carolina, on April 21, 2022, and was called to order by Mr. Chris Burrows.

MR. BURROWS: Good morning, and I hope that everyone had a good evening last night. Do we have anyone online as of yet? Good morning, Richard. I will turn it back over to John at this point, and we will resume.

MR. HADLEY: All right. Thank you. We're kind of on Agenda Item Number 5 there, Regulatory Amendment 3, which is -- We're going to talk about modifications to the minimum size limit, recreational retention limits, and for-hire captain and crew bag limits for dolphin. Before we do that, just to kind of get everyone's mind warmed up this morning, I wanted to go over, very briefly, the updated goals and objectives of the Dolphin Wahoo FMP, and so this is something that the AP has reviewed in the past, and these are new.

These are the revised ones, and these were implemented as well with Amendment 10, and so these will be going into place, and this is something that the council requested that I just go over briefly with the AP before we get into the Reg Amendment 3, and I won't go over it in great detail, but I did want to go over each goal, just to kind of refresh everyone's memory on what these revised goals and objectives kind of entail.

Overall, there is five goals, and Goal Number 1 is a precautionary approach, and this is supposed to be sort of the guiding principles, if you will, of the FMP, and so a precautionary approach. The management of the dolphin and wahoo fisheries is precautionary, risk-averse, and maintains historic catch levels while preventing overfishing.

Goal Number 2 is access, and so the idea is that the recreational and commercial sectors retain access to both dolphin and wahoo. Goal Number 3 is to minimize competition between user groups, and so the idea there is competition from the user groups is minimized, and the idea there is to minimize conflict as well, and so any sort of -- Whether it be between the commercial and recreational sector, for-hire, private rec, that sort of thing. To minimize any sort of competition and conflict, where possible.

Goal Number 4 is emphasizing the economic and social importance of the fishery, and we talked a little bit about that yesterday, but the management of the dolphin and wahoo fisheries recognizes and preserves their economic and social importance to both the recreational and commercial sectors. Then Goal Number 5, last, but not least, is ecosystem-based management and research priorities. Management of the dolphin and wahoo fisheries recognizes the importance of biological information and incorporating ecosystem considerations, really where possible, and so just kind of putting that out there, there again to kind of get everyone's mind warmed up this morning, but those are the revised goals and objectives of the FMP.

With that, we'll jump right into Regulatory Amendment 3, and so what I will do is I will provide a little bit of background here, and I'll kind of go over what preliminary analysis we have, and this is very early in the process, and so we don't have a whole lot of analysis just yet on this amendment, but we kind of have some catch distributions to show you, and then work through kind of the

background and then the range of options that the council is considering at the moment, and then I'll turn it over to the AP to provide input on each topic, and we'll work through kind of management-item-by-management-item, and so looking at size limit, bag limits, vessel limits, in sort of that order.

As a little bit of background, the council has been working on this amendment since March of 2022, at the meeting, or, well, most recently, they reviewed it at that meeting, and they kind of set the range of options, and so looking at extending the geographic range of the twenty-inch minimum size limit to perhaps be beyond -- To extend beyond the North Carolina/South Carolina border, and potentially modifying retention limits for private and recreational vessels for dolphin, and that's potentially different limits by mode, and then also removing or reducing captain and crew bag limits for dolphin.

As a reminder, and I won't go over it again, and we went over it in pretty good detail yesterday, but Amendment 10 is going into place very soon, on May 2, and so in a few weeks, and that will be dropping the vessel limit to fifty-four dolphin per vessel, and so from its current sixty-fish per vessel, and then, on top of that, and, again, I'm happy to answer any questions, but, as a reminder, there is the action by FWC, the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, that changes dolphin regulations in state waters in the Atlantic, dropping the bag limit to five dolphin to five dolphin per person and the vessel limit to thirty dolphin per vessel for private vessels and then clarifying that captain and crew bag limits may not be retained, and so that's sort of the upcoming changing regulatory background for the dolphin fishery in general that could impact the -- It could impact the fishery overall.

MR. DELIZZA: I do have a question about that Florida regulation, and so it's state waters, and, certainly down south, where we are, you are not often catching dolphin in state waters, but I'm curious about how that applies, in that you're crossing state waters, and you're coming to shore in state waters, and it might not be within your purview to comment on this, but how does that, from a practical standpoint, get enforced? Are Florida anglers now subject to the Florida regulations, regardless of where they're actually catching the fish?

MR. REYNOLDS: I was at that meeting, and FWC was very clear to say that, you know, they understand that this is a federally-managed species, and the waters that it's generally traveling in, and that they will be using good discretion to know that, you know, the regulations apply to federal measures, and there are areas, obviously, occasionally, where there is going to be fish caught in state waters, but traveling through state waters, when fish are caught in federal waters, they said will not be an issue, and they were pretty specific about that at their last meeting.

MR. DELIZZA: Okay. Thank you.

MR. HADLEY: To add to that, that is certainly my interpretation, and I think, most times, when the state and federal regulations aren't in alignment, there is usually a transit provision, and so, as long as you're not fishing while you're in state waters, and you're in transit, then those federal regulations basically apply, and they're not going to apply the state regs, as long as you keep moving on your way back to port. Any other questions on that?

MR. BURROWS: Michael.

MR. PLAIA: Just, as I mentioned yesterday, we have a lot of instances in the Northeast we have different regulations for state waters versus federal waters, and, generally speaking, the rule is that you have to be legal wherever you are at that moment, and so, if you're fishing in federal waters, and you come into state waters that have more restrictive limits, you have to abide by the more restrictive limits, and, obviously, Florida can do whatever they want, but that's the general rule in the Northeast.

MR. BURROWS: Thank you.

MR. HADLEY: All right, and so, overall, as I mentioned, the objectives of this being and the ask of the AP is really to provide input for the council's consideration in developing the options, and so, if you have recommendations, we can certainly put those up there. If you have, if you do this change, make sure you consider this aspect of it, and that sort of thing as well is certainly appreciated by the council, and so that's going to be the ask of the AP on each item.

As far as the tentative timing, what I have up here is just sort of a generic timing for an amendment, for a framework amendment such as this, and so, you know, this is really -- This can shift, and so I just want to emphasize that this is sort of a tentative preliminary timing of the amendment, but, overall, the council reviewed an options paper on this amendment at their March meeting, and they did approve the amendment for scoping, and the direction was not to scope this amendment, however, immediately, and, if they do scope this amendment, it's likely to take place sometime this summer. They wanted to take a look at it again at their June meeting, before the amendment actually went out to scoping, to gather public comments on it, and so, you know, one of the take-homes here is that we're very, very early in the process.

The council really hasn't -- They have set a very sort of wide range of options to consider, with the idea that those will be narrowed-down down the line, once they get additional input, and, really, that's one of the reasons that it's coming to the AP right now, to help decide how to narrow that down overall, but, moving along, the council will likely work on this amendment through the rest of this year and the first half of next year. Assuming they are able to approve it at June of 2023, you're likely looking at some sort of regulatory change in early 2024, and so it's just kind of a general timeline for the way that the amendment might move along.

Without further ado, we'll jump into the proposed actions, and so, overall, Action 1 would modify the applicable geographic range of the minimum size limit for dolphin. As we discussed yesterday, the minimum size limit applies off of Florida, Georgia, and South Carolina. This applies to both the recreational and commercial sectors off of these states, and so, essentially, from North Carolina through Maine, which is the regional jurisdiction of the fishery management plan for dolphin and wahoo, there is no size limit for dolphin.

As a little bit of background and rationale on why the size limit went into place originally, there was a twenty-inch minimum size limit that was implemented off of Florida and Georgia in the original fishery management plan, which became effective in 2004, and then it was extended to cover South Carolina in 2012, which is Amendment 2 to the FMP. Within that amendment, the council concluded that establishing a twenty-inch minimum size limit off of Georgia and east Florida for dolphin will prevent targeting small dolphin, reduce waste, and increase yield in the fishery. It also noted that the action allowed harvest only after most female dolphin are sexually mature and at least had the opportunity to spawn.

Amendment 2 there again extended the minimum size limit to cover South Carolina, with the concept -- It was put in place to address concerns primarily from South Carolina anglers about the large-scale harvest of recreational small dolphin, and so peanut dolphin, and, at the time that size limits were being considered and discussed for the species in the South Atlantic region, they were not considered for South Carolina, because the state had its own measures in place, and so, essentially, the State of South Carolina had a minimum size limit for dolphin in place. That measure was challenged in court, and overturned, and so the South Atlantic Council stepped in and implemented the twenty-inch minimum size limit off of South Carolina as well, and so that's a little bit of a background on the council's thinking at the time of when this size limit was implemented.

A little bit of kind of basic biological information, it really depends on the study that is examined, but you're looking at dolphin reaching -- At least 50 percent of dolphin typically reach -- Are sexually mature by about eighteen to nineteen inches, and that ranges from seventeen to twenty-one inches, depending on the study, but you're looking at the twenty-inch size limit -- Typically, you're going to have, at twenty inches, the majority of dolphin are going to be sexually mature.

Then I will show Figure 1 here in a second, but, really, what we're looking, or we're going to look at, is the percentage by number of dolphin sampled that were under twenty inches, from trips onboard private and charter vessels, and, really, you can see this variable from year to year, and one thing to keep in mind is this is coming directly from MRIP samples, and so these are measured fish.

Additionally, what you're looking at here is the percentage of fish under twenty inches within the catch, and again by number and not by weight. It's really highly variable from year to year. You can see, in 2016, which was a pretty good year for dolphin, there were very few fish under twenty inches observed in the catch, and that changes sort of in the latter years of 2018 and 2019. The blue is Florida to South Carolina, and the orange represents North Carolina. The gray is North Carolina to New York, and so North Carolina and the Mid-Atlantic region, and then the yellow is North Carolina through Maine, and so North Carolina, the Mid-Atlantic region, and New England.

On average, you can see that there is -- According to the MRIP samples, in North Carolina, you have about -- There again, it's variable by year, but you're looking at 15 to 20 percent, by number, were observed under twenty inches, and then, if you kind of expand that up into the Mid-Atlantic and New England region, you're looking at about a quarter of the fish, by numbers observed, were in the sub-twenty-inch range.

Getting over to sort of what the council is considering right now, the initial range of options that the council is examining, the council is looking at potentially extending the applicable geographic range of the twenty-inch minimum size limit, to cover potentially North Carolina only. In that case, you would have the entire South Atlantic region covered, and potentially including North Carolina, and then moving up through the Mid-Atlantic region, and so up through New York, and then the other option would be to cover North Carolina and go all the way through Maine, and so essentially incorporating the minimum size limit off of North Carolina and then also including the Mid-Atlantic states and New England states, and so this is where we turn it over to the AP.

I have a few discussion questions there that hopefully we'll get some targeted input, as far as the importance of dolphin, sub-twenty-inch dolphin, and I know we had some discussion on this yesterday, but sub-twenty-inch dolphin -- Are they an important part of the recreational catch? Are there seasonal aspects to that importance? How might the effects of a size limit vary by sector, and so private vessels or for-hire vessels, and how might the effects of a size limit vary geographically, say off of North Carolina versus states further to the north? With that, I will turn it over to the AP.

MR. BURROWS: A quick question for you, John, and is there any way to turn yesterday's discussion into -- Can that be incorporated back into what we're doing today, and is there any way to use those --

MR. HADLEY: If that's -- If the AP is good with that, I can certainly pull bits and pieces of that and incorporate it into the report.

MR. BURROWS: That was just a thought I had, and I think there is -- You know, we had a pretty good discussion yesterday, and certainly there is more to add, but that might be a good starting point.

MR. HADLEY: Duly noted, and, when I'm typing up the report for the AP, I will pull some of that discussion into this document.

MR. BURROWS: Let's proceed. Does anybody have any comments? Michael.

MR. PLAIA: Just a question. The numbers that you show on that chart from MRIP, what were the PSEs associated with each of those numbers?

MR. HADLEY: I am not sure. That's a good question, and I did not include those, but that's something that I could -- Well, I would have to go back and look at it, and I would imagine that they're probably fairly high, particularly for the states -- For the Mid-Atlantic and New England states, just because the sample size is --

MR. PLAIA: Well, as I mentioned yesterday, I pulled up the MRIP reports for 2021 for New England and New York, and the PSEs were off the charts, and so, you know, I'm just wondering whether any of the other states that you showed in that chart were similar, because, as I said, anything over 50 percent is supposed to be deemed unusable for management purposes.

MR. HADLEY: That's one thing that I would like to emphasize. Really, with this, and the other figures that are presented, this is sort of -- This is a very new amendment, and so these are preliminary analyses, and we haven't really had the chance to really drill-down on some of the PSE aspects and whatnot. The other thing to note, and that's a good point on the PSEs, but there is kind of two ways to look at it. This is sort of the expanded numbers, and so this is the observations and then expanded out into what they probably mean for the entire catch. The other thing we can do is go back and just see how frequently they occur in the raw data, and so how many times were sub-twenty-fish observed off of New York or that sort of thing.

MR. PLAIA: Usually the PSEs are driven by the number of instances where an MRIP consultant actually encounters and measures the catch, and I would think that -- Well, I know, based on the

limited research that I did on 2021, that the PSEs were very high in the Northeast because of that, and there's just not -- There's not a lot of dolphin fishing going on in the Northeast, and I just wonder whether the figures for the more southern states suffered from the same type of low-frequency encounters, and therefore high PSEs, as the more northern states.

MR. HADLEY: I will say, for dolphin in the South Atlantic, it's among the lowest PSEs that we have for any of the species in the South Atlantic, and so it's a very well-sampled catch, and it tends to be in the 10 to 20 range, but it's definitely below that 50 mark, if you're looking at it for the South Atlantic region, and it's one of the better-sampled fish, if you will, but you're correct that, as you get further north, some of those PSEs really jump up quite a bit.

MR. BURROWS: Thank you, and that's an excellent question on that, and I can see the discrepancy. Jon.

MR. REYNOLDS: I am kind of -- I am drifting back and forth here, and I'm going to kind of put Kerry on here a little bit, since she's in the meeting, and she's on the committee, and just other council members, and, I mean, eventually, where this is going to fall with them is with their decision and what we're meeting here, and, when I'm looking through -- I mean, when I'm looking at the goals and objectives in the preamble here, and what we're looking at, I mean, I want to ask Kerry -- From our discussion, and from what you're hearing in this meeting, do you think we're meeting these goals and objectives?

I don't think we're meeting them. You know, I mean, we're looking at the Atlantic -- It's to sustainably manage the stocks of dolphin and wahoo for the long-term benefits of all participants, owing the substantial importance of the fishery for dolphin and wahoo particularly to the recreational sector, and we want to minimize competition, and we want to take a precautionary approach, and we want to preserve the social and economic importance and incorporation of ecosystem considerations. Are we doing this at all?

Do we have measures in place that are actually in line to achieve any of these goals and objectives, and, as we move down the line here, you know, maintain abundant stock levels that lead to high encounter rates and elevated trip satisfaction, and I'm going to vote no on that, heavily, and I think most people in this room could probably agree, and the online comments that we've seen over the last bunch of years, and the massive amount of people that have commented would probably agree with that, on the record.

Ensure consistent and predictable access for the commercial sector, we're not there, for sure, and I know my commercial guys in the Keys, and then Glenn is saying we're up and down, and we're high and low, and there's nothing consistent about it. Address concerns over localized reduction in abundance resulting in perceived decline. Exercise caution in allowing new development of fisheries and expanding fisheries that can increase competition. Rom is talking about what he's seeing up here and new developing fisheries and competition between user groups, between commercial and recreational and charter.

We're not moving forward with what we really need to be doing, to achieve optimum yield on a continuing basis. I mean, we have a high ceiling now, and nothing is even getting near the ceiling, and so the ceiling doesn't really mean much, but it's just a perceived ceiling, but, if our regulations aren't in place, in order to achieve the long-term success for that, and we have these goals and

objectives in mind, and we're not reaching any of this stuff, then that ceiling doesn't really mean much. A quota doesn't mean anything if the fish aren't even abundant enough to reach those quotas, and then we're not hitting optimum yield, and so where are we really going with it?

As I'm thinking about this amendment, and future amendments, these goals are a major part in that, and I think we had a good discussion on the twenty-inch size limit yesterday, and, I mean, what we're trying to avoid -- I mean, I'm thinking about Rom going out, and I'm picturing his charter going out, just like mine, and I can feel the heat on my back from my people, and I can hear the words "big fish", and where are the big ones at, Cap, and, I mean, this is just the reality of it, and, you know, we're not going to go, and we're not going to mess with that, and that's too hard, and we want to catch large fish, and we're --

At the same point, we're going to catch what's available, and, when you look at these last few years, what's going on is people are catching what's available, which is saying that there's not a lot of big fish left out there, and we're targeting what's out there, the recreational guys and the charter guys, and, for any sort of trip satisfaction at all, we're going to catch what we can.

I mean, these people are coming down, and they're paying, and they want fish, and how are we going to achieve the goals if we don't make some sort of management measures, and so, you know, I mean, the idea that has rolled around in my head a lot, like I said yesterday, is kind of a medium between all the different inputs that I've taken through the years of the guys that I have worked with on this, and heard from on this, and so I just wanted to entertain the idea of having maybe a - - You know, you still have a vessel limit that you can reach, but those fish aren't wasted if you kill them, and maybe a certain amount of fish under the size limit, but then we're going to avoid intense fishing for extremely small fish in large quantities, and that makes a big impact on long-term success of the fishery, for everyone, for rec guys, charter boat guys, and commercial guys, really. It's growing the stock, and I just wanted to throw that back out there.

MR. BURROWS: Thank you, John. Kerry.

MS. MARHEFKA: Well, I kind of lost if there was a question in there for me, and I -- It is not my role here today to sort of, you know, participate in your discussion, because this is your time to do that, and my time to do that is another time, and it's not that I am -- I mean, I can say what I believe all day long, but that just muddies the waters for you all. I also cannot speak on behalf of the entire committee. I can tell you that our discussions, at the last council meeting, to my recollection, were that we are struggling with the fact that this is a fishery that also happens outside of waters that we manage.

I believe, in my recollection, and you can go back and read the minutes, because I do not want to put the words and other council members' thoughts -- You know, I don't want to say them wrong, but, the way that I recall the conversation is we all sort of felt like a lot -- What may be happening may be happening outside of our waters and outside of our control, and I know we had some discussion about how can we get more involved at the international level, to what extent we have any pull to sort of say like, hey, we think there's a bigger problem outside of what we're dealing with.

There was some conversation about that, and I think we've all acknowledged that we think that we have probably a regional issue in our own council, that, you know, what you guys are seeing

in Florida might not necessarily be what the guys in North Carolina are seeing, and then absolutely, 100 percent, we know that we have sort of economic needs, and social needs are different between what's happening in Florida and what's happening in North Carolina.

Biologically, we ultimately have to work with -- We're balancing everything we hear from the public, and we're absolutely hearing every opportunity for public comment, that certainly the folks in Florida are seeing issues, and I've heard it from folks in South Carolina. Again, we're not hearing it as much, if almost at all, from the folks in North Carolina, but then we also have, you know, the best available science in front of us, which shows us that we just bumped up the ABC, and so those are all of the things that we discuss when we're sitting around the table.

I don't know where we'll end up going with this, to be fair, and we are also balancing sort of what we're doing with some snapper grouper species that are in dire, dire need, and are on statutory deadlines, and we have to legally get those plans done, and so I don't know if we're going to get to dealing with user group interaction in this regulatory amendment, but we hear it all, and so, yes, we're balancing a lot, and I don't know where we will land on it. I wish that I could give you like an answer, and say this is how the committee feels, but we have pretty much the same discussions that you all have around here as a committee.

I know that that's not a great answer, but, again, it's kind of not my place to sit here and tell you - - To argue with anyone about what my personal opinion is, which I will absolutely talk to you about in some other place, but this is your two-and-a-half days, or two days, to do it, and I know that's probably an unsatisfying answer, but it's kind of how it has to be.

MR. BURROWS: Thank you for that. Rom.

MR. WHITAKER: I will get to this in a second, but Kerry has a hard job, and the council has a hard job, and I'm sure they sat in this room for the last few years, and I'm sure that some of you all that were on the AP for the wahoo and the dolphin have been through these same discussions, and it's hard to manage something that you can't see and that there's no official count out there, as far as I know, and so they're charged with trying to make hard decisions and not restrict somebody's what they've been doing, or try to maintain -- Be as traditional as they can, and so my hat is off to them, and they have a tough job, and I don't know if I want to be in their shoes at times, but, that being said, they have an amendment that's going to go into effect, I guess, in May.

It's not exactly what some people are wanting, especially the Florida group, but, you know, it does cut me by 10 percent. If I were to go catch sixty dolphin every day, I've got to go to fifty-four, and that's not going to -- I don't think that's going to affect my business, and I think that thirty will, and the reason I'm going to say that, and it's maybe not a good analogy, but the goose season in Maryland used to be two a day, and I would go up there and hunt for three days every year, and, most of the time, I would kill two, but some days I would only kill one, and, a couple of years ago, three years ago I think, they reduced it to one, and I made a decision that it wasn't worth going to Maryland and spending the money for three days to hunt to kill three geese, and so I'm just throwing that out there.

You know, I'm looking at my people to come -- charter me and come to North Carolina, and so it's very important to me, and another thing is we now -- Every for-hire boat in the South Atlantic is supposed to be doing electronic logbooks, and we have to report weekly, exactly what we catch,

electronically, and there is dockside surveys, and, if you don't believe that I am reporting the right thing, all you have to do is go to my website and look at most all the charter boats, and I'm sure that Jon does it anyway, and most of the people put a picture online showing what they've done, good or bad, and I put it up, and so, if they don't believe what I am reporting, they can go look at my picture and say, well, Rom only reported twenty dolphin today, and he's got thirty, or vice versa.

In my opinion, that is going to be a very accurate accounting of what our industry is doing, and I just -- I am hearing -- I mean, I have asked some people in the accounting department, and, well, how does our 2021 catches stack up with what the MRIP reports have been showing for our catch, which, hey, I'm a dummy when it comes to technology and electronics, but I do know that usually electronic data -- The right guy, or the right girl, can hit the buttons, and they can come up with some numbers pretty damn quick, and so I would think that, at the very least, you could compare 2021 numbers to what some MRIP numbers are given for our catches, and give you a good baseline.

It may be shocking, and it may be that we're catching ten-times the estimate for what MRIP is saying, or it may be that we're catching 10 percent of what they're saying, and I don't know, but those are things that the council can use to answer -- To make really good decisions, especially with our industry. The recreational industry does not have to report, and their data comes strictly from dockside surveys or however they do it, and so we have, I think, an excellent tool out there for the council to make some much better educated decisions on where we are with the for-hire industry, and, you know, at first, when I heard about electronic logbooks, you know, everybody was opposed to it, and I said, hey, guys -- I was, when I first heard about it.

I'm still a little bit opposed to my economic data, and I told them, when they first started talking about it, is we'll be glad to tell you what we're catching, but don't -- You don't need all this other information, and so, that being said, they have that data, and, in my opinion, it's going to be accurate, and it's going to be timely, and, you know, they've got an amendment on the table here, and let's see how it works.

I mean, I am just hearing a few reports of dolphin this year, and that it's better, but that has to play out. You know, we haven't even started our season, and so I don't know what to tell you, but I don't think it's in dire straits, and I hope that Florida's action, statewide, which, from you all's recent discussion, it sounds like it's nothing more than a political move to try to put pressure on the council, and I hope they see it as that, and I will stop for a minute, but I do have a few comments for that.

MR. BURROWS: Thank you, Rom. Tim.

MR. SCALISE: In my personal opinion, these are, at best, marginal measures to correct a problem, at best marginal, and, you know, if you think, Rom, if your customers, your clients, are going to be unhappy with a minor cutback in catch limits and can't keep any dolphin, they can catch all they want, but they can't keep any dolphin, and that says, "catch" up there, and you can catch all that you can, but what you can keep.

I have two words, "dolphin season", and, you know, if it gets to a point where you have to take drastic measures, such as the red snapper, then you're going to have some very unhappy people,

and I just think those are proactive measures, at best, but it's to avoid, you know, what I foresee as something that could be dire.

MR. BURROWS: Thank you, Tim.

MR. WHITAKER: Just to respond, my people come to catch and eat, and so I will just clear that up, but, you know, let's -- The explosion in effort is in the recreational side. As I said yesterday, that charter boat population in North Carolina has gone down the last few years, and so, yes, and I think Jon will agree with that, and I don't know about Florida, but I'm pretty sure that our big explosion has been in the recreational sector, and sure. I mean, if you want to give them a thirty limit, and a twenty-inch minimum, I don't think they're going to have a problem with that, but, for me, a sixty to thirty is a half. That's half of what I am allowed to catch as of today.

Now, as of May, I'll only be allowed to catch fifty-four, and there are not a bunch of days that I catch that many, but it's the perception, and it's exactly what Mike was talking about yesterday, and it's the perception that -- It's the same thing that I was talking about with the geese. If I know that I can only do one, instead of two, and they only know that they can catch thirty, instead of fifty-four, then they're going to say, hey, we're going to go to the Chesapeake Bay and catch croakers or red drum or something, but it's the perception, and, I mean, it's -- To break it down a little further, and I will go into this now, and it might not be the right time, but, if you're talking about the charter industry catches 17 percent of the catch of dolphin, and Florida catches 65 percent of the total catch, then that means South Carolina, North Carolina, and Georgia catch the other 35 percent.

We've certainly got to give South Carolina and Georgia some credit in there, and that's 10 percent, and let's say they catch at least, with North Carolina, and the charter boat is 17 percent of the total catch, and we're 25 percent of that, and, if you break it down into catches over thirty, it's less than 3 percent, and so we're talking about a tiny sliver of the overall quota that maybe doesn't affect Florida at all, if they don't catch over thirty, but it affects our business in North Carolina, and, you know, I just -- If that little bit is going to make all that difference, then maybe we do need to shut the whole thing down, but I want it to be there for my sons, and it's like I'm some hog out there, and I'm just trying to keep in business, and we're a whole different scenario there. Thank you.

MR. BURROWS: Thank you, Rom. Michael.

MR. PLAIA: I just wanted to follow-up on comments on the MRIP and electronic reporting, and one thing that I wanted to say about electronic reporting is, in the Northeast, we have -- Effectively, we have electronic reporting for all of the charter boats in the Mid-Atlantic and in New England, and that came about because the Mid-Atlantic Council imposed an electronic reporting requirement, and virtually all the boats in New England have permits from the Mid-Atlantic, and so it effectively covers everybody.

As far as the MRIP implications, MRIP, for the charter and party fleet, is supposed to be reconciling -- Originally, it was the paper VTRs, and now it's the electronic VTRs, but they're supposed to be reconciling -- They started off, once a year, with the final numbers, and they were reconciling the catch reports for the party and charter fleet with the VTRs. Since then, they moved to quarterly validation of the catch numbers with the VTRs, and so, theoretically at least, the MRIP numbers should actually agree with the electronic reporting.

Whether that's actually happening or not, I would have to leave it to some statisticians to figure out, but, theoretically, they should be the same, and the other thing that I would like to add to the South Atlantic Council is we have applications, electronic applications, for electronic reporting right now in the Mid-Atlantic and New England states, and, if the South Atlantic Council is moving to electronic reporting, I would urge the council to make the current applications that are being used for electronic reporting for the Mid-Atlantic and New England Council -- To use the same applications, so that we don't wind up having two different electronic reporting applications that boats fishing out of the Mid-Atlantic and New England have to use to report dolphin catches. I mean, it would be a huge complication if they have to use two different reporting systems, versus the one system that we already have.

MR. BURROWS: Thank you, Michael.

MR. OWSLEY: I hear what Rom says, and Jon says, and one of the things that I am trying to, I guess, grasp my head around is, also, it sounds like, with Rom, it's really -- For his clients, it's time and money versus yield, and so it's a real big cost driver for them, and, you know, I can kind of see both sides of it and everything, and, I mean, I'm from North Carolina myself, and so, I mean, I get it, and one of the things that I think is also to be considered is like the entertainment factor and the fellowship factor about doing this, and I think what you're saying is your guys -- They are coming, and they're coming for meat, and they're coming from Michigan and Iowa and everything, and, you know, I hear the cost factor, and, you know, at your charter rate, and I know you told me, or I overheard you say it, what you charge per charter.

If we're catching five-pound bailers, in the quantity you're catching, you know, the cost per charter, divided by the pounds of fish you catch, are already almost at \$7.00 a pound they're paying for a fish, and so I think there's some degree of fellowship and entertainment factor, because, if they were just solely concerned with the cost, they would buy it at the supermarket, because, traveling from where they come from -- I venture to say that their cost per pound is probably double from what they pay for you, with the cost of fuel and airfare, et cetera, and so I think that's a big thing.

One other thing that I know we're talking about vessel limits and size limits and everything, and I wonder if maybe the mentality needs to shift to maybe quality versus quantity, because sixty fish at five pounds per fish is 300 pounds, but thirty fish at ten pounds is the same 300 pounds, and would your clients say, hey, I'm not going to come fish, because I can only catch thirty fish, or are they mainly interested in the yield of meat to take home and through the subsequent months, and so that's one thing that I always consider, and then especially like from an outfitting, or a guide, service, with people paying an exorbitant amount of money to draw tags in Montana and Colorado and everything to hunt elk and mule deer and moose and stuff, and, you know, there is no guarantee, and I think the fishing is the same as hunting.

There is no guarantee, and I think, you know, Rom and Jon, if -- You know, you all would never guarantee your clients that, hey, we're going to catch sixty fish, or fifty-four, or whatever it is, because you would always set them up for -- You would have a lot of disappointed people, and so I think one of the things that people also need to understand, and it's difficult in these times and situation, is there's really no guarantee, because it's a natural resource, and they're either there or

they're not, and you're prohibited to chase them, because of weather or fuel costs or engine breakdowns or whatever.

Then, also, I wanted to ask Rom too, and I know he mentioned the charter population, and the boats have decreased, and I don't know if that's a good or a bad thing, but, if we're talking about -- You know, you mentioned your sons, and they want to continue the opportunity to make a living charter fishing and everything, and I think that's a great thing, and, you know, we touched on limited entry yesterday, in terms of stock management and stuff, and I just wonder about the charter population decrease, and is it for regulation, or risk versus reward, or prohibitive cost of entry, because I think all of us in this room -- You know, we want to conserve the resource for future generations, and I think that's one thing that we might want to consider, is why are all the charter boats -- Why is the population decreasing? That's all I have to say.

MR. BURROWS: Thank you, Dan. Tim.

MR. SCALISE: Just my personal opinion is you've seen the explosion in the outboards and the center consoles, and people that normally would charter -- Their cousin or brother or whoever has a boat that they can go on, and I think that's probably where a lot of that is going to.

MR. BURROWS: Thank you, Tim. Rom.

MR. WHITAKER: I just wanted to try to answer Dan's questions, and I appreciate your time in the military, and that's very appreciated by me, but anyway, and just to give you a little bit of what my day would be like out there, and most guys in my fleet, and Jon might could expand on it, or some other people listening, but, basically, when we're fishing, we have three kind of names, and everybody has a region, and everybody has a name for a dolphin.

In our area, it's bailers, which is, I guess, three to six pounds, and then hoisters, which would be six to ten pounds, and anything over ten pounds I consider a gaffer. What I do, and most of our fleet does, if we get out there and we're catching, in early May or June, what we call gaffers, then, yes, twenty-five gaffers, twenty-five ten-pound fish, is plenty, or thirty. Usually, if I'm lucky enough to catch that many gaffers, then I say, hey, let's go do something else, and let's go look for blue marlin or tunas or something out in the deep water.

The days of sixty gaffers, we just don't do it anymore, but, you know, there again, there is always a bad apple in the pie, and there may be some guys that say, well, I'm going to kill them all today, and I'm going to catch my fifty-four, or sixty, or whatever, and so there's an exception to all the rules, but that's our general -- I mean, we certainly understand the conservation, and, I mean, I damn sure don't want to catch all the dolphin. Then I'm totally out of business, but I hope that helps you a little bit, and so, yes, we do try to police ourselves.

As far as decrease, in our area, I think it's just gotten to be, you know, higher fuel costs, and, luckily, in Hatteras, I'm only about twenty miles from the Gulf Stream, and so I've got a short run, but I still would burn a hundred gallons of fuel a day, on average, and Morehead City and Wilmington, as you well know, is sixty, fifty or sixty, miles, and so it's cost-prohibitive. I mean, I'm \$2,000 a day, where I am, and, now, boats have gotten very expensive, and even a simple, single-engine charter boat -- It's the cost of buying one and maintaining it, and it's hard for a guy, especially a guy starting out with no kind of -- Maybe he's been a mate for five or six years, and

he wants to do his own thing, and it's tough to find a boat and then to, you know, get the business and so on and so on, and so that's why I think we see a decrease.

Now, that being said, you do have more what I call private charter boats, where a guy might have a sixty-foot Viking, and he decides he wants to run some charter trips to offset the expense of the boat, and you have -- I would say that's been pretty level, but there is some of that, and there's more of that now than the regular full-blown charter boat guy, and so I hope that answers some of your questions.

MR. BURROWS: Thank you, Rom. Jon.

MR. REYNOLDS: I just -- I guess part of this, Rom, is with the size limit, and I'm just holding this up, and so can you imagine -- I think about this when I think about you guys, really, when we're out there, and those shakers -- When you're talking about those big schools that you're finding, imagine if we didn't have a size limit. I mean, that's what is coming at you guys. If we didn't have a size limit down there, and we were just whacking those big schools of shakers, like we used to, I mean, those schools wouldn't even be getting to you guys up here, and it would be -- They grow so fast that your heavy-lifters, and that's what we call them, and, I mean, like your lifters, your like big schoolies, they wouldn't even be making it up there.

I know the importance of it, and then it comes back around like this though, and this is the return, is what I'm saying, and they're -- Whatever is getting to us, whatever conservation we have in place, we're sending to you guys, and then they've got to come back around to us, you know, and so I'm just kind of -- I'm looking at the two-way street, and don't get me wrong, man, and I hear everything, and I completely understand where you're coming from, and I'm getting this whole thing.

At least, with a size limit -- I mean, I think, with dolphin especially, we have to give it a little time to -- It takes time for a fishery to get somewhere. On that note, I just wanted to say that, and I think about that a lot, when we're out there and there's just -- There's big patches, and there's a lot of shakers in them, and we're just letting them be, because we don't have a size limit, and we're not -- Those fish are going up there, and, you know, that's you guys' stock, and we're letting them get by, and so it's a big deal.

I mean, look, I reached out to everyone for this one, and I had -- I really, really dug deep into the charter fleet and called and reached out to everyone, and, every time I saw a guy at the tackle center, and, every morning, I said, hey, man, listen, and I'm going to this meeting, and I don't represent myself, and I represent all of us, and where do you guys -- Where can you guys be? You know, there's still some guys that want to stay at -- But most guys say ten and thirty or ten forty. I mean, could you guys get to forty?

Could you think that ten and forty would be an acceptable range, where it wouldn't disrupt business and those few fish, with the growth and spawning rates of dolphin -- You know, I mean, it sounds like a little, but, realistically, if you're leaving ten fish, and they're making it, and they're spawning, I mean, and that's multiplying, and that's happening with ten or twenty boats, or maybe two skiffs that go out and kill fifty-four shakers, you know undersized fish, in a day, that's a big multiplier, really. I mean, it doesn't sound like much, but it helps a lot, you know, and so that's all, and those are my -- That's my --

MR. BURROWS: Thank you, Jon. Rom.

MR. WHITAKER: Well, my only response to that is -- I spoke about it yesterday, and, if you look at the minimum size catch for North Carolina, I think it averaged, for about the last five years, twenty-three inches, and so, in the charter boat industry, I don't think -- I think, and we've been through this years back, that me having to worry about coming in with a dolphin under twenty inches means that I've got to go through -- I mean, I don't know. Some days, maybe all I catch is over twenty, and some days maybe I've got to go catch some eighteen or nineteen-inchers to find some twenty-inchers, and I think, for the overall benefit of the fishery, that let us do what we've been doing.

We're at twenty-three, average, and so why do I have to go pull them in the boat and measure them, and, oh, he's nineteen-and-a-half, and throw him back, and I just think that it's going to be a diminishing return, and that's just from being out there and doing it for a long time, and it's like you say, and it takes fisheries a while to get the feel on exactly what they're doing.

As I mentioned with the logbooks, you all have got some very valuable information, and they've got dockside surveyors, and I can tell you that, if I go back, and I say, hey, boys, I don't want to see any dang dolphin on the dock less than twenty inches, then a few of us start doing it, and then it goes around, and I just hate to be that I get back to the dock, and I've got a nineteen-inch dolphin, and, all of a sudden, I've got a nice citation from enforcement, and so that's -- I think we're trying to nitpick something that we're already doing, and I think we can do it amongst ourselves, and I just -- I don't know, and I feel like I have a target on my back right now that I'm the one that's causing all the problems, and I don't think I am. Like we've all pointed out, the recreational, the explosion of boats, and maybe they need to be at a twenty-inch, and I'm all for that, and I'm not arguing that, and so thank you.

MR. BURROWS: Thank you, Rom. John.

MR. HADLEY: I just want to summarize a few of the points. I don't think there's going to be a consensus statement from the AP. We can certainly make one if you want to, but, you know, I want to make sure that this is captured, and, when it comes time in June, and Chris is delivering the report to the council, that the highlights are captured for the council's consideration, and, you know, I have a few kind of general comments there that I just want to make sure the AP is okay with.

To tie-in the discussion of the minimum size limit from the fishery performance discussion yesterday, and I think there were several very good points made, and it was noted that the minimum size limit is a marginal, but is also a preventative measure, and I think the council definitely, it sounds like, needs to consider no changes to the minimum size limit, as it can lead to, it sounds like, regulatory discards and increased fines, would you say, or tickets, and then it sounds like there was the recommendation -- There again, not a full AP recommendation, but some ideas for the council to chew on a little bit and think about more, and to consider a max number that could be below twenty, and so that was kind of the idea that John mentioned yesterday.

I am throwing numbers out there, but no more than ten fish, or five fish, could be below twenty, that sort of thing, and I think that's what Jon was getting at, and so, if there's anything else that

you want me to put up there, I'm happy to do it, but that's kind of the range, I think, of the discussion so far, and I will fill it out more in the report, but that's sort of the bullet-point notes, and, also, I just want to make sure that we do get to the -- Because we are going to discuss the bag limit, vessel limits, and the for-hire captain and crew, and so I want to make sure that we do get there.

MR. BURROWS: We do have Richard online that wishes to speak.

MR. DELIZZA: Thank you, and so my apologies to Rom upfront, because he's going to feel like he's got a target on his back again, but the note that you just wrote in there about considering no changes to the minimum size limit -- If I've been paying attention, there's only been one member of the AP that has advocated for that, and I would like to see what the AP's consensus is on extending the size -- Having the council extend the size limit to be consistent across the range of the area that they manage. I will forever and ever not understand why there is a carve-out for a single state.

We also should probably put into the notes that, based on the representative on the AP, that the average size fish is twenty-three inches that they're catching, which certainly would lead to, at the very least, making the twenty-inch size limit apply there, as literally, as stated by Rom, having no impact on what they're already doing, and so it just doesn't seem appropriate to have that size limit inconsistent.

MR. OWSLEY: If Richard is done, I was thinking about the average, and I know it was said a twenty-three-inch average, but, you know, that's a range from a seventeen-inch fish to a twenty-nine or a sixteen-inch fish to a thirty, and so, you know, a twenty-three average, that's good, but what's the low end that makes up that mean? Is it all the way down to maybe a twelve-inch fish? I mean, who knows, but one of the things that I was thinking, when we talk about this size limit, or a minimum, and some of the other species, and I know Mike mentioned it some, about going from a nine-inch to a ten-inch fish, and has there ever been any data, or a study done, of the theoretical outcome of increasing a minimum size limit to what it would do to this stock or the average size of the fish?

I know Rom mentioned bailer, hoister, gaffer range, and is it something that, you know, give these guys in North Carolina some type of theoretical outcome of, hey, like, if we did impose a minimum size limit, you can see this fishery improve, and maybe your historical catches, back ten years ago, where you were catching more of the hoisters and gaffer-range fish, and it could be rebuilt similar to a snapper grouper species, and has there been any type of data that says, hey, if we increase this size limit, in five years, we can see some of these bigger fish?

I know Jon mentioned it, and Rom mentioned it, and I think everyone, that, over the years -- I remember, from being a young boy, catching a lot bigger bull dolphins, and now -- I think I won a tournament, a couple of years ago, with an eighteen-pound fish, and I kind of thought -- I was like almost embarrassed by it, because, you know, it was -- You typically -- Years ago, it was at least over thirty pounds, and forty, and so I didn't know if there was anybody who is smarter than me in modeling or theories about what the end result would be for an increase of size limit.

MR. BURROWS: Thank you, Dan. John, do you want to address that?

MR. HADLEY: In short, I haven't seen that sort of information, and I think there's going to be -
- The issue really is along the lines of there is so much uncertainty on those fish, if you release them, finishing that loop and coming back and what you're going to see off of Georgia or South Carolina or North Carolina from that fish that you released the previous year, just because there is -- They're running through a gauntlet of fisheries, and then, once they pop out into the EEZ, they are hitting other pretty intense fisheries as well beyond the U.S. borders, or U.S. control, and so there's going to be a lot of uncertainty there.

I mean, unfortunately, I think a lot of this sort of comes down to informed judgment, since we don't have as much information as we do on a lot of our snapper grouper species and that sort of thing, and so it would come down to the notion that you would see improvements in the fishery if you did this, but, you know, as far as a quantitative analysis -- You can make some assumptions there and say, you know, if these fish lived and came back, this would be the yield, but there's going to be some -- You know, there's going to be some serious caveats to that in general, but, to your original question, that hasn't been done, at least not to my knowledge.

MR. BURROWS: Thank you, John. Michael.

MR. PLAIA: I just want to mention that, in the Northeast, we have minimum size limits on virtually everything we catch, all right, and, if anything is even close, we have to pull it in the boat and measure it and then decide whether to let it go or to throw it in the box, and it's something that we've all learned to live with, and it's just a normal part of charter fishing now. I mean, no matter what the species is, if it's even close, you've got to measure it, and so, I mean, there is a certain factor that should be built in, and I understand that dolphin is a data-poor species, and so you don't know what the release mortality is, but, if it's anything less than 100 percent, it's got to benefit the species, and I don't think it's a severe imposition on the charter and party fleet to have to measure fish.

MR. BURROWS: Thank you, Michael. Tim.

MR. SCALISE: In my opinion, the twenty-three average is -- I mean, that should be more like the minimum. I mean, I get fishing for food, and I'm an avid hunter, and I have not bought red meat in the grocery store in twenty years, and, in looking at a less than twenty-inch dolphin, once you fillet it and skin it and cut the blood line out, there isn't much left, you know, and I just -- The yield is just not there, and, if that's what those people want, they're probably better off going to Costco and buying imported dolphin, and I don't know, but I just think that twenty-three, for an average, and then you throw in the bigger gaffers and bulls and stuff like that, and, you know, there's got to be a lot under twenty inches that's pulling that average down.

MR. BURROWS: Thank you, Tim. Chip.

MR. BERRY: Thank you. This is the first time that I've spoken today, and I've been taking it in again today, and I hear you. I was kind of thinking through, and, you know, I want to answer Richard's question, and I think it was Richard, right, because he wanted to know what the AP kind of felt. I mean, I feel like, you know, we should have a minimum size across-the-board, geographically extended.

I was looking at the data presented by John, and it just seems very logical, just due to their growth and spawning nature, that -- Having a twenty-inch minimum, geographically distributed, should be good. At the same time, I think, as you look at minimum size requirements, whether it's twenty or twenty-three or anything, I think it should come along with some reduction of the vessel limit through time, and that would just seem logical, to me, especially if you're trying to get bigger fish, fish that equal a certain amount of poundage, and so, I mean, that just seems logical for I think the AP, I mean the council, to consider for the next amendment anyway.

I know that's going to be down the road sometime anyway, but I get it with the charter boat thing, and I still have a thing between the recreational and the for-hire charter industry, and I think, really, maybe there should be a different vessel limit, and perhaps the for-hire, and I mean the real true for-hire, and I don't know how you would provide a definition for that, and maybe it's already in place, that you could really -- I know I was a charter boat captain, and my family fished too, and so pay me a dollar, and am I charter guy today and that kind of thing, and so I would want the real people, like Rom's family, to be able to get into this business and be very successful in it, and I don't know whether you call it a limited fishery or something, but where you really qualify, to where the guys out there, like Rom, can really make it.

Perhaps he should be able to keep more fish, and I kind of like Jon's idea too, and sometimes you do catch smaller than twenty-inch fish, and I think Jon had a really good idea, and maybe -- We have it up there already, but maybe there should be a select allowable vessel amount of smaller fish, and maybe it's just a couple, but something, and maybe that's fair.

To get back to where I think we're all kind of looking at, is how do we conserve and manage this fish, and we don't have all the data we want, and I like what Daniel said too about -- You know, I would like to know what that ultimate size would be, if we went to twenty-one or twenty-two, and had a little reduction in the recreational side, just what it would actually do to that fishery, and I really don't know, but I think we do know that twenty inches gives most males and females an opportunity to spawn.

I had written a couple of notes here, and so I know we're looking -- This discussion goes towards Amendment 3, and Amendment 10 is going to be implemented, and so that's just kind of what I'm thinking, myself, just listening to you all, and I don't know what compromise, but I did want to answer Richard's request, because he wanted to know how AP guys, or gals, feel about this, and I think a minimum size is fair, and it should be, I think, extended.

At the same time, I think we really ought to look at the plain recreational versus the for-hire, and maybe there can be a really good compromise, to where folks like Rom can make a living, and everybody else can be happy with some bigger fish, and maybe more fish, and I don't have the answers, but that's just kind of what I'm hearing, and so I thought that I would throw that out. Thank you.

MR. BURROWS: Thank you, Chip. I will say a few things, and I try not to editorialize, but -- I'm sorry, Glenn.

MR. HOPKINS: I don't have much of a dog in the fight, other than I live in North Carolina, and I think there's a little bit of a misperception, as far as what happens up there, and, I mean, guys don't go in, day in and day out, and go catch sixty, or fifty-four it will be now, fish that are going

to fit in a five-gallon bucket. I mean, there is a wide array of lengths and everything else, and it's not like, day in and day out, there's, what, twenty boats out of Hatteras and fifty boats out of Oregon Inlet, or whatever there is, and it's not -- You know, they're not going out there to try and, like I said, and a five-gallon bucket is about what fifty little fish would do, and so I just wanted to point that out.

North Carolina is a lot different from Florida, as far as the geographic layout of the Gulf Stream and everything else, and the availability time of the fish, and I just would like to throw in that I am happy with what Amendment 10 reads, the cutoff is at the line, and see what happens with that, and I guess that's all I've got to say. Thanks, but I just wanted to -- I think there's a perception of people that haven't been up there -- It's not just an onslaught of just catching little fish up there.

MR. BURROWS: Thank you, Glenn. Jon.

MR. REYNOLDS: I totally understand. I mean, it's the same, and we're dealing with the same stuff though, and we're just dehooking them over the boards. I mean, we do the same thing, and these are shakers, and let's catch some, and they're not going to make it, and you tell me, kid, and, I mean, that's what I'm yelling from the tower, is you tell me. You know, if these look short, you tell me, and let's measure a couple and keep going, and so we're looking for bigger, and we're hunting, and we're going, you know, and so -- But it's the same idea, man. It's the same, and we're all doing the same thing.

I'm definitely for a minimum size limit all the way up, and, if we have to have some kind of under the minimum, I think that's where my guys would be supportive, because I think some of them were already in support of that before, the charter fleet at least, and not the recreational guys, and the rec guys are not in support of that, for the most part, from what I -- From all the stuff I get, the recreational population of people is mostly in support of a larger minimum. If anything, twenty-four is kind of -- Twenty-two to twenty-four is what they're screaming, and the charter guys are more twenty is good, and we want to see that all the way up, and some of them say that it would be nice, with the dead fish that we have to measure, if we could just keep them and have that as part of bag limit, or our vessel limit.

MR. BURROWS: Thanks, Jon. Michael.

MR. PLAIA: I just want to remind everybody that, I mean, we're spending a lot of time, and justifiable so, talking about the charter fleet, the charter and party fleet, all right, but the charter and party fleet is vastly outnumbered, both in terms of number of boats and the amount of the catch, by the private vessel fleet, and so what we need to do doesn't necessarily have to be what is best for the charter and party fleet if it makes a big dent of the catch for the recreational fleet, and that's all I want to say about it.

MR. BURROWS: Thank you, Michael. I don't know that we're going to get a consensus statement, as you said earlier, John, and I'm going to refrain from editorializing right now, but we probably need to move to the next part, unless there is anyone else.

MR. HADLEY: All right, and we can always certainly come back to that, and I think part of the conversation -- I mean, we look at these as management-action-by-management-action, and so size limit and bag limit and whatnot, but they all -- They play into the entire trip, and so they do

have a lot of overlap on a recreational trip, and so we can always come back to the size limit, if there are any additional comments, but, moving along to the bag limit, Action 2 in this amendment would potentially change the recreational bag limit for dolphin.

Currently, as mentioned, it's ten fish per person, not to exceed the vessel limit, which will be decreasing to fifty-four fish from sixty, and, of note, just kind of a breakdown of harvest of dolphin overall, the majority of harvest occurs onboard private vessels, followed by charter vessels, to a lesser extent. On average, combined, charter and private vessels account for 95 percent of total dolphin harvest, with the remaining coming from headboats or commercial vessels.

Overall, and so when you look at the whole picture, private vessels and for-hire vessels together, vessels tend to harvest five or fewer dolphin per person. However, charter vessels, not surprisingly, do have a higher percentage of trips that harvest more than five dolphin per person, and I'll show you a figure on that in just a second, and, when average catch per person is examined, sort of broken out by state, looking at Florida specifically and North Carolina specifically, as we've kind of heard here, vessels fishing off of North Carolina tend to exhibit higher landings per person than those fishing off of Florida, with charter vessels in North Carolina exhibiting notably higher average harvest per person.

Here is a table that sort of breaks down dolphin harvest, percent of overall harvest, or, well, percent of overall recreational harvest by general mode, and then percent of overall harvest, and so that's the whole picture by mode, and, as mentioned, on average, charter vessels harvest about 16 percent of the dolphin catch overall, and private vessels harvest around 80 percent.

As mentioned, here's the figure that shows a distribution of dolphin harvest per angler in the Atlantic, and so this is the whole picture, from the Keys all the way up through Maine, and, generally speaking, most vessels are harvesting less than five dolphin per person, but you can see those sort of blue bars that extend out to the right there, and those are -- You see a much higher prevalence of the higher numbers of fish onboard charter vessels.

When you kind of zoom-in a little bit and look at harvest by mode and by state, in this case, this really just picks out harvest off of Florida versus harvest off of North Carolina per person and by mode, and so the blue line is Florida for-hire, and the orange line is Florida private vessels, and then the yellow line is North Carolina private vessels, and the gray line on the bottom there is North Carolina for-hire vessels, and, really, this is sort of cumulative, and so it adds up as you go up this sort of bin on the horizontal axis, and so one to two fish, two to three, et cetera, and it adds up how many of those trips caught at least that many fish.

You can see -- Looking at about 97 percent of the observed trips are in the three to four range for private vessels off of Florida, whereas, if you go down to for-hire vessels off of North Carolina, it's about 80 percent, and so you have a good number of those trips are harvesting sort of those higher numbers, and that's sort of the take-home point there from that figure.

Overall, the council's initial consideration of a range of options is pretty wide at this point, anywhere from two to ten fish per person, and they want to consider different bag limits, potentially, by mode, and so, essentially, you could have a different bag limit onboard charter vessels versus private vessels, and they also want to look at potentially adding an option that would

include a vessel limit or a bag limit, whichever is greater, instead of whichever is more restrictive, which is the case at the moment.

In this case, this would look at -- That last bullet there, where it says whichever is greater, and say they set a bag limit of thirty fish per vessel, and two anglers went out, and the bag limit was say five per person, and they could still keep thirty fish, since the vessel limit is thirty fish, whereas, if they had say six anglers onboard, the thirty-fish bag limit would be -- Or say seven anglers, I guess, and the thirty-fish bag limit would be the restrictive -- They would be able to keep five per person, rather, and so it's whichever would be greater, and so that's sort of a new concept that was brought up at the March meeting.

I'm happy to turn this over to the AP, but just kind of the general input that the council would be looking for is how the effects of reducing the bag limit may vary by sector, and I know that there's been quite a bit of discussion on that from the FPR and then earlier today that we could tie into this, but, also, how the effects may vary by region, and this is a general question, and how much could the bag limit be reduced before you think people would just -- There would be a notable reduction in the number of trips targeting dolphin, and, in other words, is there a bag limit that wouldn't be worth pursuing, for most anglers?

Currently, the bag limit is ten fish per person, not to exceed sixty fish per vessel, and would you be in favor of considering a reduced bag limit and vessel limit, but the default would be to whichever is greater, instead of whichever is more restrictive, which is currently how the regulation reads, and so, with that, I will turn it over to the AP, and, there again, this one is focusing on bag limits, and we're going to jump into vessel limits just after this.

MR. BURROWS: Richard.

MR. DELIZZA: I would just like to give a little bit of a preamble, and I promise not to make it too long, and so almost all of the members of the AP have observed a decline in the quality and quantity of dolphin catches over some number of years, whether it's five or ten or fifteen, but almost everybody has agreed to that.

The statistics show that it's very rare for any anglers to actually take what is the current bag limit, and it's pretty rare for that to actually be happening. Looking at other fisheries that have had declining stocks, eventually a biomass gets to a level where -- The term is pejorative, but where the stock collapses. Once that collapses, then the regulators come in and take extraordinarily draconian measures. All you have to do is look at Atlantic red snapper and, down here in Florida, you can see what has happened with snook, where you go from being able to do what you would like to hardly able to do anything.

As a group, I would like to think the mission of the AP is to make recommendations that avoid those kind of severe restrictions ever happening by making recommendations that sustain a viable, enjoyable, profitable fishery in perpetuity, and so I just wanted to throw that out there, as we start this discussion.

MR. BURROWS: Thank you, Richard. I will be glad to add my two-cents. Looking at the numbers, with the private non-for-hire sector taking 83 percent of the dolphin, it tells me that may be where we need to look first, and separating sectors further than we have in the past might be

the way to fix this -- Address this problem for the groups that care about this, that are in this room today. Rom.

MR. WHITAKER: Well, we've kind of beat this horse yesterday some, but, you know, right back to I do have people that catch -- Well, now the limit will be nine per person, if I have six people, and they can catch nine per person, and I do have people that do that, and they like to do it, and they utilize the fish, and so, you know, the real monster here is the recreational. That's where all the, as Mike pointed out, and you all have pointed out, that's where the effort is, and, I mean, I have no problem if they want to go thirty fish, five a person, but, for my industry, I think it would be devastating, or it would certainly be a negative economic impact for our industry in North Carolina. Thank you.

MR. BURROWS: Thank you, Rom. Jon.

MR. REYNOLDS: Man, that's a tough one. That's sector separation, and that's, you know, a lot of screaming unfair, and there's a lot of rec guys who agree, and that's going to be a divided, a very, very divided, thing, but I agree. I mean, with the number of rec boats now, and then you can load up a rec boat. You know, I mean, you can load up a boat, and I'm not saying the fish are even alive out there to catch, and, I mean, that's -- Those days are not here, and we're not -- We need to work towards sustainable measures, and so, I mean, I think we need to kind of -- We've got to walk the line on that one.

Anyway, not for me then, but from the recreational input, and what's been on the record, and the people that I've talked to, and what's literally been inputted onto the council record, is the recreational sector is in support, way more, of five per and thirty max, or even less, for that matter, and a larger size limit, and that's what they said, and that's what I hear, for the most part.

You know, I mean, there are some rec guys that are saying no way, and how are you going to restrict us, and you're not going to restrict charter boats, and you're not going to restrict commercial boats, and there's no trip limit, and I can't catch this, and charter guys are going out there every day, and, you know, these are the literal arguments that I deal with all the time, but, for the most part, the recreational sector, and the recreational boats, are screaming less fish, bigger size limit. Charter boats are, in our area, are screaming lower vessel limit, but not lower the bag limit, and that's what I have, I guess, for now.

MR. BURROWS: Thank you, John. Richard.

MR. DELIZZA: Just to get a bias out there, I hold the charter captains in the highest regard, and they are the rock stars of our recreational fishing industry, and we all learn from them. When I grow up, I wanted to be one, and it just hasn't exactly worked out, and so protecting that market is extraordinarily important to me, and Jon mentioned something on the sector separation, and one of the, and I don't know if it would be intended or unintended, consequences of that could be very favorable.

If you allow the charter sector to have a larger bag limit than the recreational sector, that becomes a differentiator to sell the charter experience, whereas, if I go out in my boat, and I can only catch X number of dolphin, but, if I go out on Jon's boat, I can catch X-times-one-and-a-half, I would

think that would help sell the charter experience, and so I think that idea has some legs to it, and it still could be blended in with the other restrictions.

That said, I'm not proposing, or suggesting, that the status quo is acceptable. Again, I think that there has to be some additional limitations that allows that biomass to increase, but, as one recreational guy, I not only am okay with sector separation, but I think it could be pretty favorable for the charter guys, and that's coming from the outside looking in, but those are my thoughts.

MR. BURROWS: Thank you, Richard. Jon.

MR. REYNOLDS: Another one of my out-of-the-box ideas, I guess, and I don't know how this would fly, but the way this all goes, and achieving all the goals, and I try to think out of the box as much as possible, and what's going to work for everyone, and so all the things we're proposing, and all the different measures here, and then we're talking about charter vessel bag limits, and rec guys, and the amount, and five per, and charter guys don't want five per, and say you get to a forty max vessel limit, right, but captain and crew stays at ten, and it's five per, and this is an overall.

Then what you're doing there -- In essence, what we're all saying here is you're putting the charter guys at forty, okay, and the captain and crew bag limit would give you twenty, and, I mean, what are you going to do? If you have two people, you can only keep thirty, I guess, if you only had two people, and, once you're at four people, you can keep forty, if you were at five per, but a captain and crew limit is still at ten, and then, on private vessels, it's five per and forty max, and that's just another one of those ideas.

If we're dealing with this range of options, and we don't want to get to sector separation, but we want to kind of walk the line on what we think can work for sustainability and still to keep everyone happy, that's just another idea. The captain and crew limit stays at ten, and it goes to five per, and the recreational sector is moved to five per, and so is the charter sector as well, except for you can reach that forty max, and it's not going to put Rom out of business, and that's just another idea.

MR. BURROWS: Thank you, Jon. Michael.

MR. PLAIA: In the Northeast, we have several species where the charter and party fleet has different bag limits than private vessels, and that is not the same thing as sector separation. I personally am vehemently opposed to sector separation, because I think that, when you separate the charter and party fleet from the recreational fleet -- First of all, you've created a lot of animosity if the charter and party fleet has entirely different rules than the private boat fleet, and, secondly, I think, if you go full sector separation, you're setting yourself up for, somewhere down the line, when drastic measures are required, the politics of the situation --

Again, the private vessel fleet outnumbers the party and charter fleet, probably three to one, or four to one, and, if a political solution is necessary, because of an extreme situation, the private sector is going to have much more political clout than the charter sector, and I'm afraid that the charter sector is going to take it in the teeth, as opposed to the private sector. We've seen it, to some extent, already in striped bass, and I just -- I am just opposed to it in general principle, and that's not to say that you can't have different retention limits for the charter and party fleet than for the private vessel fleet.

MR. BURROWS: Thank you, Michael. Chip.

MR. BERRY: Michael, I agree with that, and I wouldn't want the sectors to be like -- I like Jon's idea of doing something out of the box and creative that will make this work and not have that sector separation, because I agree with Michael, and, if accountability measures ever have to be done, something has got to give, and it's not going to be pretty, and so I think we're all in this together, and we all work together, and we want everybody to be successful, and we want the resource to be sustained and grow, and I think -- Anyway, I just wanted to throw that out, and I think you're heading somewhere here, actually. Thank you.

MR. BURROWS: Thanks, Chip. Tim.

MR. SCALISE: I think we could reach a consensus, if we could agree to the catchable limits, and I think that's about the only thing that I think we could be unanimous in.

MR. BURROWS: Thanks, Tim. Good point. Rom.

MR. WHITAKER: Just to add a little bit, and, yes, I think the captain and crew certainly needs to remain part of it. Sometimes I get one person, and they certainly want to catch more than nine, if they're chartering the whole boat by themselves, and I can say that, guys, I have a lot of women that fish with me too, and so I'm not trying to eliminate or discriminate, and I have plenty of all-girl groups, and they're a lot of fun. In fact, they listen ten-times better than the men, and usually are better anglers, as Jon will probably tell you.

If you're going to do a number, most of my charters are -- The majority of them are six people, and so I say keep it at some component of that, because sometimes -- I don't know, and it just seems to work out better, and people say, well, those are my six, or these are my six, or these are my whatever, and so I would say to try to keep it at some multiple of six. Thank you.

MR. BURROWS: Thank you, Rom. John.

MR. HADLEY: It sounds like another thing that everybody seems to be in agreement on is, if there is a change to the bag limit, that it should be higher -- Retention limits should be higher onboard for-hire trips, compared to private vessels, and is that fair to say?

MR. SCALISE: I think it's the same. I mean, the captain and mate are -- I mean, they're beings, and they're individuals, and they should count, and so I don't see where it differs. In my opinion, it's being consistent.

MR. DELIZZA: What I was saying is that, yes, some distinction that, from a practical standpoint, allows a charter to have a higher catch limit than what recreational does, and I think that would be useful in balancing off against overall lower bag limits or higher size limits. My thought here is to protect the charter industry and to get them onboard with other restrictions that have less impact on them, because clearly the charter industry is important, and clearly they have a lot of influence on the council, and, because they're part of the recreational catch, it seems to be -- There seems to be a resistance to making an overall improvement in the fishery management plan, and so that is kind of my thought, and I used the wrong term with "sector separation", but coming up with a

practical solution that keeps the charter industry viable while overall keeping the fishery sustainable for longer is the concept that I had in mind.

MR. BURROWS: Thank you, Richard. Jon.

MR. REYNOLDS: So, I mean, seven per? We're at nine per, and I would like everyone's input, and I don't know, but seven per? Then we get into, if you've got captain and crew involved, and you have a four party, and does captain and crew still count, and then you're at forty-two, and we're taking a little bit of a reduction, and the charter vessels still have two additional guys on there, and I don't know. I'm just throwing that out there to get feedback.

MR. BURROWS: Rom.

MR. WHITAKER: Everybody keeps staring at me, and I'm just one person, and I have to go back, and I don't think my industry would be happy with forty-two, and I'm going to bring it up again, but the charter industry has to have an electronic logbook, and we're required, by law, to report exactly what we catch, and this information, I would think, would be immediately attainable, and we have an amendment for fifty-four, and let's see how it works, you know, and I think you can go look at the dockside surveys, and you can see -- You can pretty much verify our reporting, but that's -- I mean, I've heard a lot of recreational guys say, well, man, we wouldn't mind reporting our catches too, and maybe there needs to be a way to do it, because I've been dealing with -- Well, it used to be MRFSS.

Dewey would refer to it as SMURFS sometimes, and it, as we all know, wasn't worth the paper it was written on, and so that's still a very variable number that, until we find a better way to capture it, is always going to be way out there, but that's not true with our industry. You all should know exactly, pretty much, what we're doing, and that's just how I feel. Thank you.

MR. BURROWS: Thank you, Rom. Michael.

MR. PLAIA: I just wanted -- On a cautionary note, when we talk about the charter and party fleet, we're not always talking about six paying passengers, all right, and I don't know what it's like in the South Atlantic, but, in the Northeast, there's a lot of the charter and party fleet that are smaller boats that only take two or three or four passengers, and so, you know, you don't want to reduce the size limits to the point where it makes them uneconomic to charter.

Again, back to the point we were on yesterday, with Rom and myself, it's the perception of what you can catch that sells the charter, and it's not the actual amount. Very few charters actually hit whatever the maximum is on a particular species, and there is a substantial portion of the charter and party fleet that takes less than six passengers routinely, and, you know, you've got to be cognizant of what you're doing to those guys.

MR. BURROWS: Thank you, Michael. Jon.

MR. REYNOLDS: That's us, all day long. Six is rare with our charter fleet, very, very, very rare, and so you've got two people. Seven times two, that's fourteen. With two crew, that's twenty-eight. You've got a charter with two people, and you can keep twenty-eight fish. I mean, that's pretty good, and we're talking about a -- That's pretty good, and so I'm just doing the multipliers

here. If you've got three people, you can keep thirty-five fish on a charter now, and that's not going to discourage. That's a small party of three people, and the crew limit is seven, seven per, and then, when you get to forty-two, then that's where we would like to see a maximum vessel limit then. I'm just pointing that out. When you do the multiplier like that, with the crew limit, even with those small parties, it's a good deal, you know, and it's working. I think it's workable.

MR. BURROWS: Thanks, Jon. Do you have a second mate in reserve?

MR. OWSLEY: Getting to what Jon was saying too, if you've got -- I mean, the charter calls that I get out of Georgia -- I'm a little different than what you all are hearing, and they want to always know how many people can the boat take, because of the long run and the cost, and so they want to have as many people as they can take to keep the unit price down. Rarely have I ever been asked how many dolphin are we going to be able to keep.

I will say, like Jon referenced taking two people and the captain and mate, and, if those two people -- I mean, I have been on some charters where people just want to go home, and they're tired of reeling, and then so, if they go catch that many fish, it's not -- You're up top, in the bridge, and your mate is doing his stuff, and he's not reeling, and so your two clients -- They're going to be worn out, and so, a lot of times, I don't even know if they attain that limit, because they're like, look, you know, we don't do this for a living, and we've had our entertainment factor, and we've got food for the freezer, and so on and so forth.

I see, you know, definitely both sides of it, and I don't know what the right answer is, but I just know, in terms of sector separation, that creates animosity, and you put recreational against charter, and, you know, it just seems to make people angry at one another and start pointing the blame, instead of trying to get some end result, like Jon mentioned, and the goal is to manage and maintain and make this a sustainable fishery. It kind of creates war within the sectors about who does what and he said and she said, and so --

MR. BURROWS: Thank you, Dan.

MR. PLAIA: Maybe Dan isn't get a lot of questions because there is no size limit, or there is no boat limits, rather. Everybody knows it, and so why ask the question?

MR. BURROWS: Thank you, Mike. Chip.

MR. BERRY: I am just going to throw this out, and it's just a comment, but I have always had a problem with the per-angler way of judging things, and I have always looked at, you know, a boat catches fish, and it's a team effort, and vessel limits just keeps in clean, in my opinion, regardless of anglers, and there might be benefits of going either way, but I just always look at things as how many fish does a boat bring home in the afternoon, and it is a team effort, you know, and everybody works as a team. I mean, I understand why it's done like that, and I just thought that I would throw that out there.

MR. BURROWS: Thank you, Chip.

MR. OWSLEY: One other thing too, and I know -- Is there any -- Like where this dolphin is a six-per-person bag limit, but where you mentioned that you might have one customer, and you

want to get your captain and crew, and does this possession limit ever come into account? I know it happens a lot in migratory birds and stuff, and you can have a daily bag limit, but you also have a possession limit, and so, if that one customer is one person, it's a six-fish daily bag limit, but then, you know, if they kept captain and crew, and they were going back home or whatever, and they've got eighteen fish for one day -- I'm just asking the question, and has that ever been an issue, or would it be an issue?

MR. WHITAKER: Yes, and, I mean, we have, at the present time, ten fish per person, captain and mate included, and so, if I have one person, I can keep thirty dolphin, and, if you go over that, you're illegal, if that helps any, but, yes, we run into that. If we have two people, we can catch forty, and now I guess you would have to count it at nine, but, anyway, yes, that's certainly something we deal with every day.

MR. BURROWS: Thanks, Rom. Is it time for a break, so everybody can collect their thoughts for fifteen minutes?

MR. WHITAKER: Can I ask a quick question?

MR. BURROWS: Certainly.

MR. WHITAKER: When is checkout? Is it 11:00?

MR. BURROWS: It's 10:55 now, and so, if we have to deal with those issues, this would be a good time to do that. Let's try to do twenty minutes, or ten minutes.

(Whereupon, a recess was taken.)

MR. BURROWS: All right. We need to resume here, and so, John.

MR. HADLEY: All right. Thank you. This next action, this is the second-to-last, but this looks at potentially modifying the recreational vessel limit. As a reminder, it was sixty, and it will be going to fifty-four shortly, as of May 2, and this is kind of a continuation. There is a few items here, and you have the state measures from FWC that I mentioned yesterday and today that have changed the vessel limit in state waters in Florida.

On top of that, this is sort of a continuation of the discussion in Amendment 10, and the council essentially considered vessel limits of between thirty to fifty-four or upwards to sixty dolphin, and so thirty, forty, forty-two, forty-eight, and fifty-four dolphin per vessel. Previously, in Amendment 10, they settled on fifty-four, and, really, this was looked at potentially covering the entire management range, which is where they ended up, but there were also discussions of vessel limits by area, and so potentially off of Florida specifically, or potentially from Florida through South Carolina, and so there was a regional aspect to that discussion as well.

Overall, vessels, when you look at the kind of very high-level, big picture, from the entire management range, vessels tend to harvest twelve or fewer dolphin per vessel. However, charter vessels tend to account for a greater percentage of trips that harvest the higher numbers of dolphin.

Catch per vessel, when examined by -- You know, kind of broken up by state, and looking at Florida and North Carolina specifically, vessels fishing off of North Carolina tend to exhibit higher landings than those fishing off of Florida, with charter vessels having notably higher occurrences of higher numbers of dolphin per vessel.

To kind of view that visually, you have this figure here, similar to what you saw before, but notice it's a percentage of trips that fall into each vessel limit category, essentially, looking at zero to five, six to eleven, upwards -- All the way up to sixty, and you can see the private vessels tend to drop off there, overall, around twelve to seventeen fish, and there are several for-hire trips that do land upwards of that, and so that kind of rightward tail there tends to be heavily dominated by for-hire trips.

Looking at a similar figure, but, really, this is cumulative trips based on the same bins, if you will, of fish landed per vessel, and so zero to five, six to eleven, and onward. The orange and blue lines represent Florida trips, the blue being Florida for-hire and the orange being Florida private. Moving to North Carolina, the gray and yellow lines there represent North Carolina trips, and the top yellow one being North Carolina private trips and the bottom gray being North Carolina for-hire trips, and, as mentioned, you can see the North Carolina for-hire trips do tend to have a higher occurrence of fish, landing upwards of twenty and up, if you will, fish per vessel, and so there is definitely a regional difference there, when you look at harvest per vessel.

Looking at where the council is at least considering going with this, there's a pretty wide range of potential options for a vessel limit. Right now, it's between twelve and sixty dolphin per vessel, and this will include increments divisible by six, as well as a bag limit of thirty dolphin, or a vessel limit, rather, and that should be "vessel", of thirty dolphin. They also want to look at an option that would remove vessel limits, and so essentially defer to bag limits overall and remove the vessel limit.

Consider different vessel limits by mode, and so that could be different onboard private vessels versus charter vessels versus headboat vessels, and they wanted to add a regional option for vessel limit changes, and so this could occur -- These vessel limits could be in place only -- Or different vessel limits could be in place only off of Florida, and, also, we want to look at potential different regional options for vessel limits that may extend beyond Florida.

Then, last, but not least, they do want to -- The council does want to look at potentially looking at a vessel limit or a bag limit, whichever is greater, rather than whichever is more restrictive, and so kind of flip that on its head, as it currently stands, and so, turning it over to the AP for discussion, I know we've kind of touched on this a little bit, but looking at, you know, how might the effects of vessel limit vary by sector, should there be different limits by sector, how might the effects of reducing the vessel limit vary by region, and should there be regional considerations to vessel limits. Is there a vessel limit that essentially would be so low that it wouldn't be worth pursuing for most anglers?

Currently, headboats are exempt from the vessel limit for dolphin, but there is a bag limit of ten dolphin per paying passenger, and so, essentially, there are no -- There is no vessel limit. However, there are no captain and crew limits onboard headboat vessels, and it's just essentially ten dolphin per paying passenger, and so should there be vessel limits for headboats? With that, I will turn it over to the AP.

MR. BURROWS: Jon.

MR. REYNOLDS: Just kind of an analogy here, and I'm an athletic trainer, and I train guys, and they have goals in mind, and I cut to the chase with them, and I tell them, look, if you want to get here, buddy, here's what you've got to do. You know, if you want to run a four-minute mile, you start running tomorrow, and I don't fluff it, and so I'm going to attach every one of these motions that I want to make to a goal in mind, you know the goals that we have here.

We're looking at a motion for the long-term benefits of all participants, owing the substantial importance of the fishery for dolphin and wahoo particular to the recreational sector, all right, and I would make a motion -- **From what I'm gathering, I want to make a motion to move the twenty-inch size limit all the way up to Maine.** Then another motion, if we can vote, and I don't know if we have to vote individually, or another motion for the twenty-inch size limit all the way up to Maine, but to have an exclusion to keep X amount of fish under twenty inches, to avoid a waste of fish.

MR. HADLEY: If we're going to have multiple motions, I think the cleanest way to do that is to make the motion, and we'll discuss it, or the AP can discuss it, and vote on it, and then we'll capture the next one, if that's okay with you. That way, we won't lose track of what we're voting on and whatnot.

MR. BURROWS: So we have a motion on the floor to move the twenty-inch minimum size limit all the way through Maine. Is there a second to this motion?

MR. SCALISE: I second.

MR. BURROWS: Let's discuss this motion before it moves to a vote.

AP MEMBER: Can I ask for clarification on something? The other part of your motion, maybe having X number of fish that could be under the minimum size retained, is that going to be a separate motion, or it sounded like you were trying to connect the two together, and I was just curious if that was going to be another motion, separate from this one.

MR. REYNOLDS: Yes, I was going to make two motions. I think we can discuss, or vote, on two separate motions there.

MR. BURROWS: Is there any other comments? Rom.

MR. WHITAKER: I didn't hear Jon finish his -- I guess some kind of under twenty-inch bycatch, or I don't know what you would call it, exactly, but discard allocation, and, you know, for all the reasons that I mentioned before, I really think this is something that our industry can take care of without having to have somebody breathing down my back, with the twenty-inch, but I'm not saying that we can't live with it. I mean, sometimes you have to do what you have to do, but, I mean, I think, as I've stated before, that it's going to kill more dolphin than it's going to save, in my case, but, anyway, that's as far as the recreational part of it, and certainly that's where the problem is, and so they're a little different from us.

I can look at the guy down the dock and say, hey, why are you killing those little-bitty fish, and I can shame him into not doing it the next time, but that's maybe not the case with recreational, because it's so widespread, and they just don't have, sometimes, the opportunity -- We normally have a way to go to try to find some bigger fish, and sometimes you don't, but, most of the time, we try to.

MR. OWSLEY: Rom, I just wanted to -- I should have asked you offline, but I was wondering, and what does your catch methodology -- Does it differ for bailers, versus hoisters or gaffers, or are these smaller bailer-type fish -- Are they hitting a troll bait, or is this typical, you know, barbless hook with a chunk of ballyhoo and catching schoolies? I guess, would it -- Eliminating the smaller bailers, is that -- You know, could that be solved by tackle, or how does that work?

MR. WHITAKER: Yes. To answer your question, normally, we'll hit an area, a grass line, a current edge, a break, whatever, where we think dolphin is living, bailers. I mean, like I say, my ideal day is to catch thirty or forty bailers and go more offshore, but, normally, the method is if you put a couple of nylon feathers out, or maybe a couple of what we call a deep bait, just a small ballyhoo, swimming, and, as soon as you get a bite, you slow down, and we get what we call bailing rods out, which are just small 5/0 hook, with a two-ounce lead on it, and it doesn't take long to catch thirty fish, thirty or forty fish, and then you go on about your business.

If they're small, you know, I say just throw those things back, and we're going to go look for bigger ones, and hopefully you find them, and sometimes you don't. Sometimes you say, well, I'm not catching them that small, and you never find big ones. Most of the time, we do find some bigger fish, but, at any rate, I certainly -- You know, if we have to live with twenty inches, we'll figure out how to do it, but I think we can do it without an amendment, for the for-hire. Thank you.

MR. BURROWS: Thank you, Rom. Any other comments, before this moves to a vote? Glenn.

MR. HOPKINS: I don't know, and, from just observing it, are we just kind of assuming that Amendment 10 failed at this point? I mean, the catch is going to be reduced some, and was the minimum size already in Florida at twenty inches? So it's already been in effect? Okay. I am kind of against moving it all the way up the line, the twenty-inch limit, just from what Rom says.

I mean, as a commercial guy, we have to deal with intense scrutiny from enforcement, and it can be such a hassle, and I know you can eyeball some, but, if you're talking about a nineteen to a twenty-one-inch fish, or whatever, and you might not be able to discern it right away, and my best recollection of trying to measure a live dolphin is it's frisky, and it's kind of hard to get a good measurement, and so just I would kind of like to see what Amendment 10 does, as far as making any drastic things, and so that's just all I've got to say.

MR. BURROWS: Thank you, Glenn. Chip.

MR. BERRY: I done know if I want to make a motion to amend the amendment, but I would certainly be in favor of that to private recreational vessels, and I still feel like I'm not kind of -- You know, I don't have a very good solution to the rest of the sectors, the commercial nor the for-hires, but I would -- I think the minimum size should be applied more geographically, certainly to

the private sector, since the recreational sector -- Since they take 80 percent of it. I will just throw that out there. Thank you.

MR. BURROWS: Thank you, Chip. Tim.

MR. SCALISE: I think Amendment 10, in my opinion, is just a half measure. I mean, I will just put that on the record.

MR. BURROWS: Thank you, Tim. Anyone else before this goes to a vote?

MR. REYNOLDS: Honestly, I mean, we've dealt with it for so long, and, I mean, I can look at a school and tell you that they're probably not all going to make it, and we'll choose one fish, and cast to him, and twitch and twitch, and get him to bite and take that one and leave. I can look at that school, 90 percent of the time, and tell you if they're going to make it, and my mate can too, and he can look at them, and he can take the first fish, and I say, all right, gauge them, and you tell me, and so, I mean, I'm all for a minimum size all the way up.

I think it can be done, and I think these guys can do it, and I think it's going to take a little bit of - - You know, it's going to take a season, but these guys know -- You know, these guys know what they're doing, and they've been doing it for a long time. Everyone can look at a fish, and, the rec guys, it's hard to bail and measure in the same way, and they're just coming in the boat, you know, and so then that might even be more an opportunity for the next motion, and I know we're time-restrained, and so I'm going to --

MR. BURROWS: Anything else before we call a vote? Dan.

MR. OWSLEY: With it being that Florida, Georgia, South Carolina already has this twenty-inch minimum, and the North Carolina recreational -- I know there's a lot of inboards, but it's definitely a lot of outboards, and is doing a twenty-inch minimum size limit to recreational -- With what the charter boats catch in North Carolina, is doing a twenty-inch size limit really -- I was asking earlier, is it really going to make a difference?

If 80 percent of the recreational guys aren't bailing dolphin, is taking away his method of bailing dolphin -- Is that going to yield any results that we're trying to -- I know we don't have the answer, but I hate to say we want to take, or increase, or something, and then, two years from now, it hasn't done a thing, except maybe potentially hurt Rom and those North Carolina boats, and so I just -- Like Jon and Tim and me in Georgia, we've already dealt with the twenty-inch minimum, and it's going to be nothing new to us, but it's going to be new to them, and I don't know if, from when we did -- When South Carolina, Georgia, and Florida implemented a twenty, from whatever it may have been, if there was a minimum limit, have we seen any improved results from that minimum limit in Florida and Georgia, and so I'm a little conflicted to say yes or no, without having some information.

MR. BURROWS: Thank you, Dan. Chip.

MR. BERRY: I will throw in one more thing, since I'm pretty much from Wilmington too, and I know a lot of guys and girls up that way, and, you know, from Morehead City down through Little

River, South Carolina, and you know that southern North Carolina sector, and the fish seem to behave the same --

(There is a gap in the audio recording.)

MS. MARHEFKA: We're going to weigh-in, and so I just wanted to -- Because I know that you're in the thick of trying to come to a solution together, and, obviously, the more consensus we have, the easier it makes our job, but just do know that, you know, if you're on the losing side of a very close vote, that doesn't mean that then the council goes, okay, that's the way we have to go. Your entire conversation has been so good, and so thorough, and it will be what informs our decision and not the vote, for the record.

MR. WHITAKER: Kerry, thank you for your input, and, yes, I think, at these meetings, sometimes a vote is -- It just creates animosity, and it doesn't necessarily solve a problem, but I will add that, you know, Jay is out fishing, Jay Kavanaugh, who is a North Carolina member, and is not participating today, and Dickie Harris, who runs a charter boat in Oregon Inlet, the Fintastic, is in Argentina bird hunting, which is where I wish I was, and they told me that I had their full support, and so sometimes I don't like the vote process, and, in fact, we did away with it at the HMS, because all it seemed to do was create animosity. Thank you.

MR. BURROWS: Thanks, Rom. Chip.

MR. BERRY: I kind of agree with Rom. I feel a little uncomfortable, and I don't know why, and, I'm all for -- I am for it, and I am kind of for the full package, like you were trying to, Jon, put this if this occurs, and that's kind of where I am, and so I feel kind of -- I don't know. I don't know.

MR. BURROWS: Jon.

MR. REYNOLDS: Just rationale, Rom, the only reason I was doing that is -- This is much better, and, I mean, everyone is speaking out, and that's just my -- I am just learning, and, in past meetings, that was done, and so I just went with that, and the only reason that I was doing that is to make sure that everyone kind of like really gets in, and some people are shy, and they sit back, and they don't say it, and everyone has a part in it, and that's -- I just want you to know that that's the only reason that I was pushing that, but I hear Kerry, and that's it. Besides that, I have a few more things that I would like to throw out there then, and so I have to get my piece in, but, besides that, we don't even have to go to motions then, necessarily. As long as the discussion is like being heard in the overall thing, that's totally fine, and I understand.

MR. HADLEY: I just wanted to -- **We did have a motion that we need to just dispense with, one way or another, before we move into other discussion, if it's all right, and so we had three in favor, and we had two in -- I know we had at least two in opposition, and I didn't know --** Will the Chair be abstaining?

MR. BURROWS: I feel like I have to vote in opposition to this. I think there is ways that it can go that it can work, and I don't think the blanket measure is right for what I feel like my constituency is. If anybody is uncomfortable with me voting -- I know that's kind of not my role, and feel free to speak up, but I would -- I think it needs more work.

MR. REYNOLDS: I think we need to end the small-fish targeting effort though amongst the masses. That's a big deal, and so however we get to that, whatever we need to do, and, if charter boats -- If we can think about that, keeping some fish, so we can keep hitting and moving, and then he died, and he goes in the box, and he goes in the box, but, overall, I think, somehow, if the council -- We need to get to that. We need to get to not, you know, big kills of these small fish.

I agree with Tim, and I don't think Amendment 10 -- I don't think it went anywhere, and I don't think we achieved anything, and I don't think our goals were in mind, and I can speak for probably, you know -- I mean, just on the document that I have here, I can speak for twenty-five other big corporations and organizations and like 7,000 people that signed that, that said Amendment 10 should get torched, basically, and we need better measures, and that's on the record too, and so, I mean, I don't think Amendment 10 was going anywhere, and I don't think that it did enough, and I think we need more.

That being said, you know, the seven per, and then captain and crew counting, and I think that's - - For a goal and an objective, I think that's a big one, and I think we really need to address the council boat situation, and I think we've been talking about that for years, and I think it's causing a market disruption, and it's competition, and it's a negative impact on the overall fishery, and I think that needs to be addressed, for sure.

MR. BURROWS: Thank you, Jon. Do we want to move forward by presenting another motion, or is that where we're at?

MR. HADLEY: I think there's a couple of ways forward here. We can go through motions, and that shows a vote and how it would play out amongst the AP members. Another way we can move forward is sort of AP comments. If we're not going to have a consensus, where everybody is necessarily onboard with that, we could say -- You know, the considerations, Jon, that you just mentioned, those are some of the thoughts of some AP members, and it's not necessarily the whole AP is saying do that but we can kind of have a list of bullet points, kind of like I had earlier, that capture those thoughts, so they are presented to the council, but it's really -- It's up to the AP and the AP Chair on how to move forward.

MR. BURROWS: I think, the way this is headed, I think I favor more discussion, because this has to be reported to the council, and let's get everything out there. I think consensus on this is going to be really hard. Like a true, unanimous consensus is going to be really hard to find, but let's get our thoughts out there.

MR. OWSLEY: I agree with you, Chris. I just totaled it up, and I see there is eighteen AP members, and there is, you know, seven here, and so we're missing some Florida, and I know that Richard spoke up, and we're missing another Georgia guy, and some other people, and so I think -- Like you, I'm -- I don't want to be the guy abstaining, but I'm the guy who wants some more information to see before I make a decision.

MR. BURROWS: Thank you, Dan. John.

MR. HADLEY: If I could, on this, one of the things to also think about is that this is early in the process, and so this amendment has not been scoped, and so the range there is pretty wide, and we don't have actions and alternatives. This will -- Assuming that this isn't approved until June, this

will be coming back to the AP next spring, and that's when you could say here's -- You will have additional analysis, and the AP could say, you know, Action 1, Alternative 2 is our preferred alternative, and you could also -- So you'll have another crack at it, and it will be a little bit more developed, and so there is -- There's some room down the road, if you do want to make specific recommendations, next year. I just wanted to point out that's another avenue.

I think, in general, the council is really looking for input on some of what they should be considering when they're thinking about these different options, and then also helping narrow it down, and is there something that, you know, this should not be on the table, and like this needs to go, that sort of thing, and I think that's what the council is looking for at this point, but the AP will get another crack at this amendment, and, when it's a little bit further developed, you can say, you know, here's the full analysis, and here is based on what we know, and maybe narrow it down from there.

MR. BURROWS: Thanks, John. Hopefully we'll have more than seven at that point, too. Any more comments? Glenn.

MR. HOPKINS: It's actually more of a question, and I know it's a huge can of worms, and it's been touched on a little bit, but has there been any discussion on having recreational accountability, as far as reporting? Like somebody already said about hunting, and, I mean, if you shoot an animal, you call it in, and you get a tag or whatever, and has there been any discussion, and I know it's a lot of money, and a lot of time, but is it going towards that way?

I mean, we started off with the commercial guys having to report logbooks and yada, yada, yada, and charter boats having to report logbooks, and has there been any discussion, or can we start that process, of trying to get something started in that direction, so that we get a feel for this universe of what really is going on?

MR. BURROWS: John.

MR. HADLEY: That is something that hasn't been considered for the dolphin wahoo fishery. It is currently being considered for snapper grouper, and so the council -- They are fairly early in the process, and there's a lot of, you know, nuts and bolts and caveats that go along with it, but they are actively pursuing a private recreational permit for all snapper grouper species, and then potentially some reporting requirements to go along with that, and whether it will be all species, or maybe just a subset of those, but it is in the hopper, in the works.

MS. MARHEFKA: I think this is one time that I feel fairly confident that I can say that all of us would love nothing more, and I think it's the will of the council, and the desire of the council, to implement some sort of, as you say, knowledge, true knowledge, of the universe, and so it's not that we don't want to, and I think that it sort of has gotten started in snapper grouper, and it's so much more complicated than it should be, given that it's been done on land for such a long time, but we're determined to work through it, and I suspect that, if you all can just be patient with us while we -- Certainly, absolutely, 100 percent make it clear that this is a body that would support that, if that is the case, and that's how the -- We kept hearing that from our Snapper Grouper Advisory Panel, for a decade at least, and then, also, have some patience with us. It's not going to happen fast, but that's not because -- We're all right there with you, but it's just expensive and more complicated than one would hope, but I hope we're headed in that direction.

MR. OWSLEY: Glenn, I can tell you that I represent, obviously, recreational, and we talked about it at some conference or something, about doing the recreational-type reporting, and how do you get accurate reports, and how do you hold someone accountable for the accurate reports, because they're just doing it on the weekend for recreational fun, and it's not like you all are doing it, to feed your families, and so I know, from the recreational side of things, with -- In the snapper grouper, with dead discards and everything, the rec guys were like, well, I'm not going to report that I released a snapper, because it's going to count as a dead discard.

Then, on the flip side of that, it's, well, if I don't report, they're going to say that there is no fish out there being caught, and so, from the recreational side of things, there is a whole lot of people talking about are they going to be accurate or, hey, I'm just not going to do it type of thing, and, you know, all I can say is, when we tried to implement -- I will relate it to a completely different industry.

For equipment management and such, when we were doing like paper pre-trip inspections and stuff, they were getting a lot of pencil whipping and stuff, and so we've tried to use a lot of technology to make it simple, and I think that's what all the recreational people are saying, is, hey, they're not -- Some of them aren't opposed to doing it, but they just want it simple, and, you know, there's a huge concern, from the recreational side, of how is this data going to be used against me, and so --

MR. REYNOLDS: I mean, this being, economically, recreationally -- The public comment, just for the council -- I mean, the public comment has to weigh heavily on the council for this, because, I mean, we're talking about a \$350 million a year annual fishery here, recreationally, and the contribution from the recreational sector to go dolphin fishing, and what we're looking at for stock and abundance, I mean, it's massive, and so, I mean, I just want to point that out, you know, and I can look at myself and want what I want, but I'm making a living off of the fishery, and I have to walk the line on what I'm taking from this fishery as well, and recreational people are not doing that. I mean, they're catching dinner, and they're contributing heavy amounts to the economics of the fishery.

MR. BURROWS: Thank you. Anyone else? John.

MR. HADLEY: I think one thing -- You know, bringing it back to what's on the screen right now, we've had a good bit of discussion on vessel limits, and I think one thing the council would be interested in hearing is should there be a regional consideration of vessel limits? Should they be looking at changing vessel limits for along the entire east coast, or should they be narrowing that down a little bit more? I know that that was one kind of aspect that they were hoping to get feedback from the AP on, overall, kind of the whole east coast, or should they kind of cut down that piece of the pie.

MR. BURROWS: Jon.

MR. REYNOLDS: From my feedback on that from everyone, and what I feel personally, is, for fairness and equity, I think we need to find a happy medium, and I think that's kind of the input that I've given on it, with a captain and crew limit, and then I think we can all deal with that, personally, and I think people will adapt, and I know I have customers already who have said this

and that, and I say, look, man, we didn't catch that last year anyway, and come on, and let's do this together, and come on, but, from Florida's perspective, they're looking at we're all in this, and the stock is a shared stock, and we should all make a compromise.

MR. BURROWS: Tim.

MR. SCALISE: Dolphin are just such a migratory species, and they're so interwoven, and each region is just sharing the same stock, and so I just don't see how you can just have carve-outs. What they do in Florida is going to affect what happens in North Carolina, and what happens in North Carolina is going to affect what happens in Florida. I mean, we're all in this same boat.

MR. BURROWS: Thank you, Tim. Rom.

MR. WHITAKER: Well, I don't know that I have any great comments on this, but, I mean, if you were looking at the Northeast -- Of course, Mike is gone, and, if you were to ask them, they've had great dolphin fishing in the last three or four years, and so their opinion of the fishery, that it goes from North Carolina to Florida and back and forth, might not be the same, and what nobody has brought up is that, as soon as those fish get out there to 200 miles off our coast, they're fair game for any nation in the country that has a fishery, a longline fleet, I guess you could say, and so I think we need to look at the whole picture here, and I just -- I feel like, and what I've been arguing with for the last two days, is that, if I reduce my limit, then it's obviously going to affect my business, and maybe -- I mean, from I'm hearing in Florida, that it's not, and so that's a different deal, and so I think all those things have to be considered. Thank you.

MR. BURROWS: Thank you, Rom. Chip.

MR. BERRY: I agree with everybody, again, and I'm good at agreeing, aren't I? I don't want to see things get too fractured either, but I still would get back to that same feeling, is that perhaps the private sector, and the for-hire sector and the recreational side of things, might should be just treated a little differently, instead of trying to do it geographically, because it is all connected, and I would just throw that out, and I don't have any answers, but do you see where I'm coming from?

MR. BURROWS: Thank you, Chip. Anyone else before we move forward? John.

MR. HADLEY: Really quick, I know that this has come up during council discussion quite a bit, the current headboat exemption, and so it's ten fish per paying passenger, and so, in that case, captain and crew cannot keep their limits onboard headboats, but there is no vessel limit, and that's sort of the tradeoff there. Do you all recommend any change to that, or do you think it should stay -- Basically, the headboat limit should remain at whatever the bag limit -- You know, wherever the bag limit ends up, and is there any feedback on that?

MR. BURROWS: Jon.

MR. REYNOLDS: I've worked on headboats a lot, and I don't think they have enough of an impact, personally. I mean, if the bag limit goes down, they need to go down with it, but I don't - - For dolphin at least, I don't think they have much of an impact, but I just wanted Chip to maybe, briefly, like throw out what you mean though, and, okay, and so we're looking at recreational and

charter differences, and so where do we want to -- Give me an idea of where you think that recreational should be.

MR. BURROWS: Chip.

MR. BERRY: Well, it seems that the recreational, I mean the private recreational -- Well, maybe that's not exactly true. I don't know, and I'm just feeling that there's a little bit of difference here, and I want to see the for-hire -- I think somebody, and I think it might have been Tim, earlier or something, said something about, you know, some experience out there, and so we look up to our captains and the for-hire industry, and those are our mentors, and like Rom has always been one of mine, and that kind of thing, and I don't know, and I just think that -- Like I said, the private recreational sector takes 80 percent, and anything we can do with that would seem to benefit the entire fishery, and leave the for-hire for alone for a while, and just see where Amendment 10 goes, the current one, and so forth.

I don't know, and I guess we've got to start somewhere, but 80 percent is what I keep thinking, and I see there's a -- In the discussion, there is a little bit of a difference, and we're trying to balance this thing, and I don't know if, by going to geographic regional differences, if we're going to solve that, and I don't know. I am still in the processing, to be honest with you, and I don't know if I answered your question, John, and I'm sorry, but, anyway, the bottom line is I think that 80 percent would do a little bit in that sector towards conservation, if that's what is really needed, and I'm not even sure what's really needed. Maybe we should start there. Thank you.

MR. BURROWS: Thank you, Chip. Rom.

MR. WHITAKER: Just to follow-up on the headboats and John's comments, we have a couple of headboats out of Hatteras, and I think several out of the Morehead City area, and I'm not sure about Wilmington, but, if you want some entertainment, you need to go watch the headboats when they get into a school of dolphin, because it is absolutely the funniest thing, or one of the funniest things, I've ever seen, and so they catch them, but they are certainly not -- I don't think they're a targeted species, but I do think that we need to make it very clear, so they know, and I think their limit, per person, needs to be in line with whatever the council decides to do. If it's fifty-four, then their limit needs to be nine a person, or whatever, but that's all I've got to say.

MR. BURROWS: Thanks, Rom.

MR. BERRY: I've just got one funny comment. When Bob Dylan wrote "Tangled up in Blue", he was describing getting to a school of mahi on my headboat.

MR. BURROWS: Thanks, Chip. Anyone else?

MR. HADLEY: So, from a for-hire perspective, we have some South Carolina input here at the table, and I think the Florida perspective and the North Carolina perspective has been described, and, not to put you on the spot, Tim, but is there kind of a feeling, generally, which camp the South Carolina vessels may fall in? I will send that to Georgia as well, and sorry, Dan, and I didn't mean to leave you out there, but, I mean, it's kind of -- A lot of the discussion is on each end of the spectrum there, but there are certainly very important states in between.

MR. SCALISE: I mean, I've been doing this, professionally, for close to forty years, and I have just seen the decline, and I think the consensus among the charter boats is that any marginal steps we can take to increase the stock and the size of the fish -- You know, we're not really concerned about numbers, but it's just the quality of the fish, and anything we can do to increase the average size -- I think everyone is for that, and the quantity just -- You know, you get a box full of dolphin, and you don't count numbers, like I got fifty-four, or I got sixty, or I got -- That's my thoughts.

MR. BURROWS: Thank you, Tim. Dan.

MR. OWSLEY: From the Georgia -- I don't know if there's a party boat even fishing out of Georgia, and I know there's a couple of people that can take ten, but they don't even participate in the dolphin wahoo fishery, and so, in Georgia, it's predominantly all recreational, and so the -- You know, I'm one of the few that would do a charter, but we call it a private charter, and I'm not a full-time charter captain, like Rom, and so I think the for-hire part of the dolphin fishery in Georgia is kind of a moot topic, and so it's mainly going to be recreational driven out of Georgia.

MR. BURROWS: Thank you, Dan. Chip.

MR. BERRY: I just want to -- Since you're talking about headboats, I was just thinking that, you know, Murrells Inlet used to have quite a few headboats, and I don't think there's maybe but one there, or maybe any. In Georgetown, I don't think, and I think there's still one, or a couple of them, up in the Little River fleet, but there's not that many in that sector.

MR. BURROWS: It has contracted a lot in Little River. It used to be a big deal, and it's no longer there. Thank you. John.

MR. HADLEY: It sounds like, to me, that a vessel limit shouldn't -- You don't think they're necessary for headboats, and that seems to be what everyone is kind of getting at there. Okay. Thank you. I just brought that up because I know that it's been something that's been kind of a talking point at the council, and I'm sure they would appreciate that feedback, and so thank you.

MR. BURROWS: I think that brings us to the end of the headboat discussion. Do we have time to proceed or --

MR. HADLEY: I think we have a little bit of wiggle room here, but it's going to have to move pretty quickly to wrap it up. The next one is captain and crew daily bag limits for dolphin, and the council is just kind of weighing what to do with that. Currently, captain and crew bag limits can be kept, provided that the vessel limit is not exceeded. The council is kind of considering three options with this, to leave it as-is, to consider reducing or removing -- To consider reducing the captain and crew bag limits, and so, essentially, that would be a range of two to ten dolphin per person, or potentially removing captain and crew bag limits, either throughout the management range or potentially a regional option, focusing off of Florida only.

It sounds like captain and crew -- I am just going to kind of summarize the AP discussion, and it sounds like captain and crew bag limits are fairly important, and that's something that the AP would probably want to maintain, but I will turn it over to you all for any other additional comments on that, and, if I'm incorrect, please let me know otherwise.

MR. WHITAKER: Well, it seemed like that was about the only thing, maybe one of the few things, we did reach a consensus on yesterday, pretty much, didn't we, John, that captain and crew limits were very important, and we would like to keep them, and that's our -- From North Carolina anyway, and I thought we kind of reached consensus.

MR. BURROWS: Thank you, Rom. Jon.

MR. REYNOLDS: I would agree. I mean, yes, I would agree. I am thinking of using it more as a tool for overall conservation as well, but keeping the charter boats happy, and, yes, I think it's a good way to maybe go about it.

MR. BURROWS: Thank you, John. Chip.

MR. BERRY: I agree with both of you. That's something that I think we did come to kind of -- That is a tool, and that's exactly what I was hoping, that, if that minimum did, that that would be one of the, quote, compromises, and I think it is a tool, and I think it's important to keep, at least now anyway, and, yes, I agree with that, and it can be used as a tool. Instead of trying to divide the sectors or whatever, it's to use that kind of thing as a tool, like John said, and kind of out-of-the-box thinking, and I think that's a good way of looking at it. Thank you.

MR. BURROWS: Thank you, Chip. Anyone else? Dan.

MR. OWSLEY: With us able to keep the captain and crew limit, I know there was talk about charter sales too of dolphin, and so like, currently, the captain and crew -- Like everyone on the boat, and I guess your clients would take your fish as well, or do you keep them, and, if that sale thing passed, would it be now the clients would be back to their daily person limit and then the captain and crew, captain and mate, would be selling those extra fish to -- I am just curious how it's used as a conservation tool, or is it going to be used as a tool to still say, hey, we can keep this many, and how does that work?

MR. BURROWS: The advisory panel has kicked that anthill a couple of times, with reinstating bag limit sale, especially in the Florida Keys and, to some degree, in the Outer Banks, and it has not gotten any traction at the council level, and so that would not be the -- That wouldn't really factor in, I don't think, to this, and correct me if I'm wrong, John, but the captain and crew bag limit would be going towards paying customers, at this point. Jon.

MR. REYNOLDS: Just briefly, I watched all different guys do it all different ways growing up, and I watched some guys destroy their businesses by trying to do that, and so, I mean, it's not like -- It hasn't created traction, and there was a lot of votes in favor of -- I mean, I think the reality of the world, and higher dockage, and commercial fishermen having to adapt and do what they have to do to cover fuel and everything else, I think it's a great management tool. All that being said, it doesn't really matter at this point, but I think that's just going to be a hit to your own business, and anyone is going to take that how they want. If you start saying you're going to keep the fish, you're hurting yourself, you know?

MR. BURROWS: Thank you, Jon. Rom.

MR. WHITAKER: Yes, it just doesn't happen, up in my area, and, it's like Jon says, and you're cutting your own throat.

MR. BURROWS: Thank you, Rom. Any other comments there? I think a five-minute free-for-all would probably be in our best interests. As long as we can include yesterday's discussion in this, I think that's going to be really important in reporting this to the council, and so I guess we've got five minutes.

MR. HADLEY: I was just going to make just a quick kind of -- If it's okay with you, to just kind of go over the remaining items for the agenda, and I think that the council is interested in hearing about regional management needs, potential future needs of management in the fishery, and I think a lot of that discussion came out in the fishery performance report, and also the discussion of Amendment 3. You know, if there's anything else that sort of falls outside of that, we can always -- Let me know, and we can email it, and, assuming Chris is good with it, we could always add that to the AP report, and so, if there's something outside of that that warrants bringing to the council's attention, we can certainly do that through the AP report.

Then, really quickly, the Other Business items, there was some discussion, and this is something that you can certainly follow-up with at the end, but the council is interested in gathering more information, and this is something that's been kind of more impactful for those of you that may be involved in the commercial snapper grouper fishery, but there has been increased questions on the National Marine Fisheries Service, and so the federal observer program, and the commercial discard logbook and the use of that.

The council is looking into it, and they may have some questions to ask the National Marine Fisheries Service of, you know, how is that information being used, and they will gather more information about that program, and so that's just a -- If there are specific questions, or there's something you would like to see the council ask NMFS on that program, certainly we can -- Let me know now, or we can follow-up by email, and I will certainly pass that along to the council.

The other thing, very quickly, if you have any ideas down the road, as far as communication preferences of the AP, and this is something -- I think it's just getting a reboot and getting used to meeting back in-person, but I want to make sure that my communications are getting out to AP members, and just some -- I assume, when I send out an email, that people are getting it, but, if I need to go back and call certain folks, if that's easier for you, I can certainly do that, but I've been relying heavily on the email list, and I want to make sure that everybody is sort of getting the communications there, and so, if there any improvements to that, I'm happy to hear it now, or you can send me an email and say, you know, it would be really helpful, John, if you did X, Y, and Z, and I will do my best to follow-up on that. That's all I have, and I know we're kind of running a little bit over time here, and so, without further ado, I will turn it back over.

MR. BURROWS: Five-minute free-for-all. Jon.

MR. REYNOLDS: I've got to speak on behalf of all these organizations who joined together, and I'm just going to go through the list and ask what their request is of the dolphin fishery: The International Gamefish Association, AFTCO, West Palm Beach Fishing Club, Sailfish Boats, Stuart Rod and Reel Club, Young Boats, Invincible Boats, Salt Strong, South Atlantic Fishing Environmentalists, Yamaha Outboards, Maverick Boat Group, Wild Oceans, Jacksonville

Bluewater Club, Maheo Sunglasses, Danco Sports, Biscayne Boatworks, Engel Coolers, The Billfish Foundation, Contender Boats, Guy Harvey Ocean Foundation, Hook and Tackle Clothing, Gainesville Offshore Fishing Club, DOA Lures, Central Florida Offshore Association, Don's Bait and Tackle, *Florida Sportsmen Magazine*.

They all request movement for a twenty-inch size limit up the coast, and to move these measures into the Gulf as well, and ten per person, thirty maximum, and a 2,000-pound commercial trip limit, and I'm speaking on behalf of all of those organizations and 7,000 individuals who signed the same document on that, and they wanted me to make sure that I said that on the record at this meeting. Thank you.

MR. BURROWS: Thank you, Jon. Rom.

MR. WHITAKER: I just wondered if we had any public comment from anybody listening.

MR. BURROWS: Let's move to public comment.

MR. HADLEY: If there is anyone on the webinar that would like to make public comment, feel free to raise your hand, and we'll get you unmuted.

MR. BERRY: How many folks have we got logged-in from outside? I'm just curious.

MR. HADLEY: I'm sorry, Chip.

MR. BERRY: I think I got the answer, and there is seventeen connected through the webinar? Okay. Thanks.

MR. HADLEY: So no hands for public comment online, and I'm assuming none in the room, and so it looks like no public comment. I did want to mention the next meeting will be next year, and the council does want their APs to meet at least once a year, and so, you know, we will have probably Amendment 3 to discuss, and some other agenda items, and so to be continued on that, overall.

MR. REYNOLDS: Was there written public comment?

MR. HADLEY: It looks like there were two, and I will bring those up, really quick. For those of you that -- That is available on the website, and it looks like there were two public comments received. Oh, there were way more. Never mind. I'm sorry. There are twenty-four, and I take that back, and so I apologize for that. There were several up there, and that's available to the public. That's available to AP members, and that's available to the public, if you do want to go through those. If you go on our website for the Dolphin Wahoo AP meeting, there it is right there. There's the online public comment form, and then that very last link there is to read the public comments.

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

MR. HADLEY: The public comment period opened up two weeks before the meeting, and it ends today, for the AP meeting. It will open back up for the council meeting, which is coming up in

June, and it opens up when the briefing book is posted for that meeting, and so essentially two weeks before that meeting, and so it will open up in late May.

MR. BERRY: Just quickly, when I look at the public comments, I think, if you scroll way over to the right, those fields are kind of stretched out in the database, and it gives you the time and date that they presented and who it was, I think, or it might even be to the left, but they are separated kind of far, and so just keep that in mind. If you want to see who and when, you have to kind of scroll over side-to-side.

MR. OWSLEY: I think one take-away from what Jon was just saying, and he named all those organizations, and I see, quickly, looking at these public comments, that there's a whole lot of people that are in support of ten per person, or ten and thirty, or ten and forty, and a twenty-inch minimum limit, and I think one of the things that I hope I haven't harped on is -- But, as Kerry said, with the council members, they appreciate our discussion and candor and everything, but I think one of the things that I would like to see, and I think maybe the council members, is if somebody, somewhere, could show like the tangible, or the benefits, of these comments, and I know there are so many caveats to it, and contingencies, and, you know, us trying to manage something that, when it goes on the loop and out of the EEZ, it's fair game, and so, you know, how this would ultimately -- You know, in five years, what would these measures mean to us?

MR. BURROWS: Thank you, Dan. Seeing no other hands and no other red lights, it may be time to adjourn for this period, but let's keep the discussion going in some form, some way, and everybody communicate, and we'll move forward. Rom.

MR. WHITAKER: I can't walk away without -- The proposal, in a lot of these letters, are thirty maximum per boat, but they're all asking for a ten-per-person limit, and, you know, there again, a lot of this is coming from Florida, where they have an unlimited amount of days to go, and boats, nice boats, to go in, and opportunities, and they want to have ten dolphin a person, and that's what I want my people, that are coming from all over the United States, and they're already at nine, which I'm not raising cane about that, but it's very ironic that they want ten, but they want me to have -- I'm already at nine, come the first of May, and so my point is that, if they can have ten, then my people, that come from all over -- They get one day a year to go out there and catch a fish, and why can't they have ten? It's just a little bit ironic. Thank you.

MR. OWSLEY: I will say, Rom, from northeast Florida, running to dolphin, I mean, we're at probably fifty-five or sixty miles, and so northeast Jacksonville, St. Augustine, Cape Canaveral is different from the lower Keys, and even -- The northeast Florida and Georgia people, their run is a lot longer than Hatteras, and definitely Hatteras is longer than down at the lower Keys, or south Florida stuff, and so that's -- Florida itself is kind of -- Within the state, it's a regional difference, because you can catch dolphin in sight of land down in south Florida, and you're way, way out of sight of land in northeast Florida.

MR. BURROWS: Thank you, Dan. Jon.

MR. REYNOLDS: If there's much support for that, then maybe it's like that and then seven per - - You know, we're talking all these -- It's just another option, but seven per crew member, and then you end up at forty-two, or forty-four, and I don't know, and you're talking a big compromise, and we're talking a lot of people involved in this.

MR. BURROWS: Thank you, Jon. Anyone else, before we bang the gavel? Chip.

MR. BERRY: Well, since you called me down, I will just tell you how much I have enjoyed being with everybody today, and it's good to see old friends, and new ones, and I just hope that we can get the discussion in a good, readable format for the council to see where we are kind of on the -- I mean, we, obviously, are trying to help here, and I just hope the minutes can reflect something that the council can see what we're either struggling with or trying to help with, that kind of thing, because I think it's very helpful for them.

I will have to go back -- I think it was Jon that said -- Did you say a \$350 million business a year for the dolphin fishery? Yes, it's important, and so probably way more than that, if you add in everything else, and it would be probably well more than that, but I think what we're doing is very important, and maybe we walk out of here thinking we didn't really achieve much, but I don't know, and it takes a lot of brainstorming to get -- I think we'll -- I mean, we'll get there, and everybody will be happy in the end, but I enjoyed being here, and God bless you all. Thank you.

MR. BURROWS: Thank you, Chip. Anyone else? I echo that, and thank you, all. It's been a fun discussion, and hopefully we can move forward and get it right. With that being said, we're adjourned.

(Whereupon, the meeting adjourned on April 21, 2022.)

Certified By _____ Date _____

Transcribed By
Amanda Thomas
June 21, 2022

Dolphin Wahoo

Attendee Report: Advisory Panel Meeting

Report Generated:
06/13/2022 07:26 AM EDT

Webinar ID
608-668-251

Actual Start Date/Time
04/20/2022 12:30 PM EDT

Duration
4 hours 46 minutes

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Yes	Darrow	Jamie
Yes	DeLizza	Richard <i>DW AP</i>
Yes	DeVictor	Rick - <i>OTHER</i>
Yes	Gillingham	Lewis
Yes	Guyas	Martha
Yes	Harrison	Alana
Yes	Helies	Frank
Yes	Hemilright	Dewey - <i>OTHER</i>
Yes	Iberle	Allie
Yes	Kavanagh	Jay <i>DW AP</i>
Yes	Kittle	Christine
Yes	Laks	Ira
Yes	Mehta	Nikhil
C Yes	Murphey	Trish <i>Council</i>
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Yes	Vinay	Nolen
Yes	Wamer	David
Yes	Wiegand	01Christina
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Attendee Report: Advisory Panel Meeting

Report Generated:

06/13/2022 07:30 AM EDT

Webinar ID

608-668-251

Actual Start Date/Time

04/21/2022 08:09 AM EDT

Duration

4 hours 16 minutes

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Yes	DeLizza	Richard
Yes	DeVictor	Rick
Yes	Foss	Kristin
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Yes	Guyas	Martha
Yes	Harrison	Alana
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Yes	Iberle	Allie
Yes	Iverson	Kim
Yes	Laks	Ira
Yes	Mehta	Nikhil
Yes	Murphey	Trish
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Yes	Wamer	David
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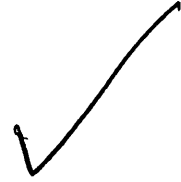
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