

SOUTH ATLANTIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

FULL COUNCIL SESSION I

**The Shores Resort & Spa
Daytona Beach Shores, Florida**

June 10-11, 2024

Council

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Dr. Julie Neer

Attendees and Invited Participants

Rick DeVictor
Monica Smit-Brunello
Geoff White
Dr. Marcel Riechert
Dr. Clay Porch
Dr. Kesley Banks
Dr. Mandy Karnauskas

Sonny Gwin
Pat O'Shaughnessy
Nikhil Mehta
Shepherd Grimes
Marisa Kraiss
Sam Rauch
Walter Hoppe

Observers and Participants

Other observers and participants attached.

The Full Council Session I of the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council convened at The Shores Resort & Spa, Daytona Beach Shores, Florida, on Monday, June 10, 2024, and was called to order by Chairman Carolyn Belcher.

DR. BELCHER: Good afternoon. Welcome to day one of the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council council meeting here in Daytona Shores. We'll start out with introductions of our liaisons, and we have Kesley Banks, with the Gulf Fishery Management Council, and Sonny Gwin is here representing the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council.

The next item on the agenda will be to talk about adoption of the agenda. Is there any changes that are needed for the agenda, as currently published? Any exceptions to the agenda? Okay. Seeing none, we will adopt the agenda to move forward. The first item under that agenda will be approval of minutes. Shep.

MR. GRIMES: Thank you, Madam Chair. Page 55, the second sentence of my statement, the word "come" should be "came", and I know it's minutia maybe, but I also would like to take the opportunity to mention that, this last time around, from the last meeting, through the committee and the council, there were multiple inaudible statements in the minutes, and so just a reminder to please make sure to press the button and speak audibly toward the microphone, if you can. Thanks.

DR. BELCHER: Any other suggested edits to the minutes? Seeing none, that would be the only note then, would be the change from Shep. The next item is going through our reports, and first up is the NOAA Office of Law Enforcement and their report-out.

LT. O'SHAUGHNESSY: Good afternoon. Lieutenant Pat O'Shaughnessy, Supervising Enforcement Officer for the Office of Law Enforcement. Everyone should have received the quarterly report, and I'm here all week if anybody has any specific questions concerning anything in that quarterly report, and I would be more than happy to answer those on a sidebar, or here, if you would like to ask them.

Of that lengthy document, the South Atlantic, we opened 100 incidents. Twenty-four cases were referred to General Counsel, and those include a number of right whale cases, one closed area MPA case, a number of fishing and sanctuary preservation areas and eight area-to-be-avoided cases down in the Florida Keys. Summary-settlement-wise, there was thirty-five summary settlements issued. A number of were undersized, retention during closures, sale of a prohibited species, unpermitted charters, the descending device, and also eleven ATBA cases. Otherwise, it was 32 percent that were no violations or were handled with compliance assistance.

Enforcement partnerships, with our JEA partners and the Coast Guard, we had FWC submitted twelve cases, and the majority of those were bag limit, retention, undersized, descender device cases, and Georgia DNR submitted some descender device cases, unpermitted charters, and gear violations, and then South Carolina DNR had descender device, undersized, and out-of-season-type cases.

Targeted operations, we're pulled in a lot of directions, and some of our highest priorities are North Atlantic right whales and seafood imports. We did two North Atlantic right whale operations this period, one off Charleston and one off of Jacksonville-Mayport, where we had land-based radar

that we now have, surface assets, and air assets, in the form of drones, and we made a case off of Charleston, and we made a case off of Jacksonville with vessels proceeding -- These are sixty-five feet and greater, but exceeding the ten-knot speed rule going up the coast, and so two good outcomes in enforcing that regulation.

Seafood imports are primarily in the Port of Savannah and the Port of Miami. It's a big emphasis for NOAA, and we inspect regularly a lot of imports that are coming in from other countries, to make sure it's a level playing field, those that are directly competing with our American fisheries.

The current spotlight, SEFHIER is a big issue, as we'll discuss it later, and my guys have been spending a ton of time out meeting with a lot of these, and we get our referrals from the SERO staff, and my guys are spending an abundance of time meeting with fishers, to ensure that they're gaining compliance, and we're still educating those, being that it's open access, and we have new folks coming into the fishery, and we have to educate them, because they're not knowledgeable of what they're supposed to be doing. Charter enforcement, a number of things, and sea turtle mitigation gear, as well as charter being properly permitted, as well as the proper labeling on the side of the vessels, which was also a hot issue.

I added this one, and we had received one letter from FWC, and we had some anecdotal information, and dehooking devices, non-offset-stainless-steel circle hooks, and then non-stainless-steel circle hooks, 28 North and below, all require them to be onboard and to be used. We're enforcing the descender devices, but we're getting some anecdotal information that, on the heavy headboats, that are packed with people -- The regs require at least one descending device is required to be onboard a vessel and be ready for us. However, it does not actually require them to use it, and so something for the council to think ahead. You can have it on there, rigged and ready, but, if nobody is using it, I don't know if we're getting the benefit of the intended desire of that regulation.

I had a couple of questions on vacancies that we've had for some while, and so New Bern, North Carolina, that's been vacant for a while, and that individual has been selected, and will be going to criminal investigator school here shortly, and so we hope to have a body in that chair in the next four months. Jacksonville, Florida, it's gone to usajobs, and they've already screened the resumes, and there will be interviews that will be conducted, hopefully starting next week, and so we'll get that position filled.

Enforcement officer vacancies, our Savannah, Georgia -- He got a promotion and left, and so we believe we have an internal transfer that will fill that, and then Key West just came open, because the New Bern, North Carolina selectee was from Key West, and he was an enforcement officer, and so he'll be up-to-speed that much quicker, but it creates another vacancy, and that is all I had. Any questions? Please fire away. Otherwise, I'll be here all week, if you have anything from the report that you would like to speak to me separately about.

DR. BELCHER: Thanks for the presentation. Any questions, at this time, relative to LE activity? Seeing none, thank you for that.

LT. O' SHAUGHNESSY: Thank you very much.

DR. BELCHER: Next up is a report from the Coast Guard, and Marisa Kraiss is going to be giving that report remotely.

LT. KRAISS: Good afternoon. Thank you. Just real quick, the Coast Guard has received -- I just wanted to go through a quick -- from the Commercial Vessel Compliance Office. They issued a statement regarding this, and so I'm just going to read that for you guys, real quick.

(Some of Lt. Kraiss' comments were not audible on the recording.)

With that, that's all I have for the Coast Guard, and so thank you for your time.

DR. BELCHER: Marisa, we're going to go ahead and -- We have a representative from your Commercial Vessel Safety Office here that was actually going to go ahead and re-read what your statement was, and you were coming across pretty cut-up, and so we couldn't all hear it, and so we'll go ahead and let him reread it, and then we'll see if folks have questions for you.

LT. KRAISS: Okay. Wonderful. Thank you.

MR. HOPPE: Good afternoon, everyone. My name is Walter Hoppe, and I'm the District 7 Commercial Fishing Vessel Safety Coordinator for the Coast Guard, and, as the Lieutenant mentioned -- She talked to me after the last meeting, that there was a question that came up regarding people thought there was a requirement or that the Coast Guard was looking into regulations towards having commercial fishermen be licensed or carrying a merchant mariners' credential.

Where that came from, as mentioned, and I will read it again, because it was coming across a little broken, but, during the April National Commercial Fishing Vessel Safety Advisory Committee meeting, the Coast Guard had presented nine new tasks that were published in the Federal Register, which I have the Federal Register number, if anyone would like that, which resulted in multiple comments and questions, and it can be found online, at www.dco.uscg.mil/fishsafe. If you go on there, you can see the meeting minutes from that meeting, and it has a link to that Federal Register as well.

In general, some of the committee members, and the public, thought that the Coast Guard was initiating a regulatory project to require merchant mariner credentialing for uninspected commercial fishing vessels. The Coast Guard advised that this was not the case and explained that a number of the nine tasks, including the tasks on merchant mariner credentialing, were drafted based upon the safety recommendations from marine casualty investigations. The intent of these specific tasks was to provide an opportunity for the committee and the public to make comments and to provide recommendations on these safety recommendations. The input and perspectives provided will assist the Coast Guard Program Office in determining any further agency action, and so I just wanted to clear that up.

DR. BELCHER: Thank you for that, and so are there questions, at this time, for the Coast Guard? Kerry, you look like you're thinking.

MS. MARHEFKA: It's not the case at this time, but my takeaway, from your statement, is that it's somewhere in the consideration of those nine recommendations, and you're sort of at the beginning of figuring out which of those nine recommendations may be implemented in the future.

MR. HOPPE: Well, so, whenever there is an incident that the Coast Guard does the investigation, after the investigation, they look at what were the causal factors and what things could have been done to possibly correct things like that from happening in the future, and so the investigating officers came up with a recommendation that -- Again, I don't have the specifics on which incident, but it may have been a factor of the knowledge say of the mariner, and that maybe having a license would have been a preventative measure, and so they put the recommendation out to the National Commercial Fishing Safety Advisory Committee and said do you think the Coast Guard should look into doing this, and so, because it was a recommendation, we were looking for the committee, and the public, to make recommendations on whether or not we should pursue it.

DR. BELCHER: Further questions or comments? Tom.

MR. ROLLER: I would love to get that URL emailed to us, if possible. It's kind of hard to pick it up, but thank you.

MR. HOPPE: I can write it down for this gentleman, if he can put it in the notes, or send it out to everybody.

MR. ROLLER: That would be fantastic.

DR. BELCHER: Thanks for that. Other comments or questions at this time? Thank you, again, for the clarification. Next up will be the report from the council liaisons, and, Kesley Banks, we're going to let you go first for the Gulf.

DR. BANKS: Thank you. I think our report is in your briefing book, and I won't read it word-for-word, and I will just summarize. Starting with the 2024 red grouper season for us, NOAA Fisheries announced that the recreational red grouper season would close on June 20, or June 30, of this year, and that is to increase the probability that we would constrain harvest to the annual catch target. After June 30, NOAA will determine if additional harvest is possible, and, if so, will reopen the recreational fishing season for later in 2024.

In 2023, our recreational gag landings -- We got updates on those estimates, and the most recent stock assessment was done using Florida's State Reef Fish Survey, and our Amendment 56 will transition in-season monitoring to those units. However, with gag being overfished, we are subject to a post-season overage adjustment, and so NOAA is going to work with Florida Fish and Wildlife to look at the length of our 2024 recreational gag season.

We have a lot going on with shrimp. The council approved the annual Texas federal closure for shrimp in 2024. This is mostly due to allowing shrimp to reach a larger, more valuable size prior to harvest, and it also prevents the waste of brown shrimp that might otherwise be discarded. That closure goes into effect in May, and it will last between forty-five and ninety days.

We also continue to work on a framework action to transition the federal shrimp fleet to a new platform. They're currently using 3G cellular electronic logbook programs, and so we're exploring

options with the Shrimp Advisory Panel for that. One big point to that is, after hearing from our advisory panel, we decided that the new program would not transmit data directly to NOAA's Office of Law Enforcement, and it would go to the vendor.

Then, like you guys, we are also looking at the for-hire data collection program, and so we recently heard presentations regarding the economic data collection, and the importance that it is needed for for fisheries disaster determinations, et cetera, and we also looked at preliminary analysis of the data that was collected in SEFHIER through 2022.

We're still working on our draft amendment, and we are considering economic data, if and how to do that, and we're also looking at using our ad hoc panel, and we listened to them discuss the need for validation efforts, and how they would like that done, and most of them did not agree to a VMS system, but they did agree to the validation. Then we've directed our staff to bring that amendment back to us this month, in our June meeting.

We've also been looking at the midwater snapper complex, and so, for that complex, it's comprised of the wenchman snapper, silk snapper, blackfin, and queen snapper, and those are managed collectively. In 2020, and 2021, we had a high landings in the midwater complex, due to wenchman snapper, and what we found out is this is actually a commercial bycatch from a midwater trawl fishery targeting butterflyfish. Since that fishery has largely left the Gulf, we don't think this is going to be an issue, and so we've decided to stop working on our wenchman snapper amendment. That amendment would have removed wenchman from the complex.

We've also been working on shallow-water grouper, which is comprised of scamp, yellowmouth, black, and yellowfin grouper. Again, those are also managed as a single unit. We can no longer manage them like that, and so we're starting to look at amendments to remove scamp and yellowmouth, to manage those separately.

Let's see. We are also starting to look at the removal of the recreational February and March twenty-fathom closure for shallow-water grouper. We're in the early stages of this, and it was just forward as a motion in the last meeting, and we're also looking at deepwater grouper, which is warsaw, snowy, yellowedge, and speckled, and again also managed as a single unit, and the most recent stock assessment updated those catch recommendations. We're also looking at what those new catch recommendations would look like. Right now, it looks like they're going to decrease allowable harvest.

Then we're heavily involved in looking at our individual fishing quota program, our IFQ program, and we've looked at the goals and objectives for the red snapper and grouper-tilefish programs, and we're working on Amendment 60 and Amendment 59. Amendment 60 looks at alternative approaches to how we would allocate and distribute IFQ shares. This seems to be a hot topic in the Gulf for us, and so we're allocating a lot of time toward it, and then these shares would also include the ones that are currently held by NMFS.

We've also looked at Spanish mackerel lately. The most recent stock assessment for the Gulf Spanish mackerel incorporated new recreational landings data from the FES program, and, as of 2021, it was determined that Spanish mackerel was not overfished or experiencing overfishing. However, we have seen a decrease in landings, and, as a result, new catch advice represents a 35 percent decrease in allowable harvest, and so we're going through the process of looking at

different alternatives and how to put that into effect. This amendment would also allow the closure authority to the Regional Administrator of NOAA Fisheries if we were to go into an overage.

We've also had a lot of public testimony expressing concern for Gulf king mackerel. Landings have been well below the annual catch limit in recent years, and we've decided to move forward with catch limit reductions, with consideration of catch limit reductions, and review the recreational bag limit, to determine if that will even have an effect, and then red snapper. After reviewing red snapper landings information, and public comment, we decided to begin working on adjustments for the rec red snapper management measures.

We're considering adjusting the federal for-hire season and the buffer between the federal for-hire component red snapper annual catch limit and annual catch target, which is currently at 9 percent. For-hire operators have indicated that open the season earlier in the year is preferable to extending the season in late August.

We are also looking at -- Since we're under state management for red snapper, we're also looking to modify the private recreational accountability measures. Currently, the private angling component of red snapper is subject to accountability measures that require each state to pay back any overage, and so we're looking to see if there's a way to implement -- As long as we don't go over the ACL in whole, and each state wouldn't have to individually pay it back, and that concludes my report.

DR. BELCHER: Thank you for that. Any questions for Kesley at this time? Okay. Thank you. Sonny, you're up for the Mid-Atlantic.

MR. GWIN: Thank you, Madam Chair. The Mid-Atlantic Fisheries Council met in April, and we took final action on a joint framework action with the New England Council to reduce the bycatch of Atlantic sturgeon in the monkfish and spiny dogfish gillnet fisheries. We also approved a modified range of alternatives for the summer flounder commercial mesh exemptions framework, and we reviewed the 2023 Mid-Atlantic State of the Ecosystems Report, which had some interesting things in that, if you would like to hear them.

We received an update of the development of the draft 2024 EA FM Risk Assessment Report, and we voted to submit the golden tilefish IFQ program review package to NMFS. We received a presentation on the golden tilefish research track assessment, discussed recent progress on development of an industry-based survey pilot project. We received an update from the NOAA Fisheries Regional Office of habitat and offshore wind activities of interest in the Mid-Atlantic region.

We discussed fisheries compensation mitigation programs for offshore wind energy development. We reviewed findings from recent research on impacts of offshore wind construction sounds on longfin squid and black sea bass, and part of that was the black sea bass seem to -- They don't like noise. We agreed to submit comments on proposed changes to the regulations governing confidential information under the Magnuson-Stevens Act.

We also met in June, and so we've had two meetings since the last time I've seen you, and, in that meeting, we had an Executive Committee meeting, which recommended advisory panel

appointments, and we had a large, large advisory panel of applicants, I think probably one of the biggest ever.

We looked at the summer flounder mesh exemption framework addendum, held jointly with the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission board, and we talked about the Atlantic surf clam and quahog species, and we set the chub mackerel specs, the longfin and ilex specs, and we took a look at the unmanaged commercial landings, and we also said goodbye to some outcoming council members, Sarah Winslow from North Carolina and Adam Nowalsky from New Jersey, and our Northeast liaison, Eric Reid, which will be greatly missed. They were a great part of the council. If there is any questions, I will take them.

DR. BELCHER: Thanks, Sonny. Any questions for Sonny? Okay. Seeing none, thanks again. Next up is our state reports, and I'm going to start with Florida, if Jessica is ready for that.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Sure can. I have a couple of things that I want to talk about. First, we had our first ever future of commercial fishing summit in Florida. That was on May 21 and 22, and so it brought together over ninety members of the commercial industry, and it had facilitated discussions about kind of where they want to see their fishery in the next five to ten years, to try to develop a vision, but also talk about kind of what are the impediments and current conditions right now that are preventing the commercial industry from really thriving in the State of Florida, and so I thought it was a good discussion.

There were lots of different ideas coming out of it, and we'll have a report at the end of this, and we're still working to finalize that. We broke out -- There is no recording or anything of this meeting, and we broke out into small groups and had discussions on topics like working waterfronts and those types of things. Laurilee was there, and so was Kerry, and I don't know if you want to add anything else about the commercial summit.

DR. BELCHER: Kerry.

MS. MARHEFKA: I was there, and it was amazing. It was really, really -- I felt very lucky to be there, and I think what was great about it -- I mean, to be fair, I think a lot of the topics that we heard weren't new, or groundbreaking, and they were things we already knew.

Unfortunately, no one stood up and said here's the solution to all of that, and so, you know, to that aspect, we're still in the same place, but one of the things that I thought might be a great takeaway, or something that, in the future, whether it's our little subpanel that we may talk about this week to look at the commercial snapper grouper fishery, is they worked on a mission statement, which I thought was really interesting, and I've always liked that idea of sort of like how do we know where we're trying to go if we don't say this is what our goal is, and so I would like to put that in our pocket, and I highly encourage -- You know, in a perfect world, I would love it if we could do a South-Atlantic-wide one.

I know that it was -- There was very nice swag, and so I know that it was -- There was more than this, and so I suspect it wasn't just Florida's money, that it was a public-private partnership, and whether the council could do something like that I don't know, but, if the council can't do something like that in the future, I like the idea of, you know, the other states should consider doing it, and I think the biggest takeaway is everyone felt heard, and I don't think, you know, that

sector has really felt that way in a long time, and, even with no solution, everyone felt here, and everyone got along, and it didn't matter whether you were a Florida Keys stone crabber or an offshore shrimper. I highly encourage everyone to look at the report, when it comes out, and for us to consider if there isn't some kind of takeaway that we could take from that and doing that.

DR. BELCHER: Thanks, Kerry. Laurilee.

MS. THOMPSON: I agree with everything that Kerry said. It was really well done. FWC did a fabulous job putting it together, and, you know, we heard a lot of the same things that we hear in public comment here, and everybody was unified. I mean, I would tell you the main issues that are out there are competition from imports, and how that's impacting the commercial industry, and infrastructure. There is almost nowhere left in the State of Florida to tie up a large shrimp boat, and dock space for the smaller vessels is getting harder and harder to get, and it's almost impossible to find a place to tie up a shrimp boat now and buy ice and take on fuel.

Also, the graying of the industry, the graying of the fleet, was another big one, you know, and trying to find help, deckhands and captains, and, you know, the industry -- The people that are in it are getting older, and it's very, very difficult for a young person to get into the industry, because of the cost of permits, the cost of buying a boat and getting gear and finding a place to tie up, and it's very, very daunting for younger people to get into the industry. Let's see. What else?

Just trying to get recognition as an asset to the State of Florida, you know, which has probably more seafood restaurants than any other state, yet very few of those seafood restaurants actually sell real seafood from Florida, and so trying to get recognition for those establishments that are selling real local seafood was another big issue. Can you think of any more?

MS. MCCAWLEY: I can't. There were a number of topics, and, like I said, we'll have this report, because we broke out into sub-teams, and we tried to come up with some actions under these major topics, to try to figure out next steps. In addition to the report, we're trying to pull together some folks in a small group that can kind of continue the discussions from here forward, and think about what some of these actions are, and a lot of the actions, and Laurilee kind of made reference to it, are not really for FWC.

We were kind of the facilitators of this event, but the actions might be for our state legislature, or for the councils, or for the governor's office, or other state agencies, and so there were people there representing other state agencies, like Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services. They're dealing with the Fresh from Florida, but they also deal with the human health and safety side. We didn't have anybody from the Department of Health, but also folks from congressional offices, state legislative offices, and our chief financial officer, and they had staff there as well, and so it was very interesting. We've never had all those different commercial fishing groups all in one place like that ever.

MS. THOMPSON: I don't know why I forgot this, but water quality was a huge, huge issue, from all constituents, everybody, water quality and loss of estuarine habitat, and it's really -- It's putting us out of business.

MS. MCCAWLEY: So I had one more topic that I wanted to talk to you guys about, and I have a PowerPoint, and, actually, John, if you wouldn't mind pulling that up, and I believe that Nick uploaded it to recent documents. Sorry. It's additional materials.

MR. HADLEY: I am not seeing it under additional materials. Is it on the website?

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. That's it. Okay, and so I'm going to talk a little bit about Biscayne National Park, and I think it's been a while since we've talked to this council about the park. There is a presentation that is in these additional materials, and I'm going to hit some highlights, but there was recent litigation that you might want to be aware of that will affect some areas that are inside the park that are actually in the council's jurisdiction.

All right, and so a little bit more about this, and so a federal judge recently issued a ruling that was in a lawsuit that was filed against the U.S. Department of the Interior, and it ordered the publication of a regulation to implement a no-take area inside Biscayne National Park as soon as practicable, and this particular area is referred to as the Marine Reserve Zone, or the MRZ. This will impact areas where the South Atlantic Council has management authority, and jurisdiction, and FWC has been a partner with Biscayne National Park in much of the fisheries management inside this area, and I'm going to get into some specifics of the park, but we have historically been opposed to this Marine Reserve Zone, but we have supported other efforts to protect the park's resources.

I'm just going to hit some high points here, and this is Biscayne National Park, and I'm going to show you a map here on a coming slide, but it's the largest saltwater park in the nation, located at the southern end of Miami-Dade County. It's 272 square miles, and 95 percent of it is covered by water. There's lots of natural and cultural resources, including shipwrecks, inside the park, and it attracts over 500,000 visitors a year, and it has a number of management challenges, including the proximity to urban areas, some water quality issues, and it's easily -- This park is easily accessed by the public.

There's a lot of different user groups in the park, and so there's recreational fishing, and there's also commercial fishing, and you can see the different types there. In addition to recreational fishing, you have a lot of folks that are doing diving, and a lot of people that are doing birding, wildlife viewing, boating, and kayaking inside the park.

Here is a map, and it's a little bit hard to see, and you can probably see it a little bit better on your screen, and so I wanted to talk a little bit about the management authorities that are in the park, and so the central area of the park, which is the light-green, kind of the central area, and that was called the monument, and that was established in 1968, and then, in 1980, the State of Florida gave additional areas, and the park was expanded inside and designated as a national park, and so that's kind of the yellow areas, and so it's the upper portion of the park, and then towards the bottom, although part of that area is also in blue, and so it's a little bit hard to see, but the bottom little triangle of the park -- Those are the areas that were given over to the Parks Service at a later date.

The FWC retains authorities to manage the fish and wildlife resources in those areas that were given at a later date, and that central portion, which is the light-green area, that area -- The Parks Service retains authority to manage the fish and wildlife resources there, and so you can see there's kind of this patchwork of authorities inside the park, and the South Atlantic Council has authorities

here as well. There's a red line that delineates between state and federal waters, and the blue area, which is a little sliver there, is the area where the South Atlantic Council has authority there.

In that central portion, and you can see the MRZ is also labeled, and it's a little red box there towards kind of the far-right, and you can see it's partly in state waters, partly in federal waters, and it is solely inside the monument where the park has the final authority over fish and wildlife regulations.

In the past, when management changes were made for fisheries, FWC has been the primary entity to do those regulations, and not the Parks Service, and, actually, the last time that FWC changed fisheries regulations, we came to the council, talked about what we were proposing, and the council said, go forth, FWC, and you do the regulations throughout the park, and I will show you what those fisheries regulations were on a later slide.

I'm not going to get down in the weeds on this, and I'm going to let you go back and look at this at your leisure, but there are a number of MOUs between FWC and the Parks Service about how the fisheries were intended to be regulated. FWC has been working with the Parks Service since 2020. The most recent MOU that is in place will expire in 2025. The reason these MOUs are important is because, inside the MOU that both parties signed, it said that FWC did not intend to implement a no-take area in the park unless both parties agreed that it was absolutely necessary, and it recognized that the park might implement a no-take area for purposes other than fisheries management, and so, in other words, to protect coral reefs.

There's a lot of collaboration that the FWC has with Biscayne National Park, and so there is both a fishery management plan and a general management plan in place for the park. The fishery management plan is done in conjunction with the FWC, and so it's signed by our executive director and the park superintendent, and it goes through our commission meeting process, and our commissioners approve this, and the most recent fishery management plan I believe was implemented in 2018.

In that plan, it said that FWC would be the primary authority developing these regulations. That way, even though there is multiple authorities in the park, as a boater, a fisherman, is moving throughout the park, they wouldn't realize that they're going in and out of these jurisdictions, and there would just be uniform regulations throughout the park.

A little bit more about the fishery management plan and the general management plan, and so the fishery management plan established these goals, and the goal of the fishery management plan was to overall increase abundance and average size of targeted species in this park by at least 20 percent, and then, ultimately, we worked with the Parks Service to determine what those regulations would look like, and then we are in the process of doing monitoring, through a science plan with the Parks Service, to determine if those goals are going to be reached.

The general management plan, this establishes a long-term philosophy for the park, and we are not a cosigner to this plan, and it gets into visitor use and other activities, and this is where the Marine Reserve Zone was, and so it was not in the fishery management plan. It was in the general management plan, and, even though this plan was approved a number of years ago, this Marine Reserve Zone was never implemented, because Congress got involved, and our commission got involved, and there were a lot of concerns about this particular area.

It's a little over 10,000 acres, and it's 37 percent of the park's best habitat for reef fish, and it's also got really nice coral in this particular area, and so, inside the general management plan, some more specifics about this zone were it would prohibit recreational and commercial fishing, and it would allow spearfishing for lionfish, and it would allow snorkeling and diving, and anchoring would be allowed until the Parks Service had a number of mooring sites installed, and there was - - This has been going on, you know, since 2020, and lots of discussions about this, and I would say that there was strong opposition from the local fishing community, and from Congress, and then a lot of support for this area from environmental groups.

The FWC, in trying to implement what was in the fishery management plan, worked with the Parks Service, and we brought these regulations to the council, and so you guys had seen these back in the day, and this is the suite of regulations that were implemented for areas inside Biscayne National Park, and so there are special size limits, there's a recreational aggregate bag limit, and we also implemented these small coral reef protection areas that don't allow trapping or lobster diving inside those areas, in order to protect that coral.

The council, both the councils, FWC, and the sanctuary, had implemented similar areas, sixty of these, these lobster management zones throughout the Keys, and so this is similar, but they're called coral reef protection areas. There is a trap-free zone, and so no stone crab and lobster traps near the park headquarters at Convoy Point, and then there are very large no-trawl zones that were established as part of this rule package. I would say that the stakeholder feedback, at the time, was mostly supportive of this, and these were passed in February of 2020, and then there were a lot of requests for additional enforcement inside the park.

This suite of regulations that FWC implemented to carry out the fishery management plan did not include a no-take Marine Reserve Zone. The FWC agreed to try lesser restrictions first, and then this would be monitored, to see if it was working, through a science plan, and so this marine reserve zone was not implemented, at the request of FWC and Congress, and, instead, you know, we chose these other regulations first. Following that action is when the National Park Conservation Association followed a lawsuit, following the approval of these regulations, because the Marine Reserve Zone wasn't part of this suite of regulations.

A little bit more about this lawsuit that was filed in December of 2020, and so this was the National Park Conservation Association versus the Department of the Interior, and it argues that the Parks Service abandoned the decision to pursue the no-take marine reserve zone, and it also talked about this commercial fishing phase-out, and so that was in the fishery management plan, and it was not part of the regulations that FWC implemented, but, in the fishery management plan, it did say that the Parks Service could implement kind of a last-man-out-type commercial fishing permit, and then, ultimately, as people got out of the fishery, that would phase-out over time.

The judge's ruling in this lawsuit, which came out recently, a few months ago, was that the National Parks Service impermissibly delayed implementing the Marine Reserve Zone, but also that the National Parks Service was not bound to implement the commercial fishing phase-out. We could send around this judge's ruling, and it's very lengthy, and this is just a very scratching-the-surface, high-level summary on what's in there. The judge's ruling also ordered the Parks Service to publish a proposed special regulation to designate this marine reserve zone as soon as practicable.

What are the next steps? The next steps for FWC are, at our upcoming September commission meeting, we were already intending to provide an interim report on how the science plan is working, how that plan, and the monitoring, are tracking the goals of the fishery management plan, following the implementation of those regulations in 2020, and we'll be continuing to do monitoring of the fish resources inside the park.

We have regular meetings, I would say monthly, between FWC and the Parks Service, to make sure we're coordinated on the management, not just of the fishery resources, but also on things like coral protection, and so the Parks Service also has implemented tons of mooring buoys in that area that was the Marine Reserve Zone, and they've done a lot of other activities, in order to protect coral, and that's one of the reasons why they felt like they didn't need to implement the Marine Reserve Zone, was because they were doing all these other things to protect coral.

We're here today kind of engaging with you guys to keep you informed of what's happening, to make you aware of this lawsuit, and to kind of help you understand that the council has some authority in a portion of the park, but not just there, but inside this Marine Reserve Zone that was part of this lawsuit, and so we'll continue to engage with recreational and commercial fishermen. I can tell you that, before the lawsuit was finalized, we were working with the Parks Service to look at an area that was actually larger than the MRZ, to try to make that a coral protection area, to eliminate traps in that zone, in order to help protect coral.

Also, Bonefish Tarpon Trust has recently found a bonefish pre-spawning aggregation inside the park. The actual spawning aggregation is outside the park, in federal waters, and so we were going to include that area in this coral reef protection zone that we were talking about establishing. We've kind of put that on pause right now, because we're trying to see what the Parks Service's next steps are, but it does look like they are moving forward with implementing this no-take, which would be no recreational fishing and no commercial fishing in that Marine Reserve Zone.

I know that was a lot of information, and you have a copy of this PowerPoint, so you can go back and look, and I'm happy to answer any questions now, or, you know, I'm here all week, if you want to look at this and then get back to me with more questions.

DR. BELCHER: Thanks, Jessica. Any questions for Jessica at this point on that? Okay. Seeing none, do you have -- Laurilee.

MS. THOMPSON: I know that we're looking at a shutdown of commercial harvest at Canaveral National Seashore and Merritt Island National Wildlife Refuge, and it's coming back at us fast, and is this -- But I think this is something that's happening all over the United States, with national parks and wildlife refuges, isn't it?

MS. MCCAWLEY: It is. There was a ruling, and I am not an expert, nor an attorney, on this, but there was a ruling, a number of years ago, about commercial fishing activities inside national parks, but, on the piece -- You know, on the judge's order, it did not say that the Parks Service needed to implement that commercial fishing phase-out immediately, that they didn't necessarily have to pursue it, and the only thing that the judge said that they had to pursue was this, you know, box, this 10,000-acre area that was eliminating commercial and recreational fishing, but the entire park phase-out -- The judge said it's up to the park whether they want to implement that or not.

DR. BELCHER: Other questions for Jessica? Okay. Do you have additional report-outs for Florida? All right. Thank you, Jessica. I will skip over Georgia, and we'll go to South Carolina, and so Amy.

MS. DUKES: Thank you, Madam Chair. Just a couple of updates from a state regulatory measure, and so we are still moving forward with blue crab legislation. It primarily is to put a cap on the number of commercial holders within the blue crab pot fishery in South Carolina, through attrition, and it has been quite the washing-machine effect through our legal -- Sorry. Through our congressional ride, and, at one point, we thought it was dead, and it was resurrected, and it was attached to a dog-collar bill, and I didn't follow everything, but it still has some traction, and so we're going to see if things can get worked out before they end for session, but things are at least looking positive for the blue crab.

In addition, there was some minor language to have a sunset clause appealed for our flounder, and so we will be remaining at a five-fish personal bag limit, a vessel limit of ten, with a sixteen-inch minimum size limit, on our flounder.

Many of you are also aware that we -- I mentioned before that there was a resolution put forward for bottom fish, in particular data collection efforts by the state, and that resolution was passed by the Senate. The House pushed that bill to a subcommittee, for a Committee on Invitations, which did not pick it up, and so, at this point, there will be no further action during this session with regard to the state looking into the idea of collecting recreational data for offshore fisheries. It could be reintroduced next session, as it has been presented now or amended, and, additionally, we are partnering with ASMFC in doing cobia public hearings on Draft Amendment 2. We had our first in-person meeting in Charleston last Thursday, and we had about fifteen or so folks participate, and then there will be another ASMFC webinar on the 20th of June.

A little bit of an update on the coastal research section and the SERFS, and the Palmetto has been out sampling, and she has covered areas from southern North Carolina to the southern end of her survey in Florida, and has had semi-success. The Savannah has actually just departed on her first trip this week, and she was about one month delayed, because of some issues with a water-tight seal on the doors, but she's actually off of Cape Canaveral right now and sampling today.

The Lady Lillian, you guys may know that she is our new research vessel for our SEAMAP program, and she is home, and she has made her way from the Gulf. The last few weeks have just been getting her ready to go, gear ready, and all of her safety equipment and what have you. Last week, we did a few sea trial days, where we were able to successfully deploy the gear, and retrieve that, and all safety protocols were met. In addition, the gear is fishing the way we would like her to fish, and we had set gear parameters, to ensure that the single stern net that we're trawling behind the boat meets the height and the width requirements that we had defined ahead of time, which would mimic the catchability from the previous port and starboard nets off the Lady Lisa, which she replaced.

We were able to put her doors in and out and store them effectively, and the crew has really actually taken to that new boat well, and she's actually headed out today for her first week, to do a full week of sampling, and so fingers crossed that everything goes really well with her.

We also are in our final allocation, after direct payment to our fishermen, associated with the shrimp disaster funds. We sent out RFPs for infrastructure improvement projects, and we have about \$1 million to distribute there. The state received thirty-eight proposals, and those thirty-eight proposals totaled about \$2 million, and so twice the allocation that we have available, and so we are going to start the ranking criteria, reading through those and seeing who qualifies, and ranking out those infrastructure projects, and hopefully we'll be allocating those funds in the next couple of months.

Last, but not least, we have finally filled a long-time position that we've been trying to fill at the state level for a stock assessment biologist. Carroll Schlick, commonly known as C.J., was poached by South Carolina from North Carolina, and we're really excited for C.J., and she's going to start with us next Monday, and she's going to hit the ground rolling with a spot and croaker, and probably a little bit of cobia as well, and so we're excited to have her, and that concludes my report.

DR. BELCHER: Any questions for Amy? Okay. Moving on, Trish.

MS. MURPHEY: In South Carolina, you should be excited to have her, because she was very good, and I would come and ask questions on things, and she could really dumb it down for me, and so -- Maybe I will still call her, because you're getting a great person.

Let's see. North Carolina, this has been an interesting few months. We did have a successful southern flounder symposium back in March, and there were several talks on the life history, habitat and water quality, migration, use of citizen science in tagging, and, of course, stock assessment.

As you guys know, there is a regional stock assessment out that used data from Florida up to North Carolina, and we also had our very own John Carmichael speak and talk about management and science, and that's always an interesting discussion, and I think it was -- Everything was well received by our stakeholders, and this was for fishermen as well as academics, and so I think it gave the state an opportunity to, you know, talk to the stakeholders, let them ask questions about the science, but it was very successful. We do have it recorded, and you can find it on our YouTube page, and, if you want, I can shoot you a link to that.

We are now accepting credit cards for purchasing and renewing fishing licenses and vessel registrations. Yay. Another big piece of news is, when the Marine Fisheries Commission met in May, it was announced that our recreational flounder season would not open in 2024, and the reason being that the recreational catch had exceeded the quota in 2023, and then, after subtracting that overage from 2024, there was really not enough left to allow a season opening, and so you guys are probably hearing about that, and we've got a lot of angry fishermen about it.

Other things that happened at our commission meeting, the division -- The commission voted to request that the division work with the commission's Habitat and Water Quality Advisory Committee to develop more comprehensive options for protecting submerged aquatic vegetation and that it would consider all sorts of activities under the commission's authority. What was going on earlier in the year, through the shrimp FMP amendment, we looked at -- We had a proposal for consideration of closing of several different shrimping trawl areas, because of SAV, but, after feedback from the shrimpers, and I think they felt singled out, when SAV can be impacted by all sorts of things, and not just shrimp trawling, and so we're going to be looking at, like I said, those

kind of broader spectrum of -- Probably things like prop scarring, and, you know, the state is also working on water quality standards, because that's also a big issue in our state, as far as SAV, and so stay tuned for that, but we'll be continuing to work on that.

The Estuarine Striped Mullet Fishery Management Plan Amendment 2 was finalized, and that implements weekend closures based on the time of year for the commercial sector, and it drops the recreational bag limit from 200 to 100, and with a vessel limit of 400, and that's getting at bait, you know, the live bait, the little mullet, and we also -- It was requested that the division work on getting some landings information and potential rule language for Atlantic bonito.

The other thing, as you all probably recall, and I think I've talked about this in the previous meetings, is our general assembly passed a law to implement mandatory harvest reporting for recreational fishers that take flounder, weakfish, striped bass, speckled trout, and red drum, and it also requires the commercial fishermen to report harvest that is not sold, and so we already report harvest that's sold, but this will be requiring them to report any harvest that they did not sell, that they took home or donated or whatever. Those temporary rules passed last week, at a special commission meeting, and they will go into effect on December 1, and I think that's all I've got for North Carolina.

DR. BELCHER: Tim.

MR. GRINER: Thank you. Thank you for that report, Trish. The credit cards, is that something that's done online, or are the offices opened up, to where you can actually go in and renew anything?

MS. MURPHEY: To my understanding, you can go in the office and renew with your credit card.

MR. GRINER: Thank you.

DR. BELCHER: Any other questions for Trish? Okay. The report-out from Georgia, we submitted our recommendation for the shrimp season opening, which we are looking at June 18. This is the first year in a long time that we had a lot of discard, if you want to say, with how we should proceed. Smaller boats were really hoping that we could open the season, but the larger boats, especially those that were landing through processors and dealers, because of freezers still being full with product, and there was a lot of information from those folks that they really just didn't have the capacity to move it, and so they really didn't want to bring in more product, and so we kind of split the difference, recognizing that we did have the smaller fleet that did need to be out and get operational.

In know, in talking with Ben with South Carolina, they had similar conversations, coming out of Memorial Day, that, just before Memorial Day, people were like, no, please don't open any sooner, but then, after the holiday, it kind of shook loose some landings, and it kind of promoted them to want to open earlier, and I believe you guys opened on the 4th of June. Normally, we try to tie the two states together, to even out the effort, but even the folks kind of felt that maybe the market would be settled a little bit better if not everybody had the full rush-in with landings, and so that was kind of where we decided to go ahead and space it out for a couple more weeks.

We also were busy with some offshore deployments. We had four artificial reefs that received additional materials on the bottom. Three of them received tugboats, and they pretty much go up and down the coast. We were in Savannah with two of them, and then off of the midpart of the state with another couple, and the Coast Guard also donated some sinkers to us that went down off one of the reefs up near Savannah as well.

We had staff that attended two meetings in Charleston, and Jessica and Amy can probably provide a little bit more information about the fishery disaster meeting that occurred last week up in Charleston, and then Ben and I were at the Army Corps of Engineers meeting, which was discussing the five channels that are currently being looked at for biological impacts under the SARBO, and it was Morehead, Wilmington, Charleston, Brunswick, and Kings Bay.

The Corps was hoping to try to bring in some aspects of fisheries, similarly to how they bring in for impacts with endangered and protected species. It's a little bit unclear how fisheries kind of fits in, because it's not like we have a threshold that we can say, if you hit this many fish of Type A, it will shut down your dredge operations, to the same event that you would have with turtles, sturgeon, and right whales.

Interestingly, that was kind of where, in looking around the room, now you've kind of got a little bit of loggerheads, because the winter months are extremely important, with Atlantic sturgeon and right whale, but yet the summer months are the concerns for the turtles, and so now you've kind of got those two groups I think that it's going to be figuring out what the risk is, and how to best move forward, and so it was interesting to be at the table, but, yes, it's still kind of a big question how fisheries would fit into the whole process of that, and, with that -- Like I said, any questions relative to the disaster, I'm going to direct to the ladies that were in the room to provide any insight they might have had on that. Other than that, that's what I have for Georgia. Questions? All right.

Seeing none, we're done with reports. The next item on our agenda is Best Fishing Practices and the Citizen Science Update, which will be Christina Wiegand and Julia Byrd.

MS. WIEGAND: All right. Best fishing practices and citizen science, and so what we wanted to do for you guys this afternoon is give you sort of a comprehensive update of these two programs. You've received updates at most of your meetings, sort of showing piecemeal what's happened recently, but we wanted to take a step back and look at what all these two programs have really been able to accomplish over the last two or three years.

I wanted to just sort of very briefly refresh your memory on what some of those overarching goals were. These are specifically from the best fishing practices appendix that was approved, but, of course, also apply to SAFMC Release. We're looking to increase knowledge of best fishing practices, but, even more so than that, we're looking to encourage the active use of best fishing practices, gather information on the use of those best fishing practices, via SAFMC Release, and then, of course, increase participation in Release, as well as other council activities.

I went over those briefly because I really want to focus on sort of the last, and I would argue most important, goal of our outreach, and that's building and maintaining relationships with fishing communities, and this is something that we need to be successful in order to be successful at those other four goals and objectives, and so Julia is going to talk about building relationships a lot more later in the presentation, but one of the things that I just sort of want to briefly note here

is that building relationships is about building trust, and that is a long-term goal, and it requires consistent outreach from the same individuals over a long period of time to build up that trust.

We've broken up the presentation today based on some of the main tasks that we endeavored to participate, both with the best fishing practices program and with the citizen science program, but I do want to note that those two programs are sort of inextricably linked. All of the outreach that we do, be it best fishing practices or citizen science, specifically SAFMC Release, we're working on together, and so I'm going to cover some best-fishing-practices-specific stuff, and then Julia is going to talk about the stuff we've really been doing together, as a team, and then move into some of the citizen science stuff.

This partnership, as it says on the screen, has allowed us to leverage resources and increase reach, but what it has also really allowed us to do is be creative in the way that we are conducting outreach for these two programs, and so, starting with best fishing practices, one of the things that, in the appendix we talked about doing, were media charter trips, and these are sort of a specific type of charter trip that we try to do, where we're partnering with members of the community, as well as the media, to go out on a charter and demonstrate the use of best fishing practices, and this is really an opportunity for, in some cases, fishermen to be hearing from other fishermen about these best fishing practices, as opposed to us -- Or hearing about best fishing practices through a trusted avenue, be that a magazine, a podcast, a TV show, what have you.

Sort of two really great examples of work that has been done in this regard are -- Of course, you guys have heard about this a couple of times now, but the trip that David Hugo took with Tom Roller and North Carolina PBS to film an episode of *Science North Carolina* that will hopefully be coming out later this year. Another example of that is, just earlier this year, we had staff down in the Keys that went out on a charter trip, and we were able to get an article published in *Keys Weekly* detailing best fishing practices and sort of what happened on that particular charter trip.

One of the things that I do want to note here is that these -- We haven't been able to conduct quite as many of these charter trips as we would hope, and that's for a couple of reasons, the first being that this is a partnership with Sea Grant. As you guys know, we have had a fellow for the last three years, and Ashley was, of course, our very first fellow, and then she transitioned to be a council outreach specialist. We then hired David Hugo, who has left us, after his year of tenure, and we are very fortunate to have recently hired Brian Chansky, sort of take over for the next year of the fellowship, and you guys will all get an opportunity to meet him in September. He's very ready to hit the ground running, but the point there being that there has been sort of some lag time as we transition to all of these different fellows.

Additionally, these media charter trips, as one might imagine, can be logistically challenging. Trying to get media and fishermen and a charter trip and council staff scheduled to all align on one day is not easy, and then, added to that, you've got to hope the weather is going to be with you on that one day that you have identified that works for everyone, and so these are logistically challenging to schedule.

Sort of the next thing that we've really been focusing on, in terms of best fishing practices, is marketing and advertising. One of the first projects of note is the What it Means to Me project, which I know you guys are very familiar with. This is an incredible project that Ashley and Nick have worked very hard on, and they've filmed six different videos. Two of them are now out, and

you guys, of course, saw the one that David Hugo did, when we first pitched this project to you, and I'm happy to note that Ashley and Nick just finished Chip Berry's. If you haven't seen it yet, it is available on the council's YouTube page. Please go check it out. It is a fantastic next installment in the series.

What's great about this series is that it's fishermen communicating about what's important to them in their fishery and why they're involved in management, to fishermen, and it's a really great example of positive outreach that we are able to do, and so you will be seeing a number of other videos coming out over the next year.

Next up is social media. If you pay attention to the council's social media, you've seen a bit of an uptick in best fishing practices, as well as citizen-science-related posts, and the great thing here is that we're actually starting to see some momentum. We've got tackle shops that have shared, you know, flyers and opportunities for public comment, and we've had tackle shops that we've had seminars at share information about those seminars on their social media, and, like I've said, it's really powerful when the message is coming from stakeholders, as opposed to directly from us, and social media has provided us a really great avenue for those entities to then go and continue to share the message.

Sort of last up here, but certainly not least, we have updated all of our outreach materials, sort of taking input that staff has gotten over the years, various outreach events and doing tackle shop outreach, and we've got a beautiful sort of trifold best fishing practices flyer, and then one of our most popular outreach materials, out of all of the council outreach materials, is our how to create your own descending device flyer. We've seen more scans to that QR code than any of our other QR codes, and so illustrating that fishermen are really interested in creating their own devices, in order to stay in compliance with these regulations, and so, if you haven't seen these outreach materials, we've got a bunch on the table out there, and I know Ashley and Meg also have a bunch on them, and so please go check them out.

Then the one thing that was listed in the best fishing practices appendix that we haven't gotten around to is sort of the interactive web tool that we were looking at creating, and this was meant to be sort of an opportunity for fishermen to go in and test their best fishing practices knowledge, and so that's still something that is upcoming, that we haven't gotten around to yet, because we've been working on, of course, all of these great projects, but, perhaps even more importantly, the Best Fishing Practices Master Volunteer Program.

This is a program that you guys have heard a lot about, and it's something that Ashley actually started brainstorming back when she was still the fellow, and has been able to see it from that sort of initial brainstorm all the way through to where she's actually held four of these best fishing practices master volunteer programs, and so I'm happy to report that the first leg, so to speak, has been completed, and all of the South Carolina locations, as well as the Georgia location, were done, and then we've got Florida and North Carolina upcoming later this year.

I do just want to sort of give you a few key takeaways from these, and the first is that it really is quality over quantity. The goal with these has been to really reach those key members of fishing communities that are then going to be able to go out and spread the best fishing practices word on our behalf, and we're happy to report that those really have been the people attending these. We've also gotten sort of four tentative seminar invites out of these, a number of new MREP participants,

and, by and large, those that are attending these MVP workshops are incredibly excited about taking the information and bringing it into their communities and sharing it, and I think that really illustrates that these MVP workshops are likely to have a snowball effect, which, again, Julia is going to talk about a little bit later, but it shows that it will be valuable to go back into these communities and just watch this workshop continue to grow.

We've also found that the binders that Ashley put together have been a great outreach tool, and people have been excited to grab them and take them. They've got not only the presentation that is given at these workshops, but also a ton of outreach material, information on the snapper grouper fishery, and, if you have not seen one of these binders, Ashley has an example. Please go check it out. It is chock full of information on best fishing practices and citizen science.

Then sort of the last key takeaway that I really want to harp on for these is the value of a really informal environment, and so most of these have been held at, you know, a Bass Pro Shop, or South Carolina DNR's outdoor classroom, which fishermen are very familiar with, and they've been incredibly conversational in nature. We've got staff sitting at the table with the fishermen in attendance, where staff is posing them questions, and they're posing staff questions, and we're really able to have a fantastic exchange of ideas at these events, which has been so powerful.

It's also led us to think of some changes that we might make moving forward with this program, one being focusing a little bit more on what it's like to walk into a council meeting like this. This can be a little bit of an intimidating environment, and so helping people that might not necessarily be as familiar with the process feel like they know what to expect when walking into this room to say provide public comment, and then, of course, considering location.

One of the things that Ashley noted from the meetings in South Carolina is that some people don't want to do things just as simple as cross the bridge, and, being from Charleston, I can understand that, and I also sometimes don't want to cross the bridge to go somewhere, but sort of considering where we're holding these, in terms of easy accessibility to the communities that we're trying to reach, and so I can't say enough good things about this program. I am so incredibly impressed to see it go from just an idea, a few years ago, to a program that, even with just four meetings down, has already been wildly successful.

Then, last, but not least, for me is I wanted to remind you that there was, in the best fishing practices appendix, a note on holding a workshop that looked at ways to evaluate our outreach and education campaign, and I've been working on planning this with Ashley, as well as Judd, and, when we first started brainstorming, I think Ashley said something that really resonated, in terms of the purpose of this, and it's really to sort of transition the conversation.

We're often having conversations about the effectiveness of things like descending devices and best fishing practices, and I would say, by and large, there's agreement that descending devices, best fishing practices, are effective at improving the survivorship of released fish, and so what we really need to do is transition that conversation now to talk about are our outreach and education campaigns effective. Are they increasing knowledge, and increasing compliance, with these regulations, and so that will be part of the goal of this workshop.

We're going to be bringing together a wide variety of experts, from social scientists with experience in social norms, to outreach and education experts, people familiar with data collection

in the region, and individuals familiar with what information is needed to go into management and stock assessment decisions, and, ultimately, the goal will be to have a report coming out of this workshop that we're tentatively planning on holding in late September with research recommendations that can ultimately be incorporated into the council's research and monitoring priorities. That is a very fast, and very brief, overview of what we have done sort of best-fishing-practices specific, and I'm going to turn it over to Julia to talk about some of our more citizen science and BFP joint efforts.

MS. BYRD: Yes, and so, as Christina said, I can't speak enough about how valuable this partnership has been, and so some of the efforts that we've been kind of co-leading the charge on are visiting tackle shops, and so I know you all are familiar that local tackle shops are a really trusted resource, and where fishermen get a lot of their information, and so, over the past several years, our team has made it a point to go and visit local tackle shops in communities all along the South Atlantic coast.

When we go, we're sharing information on best fishing practices and our SAFMC Release project, but we also just want folks to know that they have a contact, and so, if they have questions about council-related things, there's a name, and a face, that they've met, that they can reach out and ask about that.

Additionally, during council meeting weeks, the team, and particularly Meg and Ashley and David, have gone out into kind of the communities around where the meeting is being held, to make sure the local tackle shops know a council meeting is taking place and are aware that there are public comment opportunities, and so you won't see Meg and Ashley in this room tomorrow, because they will be out in Daytona Beach visiting tackle shops.

One thing that's really important, as we're doing this outreach, is we really want to try to make connections and build relationships with those tackle shops, and so, in order to do that, we need to have repeat visits, and so we can strengthen the connections we've been making, and so, there are so many tackle shops throughout the South Atlantic region, and there are only just over 20 percent that we've been able to visit more than once, and so I think it's increasingly important for us to be able to continue this outreach and to continue and build and strengthen the relationships with tackle shops.

Another kind of cool thing that we've been working on, to try to get more information out into tackle shops, is we've been really lucky, over the past eighteen months, to be collaborating with Pittman Creek, and that's a distributor, and so they distribute fishing gear to a variety of tackle shops, and so we've been able to partner with them, to get them information on some of our programs, that they then send in packages that they're sending out to some of their tackle shop retail clients, and so that's another way that we can leverage our resources, get our materials into other tackle shops, and those tackle shops are hearing about the resources from a trusted source like Pittman Creek.

We've also been really working to organize fishing seminars, and, with these seminars, we're trying to make sure that we're going to places where fishermen are, and so that means partnering with local tackle shops, or partnering with fishing expos, or fishing clubs, and so we've been really excited to see that, the more of these seminars we've done, we've gotten invitations to come back, or more opportunities to present to different fishing clubs, and so what we normally try to do is to

partner with local captains who will give information, share tips on kind of bottom fishing, and then, at the end, we'll be able to come in and share information on kind of best fishing practices, using descending devices, and the SAFMC Release project.

You will see Mark Phelps is in two of these pictures. He is a charter captain out of South Carolina that we've partnered with on a number of seminars, and I can't say enough. He's on our Outreach and Communications AP, and I can't say enough what an awesome ambassador he has been for the council and for these two programs in particular.

Then the other thing that we've been really working to do, over the past several years, is to kind of attend more fishing expos, and industry and agency events, and so we've been able to go out and have kind of a council booth that is focused on best fishing practices and our citizen science work, and, in particular, the Release project, at a variety of events. We've been able to partner with some of our state agencies, go to the South Carolina DNR open house, or the North Carolina DMF Jamboree, and we've been able to do fishing expos, like the Hatteras Fishing Expo, which is Charleston, South Carolina, and then we are really lucky. Through BeBe Harrison, we were able to get connected with a *Saltwater Sportsman* seminar series that features George Poveromo, and we were able to go to some of those seminars that were in the South Atlantic this spring.

The more we're getting out into communities, again, the more that we're building relationships and making connections, and we're really starting to see the benefits of having consistent staff going out into communities and doing this over the past two years, and we're seeing more and more opportunities come available.

Now we've talked a little bit about kind of the outreach activities that have been co-led by our best fishing practices and citizen science teams, and then the next thing that I wanted to do is just to quickly highlight some additional efforts that the citizen science program is making, and I'm going to focus really on the SAFMC Release project and additional outreach work we've done to try to recruit and retain participants in the program, but I also think it's really important to point out that, when we're doing this, kind of these recruitment and retention pushes, we're also making sure to include best fishing practices messaging. We want more people using descending devices, and knowing when to use descending devices, and so that's kind of an integral part of our outreach strategies.

When I'm talking about Release, I wanted to kind of give a little bit of background information, to provide a little context to the information that I'm going to present on the next few slides, and talk a little bit about the project timeline for the Release project, and so this is a project that originally started in late June of 2019, and we were working with fishermen to gather information on scamp grouper releases, using a standalone app called Release.

Then, in August of 2021, we transitioned from a standalone app to a project under the new kind of SciFish app, or platform, and we expanded the species that we were partnering with fishermen to collect data on to all of the ten different shallow-water grouper species. Then, in January of 2022, we kind of had our initial outreach expansion. We had Nick Smillie, who was the citizen science project coordinator, and kind of leading the charge on Release at the time, and that's when Ashley came onboard as the Sea Grant Reef Fish Fellow, and so we were able to do kind of an initial push for more outreach for these two programs.

Then, in April of 2022, we added red snapper to our Release project, and Nick Smillie then transitioned to his new position with the council, and we were really excited to bring Meg Withers onboard, at the end of June, to kind of lead the charge on our Release project, and then, as you guys know, in December of 2022, you guys passed the kind of BFP appendix, where we had kind of increased outreach support, and so Ashley transitioned into her position that she has now, the best fishing practices outreach specialist, and David Hugo came onboard as the reef fish fellow.

We've talked about a lot of different outreach strategies that we used for Release and best fishing practices, and I wanted to talk about a few more that are focused specifically on recruiting new participants to Release, and one thing that we were really lucky to be able to do is partner with some of our kind of state agencies, North Carolina and FWC, to do recruitment mailings, to their license holders or reef fish designees, and so, in 2022, we were able to do a mailing with North Carolina, and that went out to 10,000 of their saltwater recreational fishing license holders, and they were trying to kind of promote participation in their citizen science project Catch You Later, and we were able to include information on Release.

Then, last summer, in kind of late June of 2023, we were able to partner with FWC to do an email recruitment mailing to their saltwater reef fish designees, kind of along the Atlantic coast, and they were kind of encouraging participation in their SERFS program and in our SAFMC Release project. Additionally, like Christina said with best fishing practices, we're doing social media posts. Every Friday, there is a CitSciFri that highlights different aspects of our citizen science program. A lot of those posts are about our Release project, and then, also, we've been focusing on trying to take content creation trips.

In order to do all of this outreach, we need materials, and photos, and videos, that we can share with people. Having a video, or a picture of something, is worth a thousand words, and so the weather has not been kind to us as we have been trying to do these content creation trips. Logistics have been hard, but we've done a couple. We were able to get out with Captain Judy, just a couple of weeks ago, and we're looking to do more moving forward.

We've talked a lot about kind of the outreach that we've done, and now I'm going to try to show some of the benefits our Release project has seen from some of this outreach, and so, if you look at cumulative participation in the program over time, 2022 is when we started doing outreach, and you can see that there's an upward trajectory, and you can see a lot of the large increases in slope in this line can be tied to times when we were doing specific outreach activities, and one of the questions that we ask, when people sign-up for Release, is how they heard about the project, and so that helps us better understand which of our outreach strategies are most effective.

This is a pie chart that kind of summarizes where people who signed up for Release heard about the project from, and so over 40 percent heard about the project through in-person outreach, and there's just really nothing that works better than talking to someone face-to-face and being able to share information about the project.

You can also see, in this pie chart, that the mailings that we were able to do with North Carolina and Florida were huge successes, and we were able to get a lot of participants from those mailings, and so, right now, we're actually working with South Carolina and Georgia to figure out a way to do mailings in their states to try to increase participation in their states.

Another important aspect of kind of the Release project, and really any citizen science project, is not just recruiting people to the project, but it's keeping them engaged and retained in the projects over time, and so Meg Withers is really who is leading the charge on a lot of these different outreach strategies. There is normal kind of participant communication on a day-to-day basis. When someone joins the project, we reach out to them with training materials. When they log their first release, we're reaching out with a thank-you email.

Additionally, Meg does monthly newsletters that shares information about the project directly with participants, and each of these newsletters includes information on a best fishing practice, and so our best fishing practices are highlighted every single month.

Then, at the end of the year, we, and, by we, I mean Meg puts together kind of annual data summaries that kind of summarizes all of the information that's been gathered from our participants and kind of what we learned from them throughout the year. We've sent these kind of data summaries out to you guys, and this is just an example of our 2023 data summary, and these data summaries go out to participants first, and they have an opportunity to look at them for a few weeks, ask questions, and then, after they've had that opportunity, we'll post them to the website, so other people can check them out.

Then, additionally, one of the new things that we launched last year, and this is really Meg's baby, is our kind of Release participant recognition program, and so this program is really designed to try to celebrate the achievements of the participants kind of within the Release project, and so we kind of set annual and multiyear milestones that participants meet, and then they get recognition on various platforms, and the council has some limitations on ways we're able to recognize participants, and so we've really started to explore partnerships as a way to help expand those recognition opportunities.

This is just kind of a highlight of some of our 2023 milestone winners, and you may recognize some names on the screen. People may be sitting around this table, or they may be AP members, and so the recognition program was really a success for 2023, and so we've added some new milestones for 2024, and then one of the things we're most excited about is we've had a partnership with Sea Grant in 2024, and so, for Sea-Grant-related milestones, they're able to send out kind of a thank you reward package to those participants who meet those milestones.

Again, we're really starting to see the benefits of a lot of this extra outreach that's been done over the past couple of years, and so, if you look at cumulative submissions in the project over time, they've really been increasing. There's a lot of seasonality to this too, but they've been going up over time, and one of the analogies that John, John Carmichael, has used a lot with doing this outreach is you're kind of pushing the snowball up the hill, and so we started pushing the snowball up the hill in 2022, and you can see that it's been making its way up the hill, and we're getting benefits. Shoutout to Meg for being our snowball pusher.

In addition to seeing kind of increased submissions over time, we're also seeing increased engagement, and so this is a graph that shows kind of the average number of entries per submitter, and so we've seen an increase in the number of folks submitting data, but you're also seeing more entries per submitter, and so that tells us they're more engaged in the process, and so some of these retention strategies seem to be paying off.

Then there are a couple of retention strategies that we haven't been able to kind of implement yet, and one of those is incorporating some kind of short-term tournaments within our participant recognition program and then also trying to develop some additional points of contact, and so, the more you can remind folks to participate in an engaging way, and provide them with information, that's helpful, and so maybe providing kind of real-time data updates to our participants would be something that would be useful and help with that participant retention as well.

Then the last thing that we wanted to talk about, and Christina talked a lot about this, is, you know, we're really -- Through these outreach strategies for these programs, we're really trying to build relationships over time, and so building relationships takes time, and I think part of the reason that our outreach has been so successful is that we've had consistency in staff over the past couple of years, and we've been really lucky to have Ashley and Meg leading the charge on this work over the past two years, and so, as they have been making more connections, and relationships, we've seen more opportunities for outreach grow, and so we became really interested in trying to explore kind of how that network has grown over time, and so they're put together kind of a graphical representation of kind of how our network -- We call it the spiderweb, when we've been talking about it internally, but how it has kind of grown over time.

On this and the next slide, we're just going to show a little bit of information to help visualize how kind of the outreach relationships and connections have grown, and so, on the left-hand side of the screen, you'll see kind of different colors and shapes, and those basically represent different types of outreach events, seminars, meetings, media trips, as well as outcomes for those events, and so Release sign-ups, kind of media articles that have come out, or invitations to return to different kind of fishing clubs and things like that.

What I'm first going to do is walk you through an example of one strand of the spiderweb, so to speak, and then we'll show you kind of the picture over the past few years, and so one strand -- The one strand example is, in 2022, we were able to do a seminar at Haddrell's Point Tackle in Charleston. One of the main reasons we were able to do this seminar was due to Captain Mark Phelps, who is on one of our APs, and he helped connect us to folks at Haddrell's Tackle Shop.

Through that seminar, we got some Release sign-ups. Thanks to that connection, and thanks to BeBe Harrison, we were able to then have a booth at Haddrell's Point Fishing Expo. From that expo, we got some Release sign-ups, and we were able to do two seminars at the expo. That led to us doing the expo again in 2024, and we were able to get some Release sign-ups, and we were able to do two seminars at that expo, and that also led to us doing another seminar at the tackle shop before shallow-water grouper season opened.

From there, we got additional Release sign-ups, and participants, and then, also, we were able to get participants in Ashley's BFP MVP seminars, and one of these participants is the owner of Haddrell's Point Tackle, which was pretty incredible, and so, if you look at that kind of relationships that have been growing over time, in 2022, and, again, don't worry about reading the words on the slides, but more look at the different kind of size of all of the different kind of items that you see coming off of each year.

In 2022, we did a couple of events, and we had a seminar, and we had a Sea Grant media trip, and we visited some tackle shops, and we got some Release sign-ups, and we had one article. Through the connections at Haddrell's Point Tackle, that led us to do a seminar with them, kind of do their

fishing expo, and you can see that we had a lot more events in 2023, a lot more seminars, and we were doing seminars with fishing clubs, and we had, I think, five media articles that came out of these events, and we had Release sign-ups from lots of different places, and we were invited to do repeat visits to some of the fishing clubs that we had, and then, through again that connection with Haddrell's, we were able to kind of go to their fishing expo to kick-off 2024, and this 2024 graphic just goes through the beginning of May.

We were able to do many events, and a lot more seminars are coming out of it, and we've been able to get a lot more Release sign-ups, and kind of a Sea Grant media trip, with an article coming out of that, and so I think what this is showing is that the outreach -- The investment in outreach that the council is doing is paying off, and we're starting to see opportunities to do more outreach kind of increase, and I think not only does building relationships, and making connections in fishing communities, help with best fishing practices, and the citizen science program in general, but we're also sharing information about the council, and ways to engage in the council process, and so I think there are a lot of benefits, kind of not just directly to the programs that we're kind of overseeing, but to the council in general, by participating in these efforts.

I will say that the BFP and CitSci teams have been kind of leading the charge on things, and I guess one other thing that I will say on this slide is the relationships build over time, and so one of the seminars that we did in 2024 came from a visit in 2022 to a tackle shop down in the Keys, and, again, some of the BFP MVPs that have participated in Ashley's program participated in other seminars, or we met them, or built relationships through them, with fishing expos.

We actually had one of our BFP MVPs that was a person that came to the very first seminar that we did at Haddrell's Point Tackle in 2022, and so, again, you know, although the BFP and CitSci teams are kind of leading the charge on this stuff, there are a lot of other people that are involved.

A lot of other council staff have been helping with these outreach efforts, and a lot of council members, many people sitting around this table, have attended these events, and kind of supported staff, as they're kind of getting questions and trying to address people's kind of questions and concerns that are brought up during these events, and a lot of other partners, and AP members who have helped us be able to make these outreach programs a success, and so I think this is just a testament to kind of show, by making that investment in outreach, there's been a big payoff for the council thus far, and I think we really need to keep that momentum moving forward. With that, we're happy to take any questions.

DR. BELCHER: Thanks, Christina, and that's an amazing amount of work that you guys have done, and I know that we've been hearing a lot about how much people enjoy the engagement. Even though I know sometimes it's a small turnout, and it seems like it does have a really good ripple effect to move out. In know, in Savannah, we didn't have a big turnout, but there was also the discussion of you all coming back and going to a fishing group, and so it will definitely keep paying forward, which I think is great. Do other folks have comments, or questions, for Christina and Julia at this time? Amy.

MS. DUKES: I just wanted to give you guys a shoutout. The amount of work that you've been able to do is tremendous, and I love the fact that you keep reiterating that outreach and education is the success tool for us to build back this trust that we have lost with our constituents, and I echo

that, that the partnership message that we're putting out together I think is really important for the next chapter of best fishing practices and the workshops that extend to the other states.

I participated in two of the three events in South Carolina, and I really was sad that I missed the third event, because the messages that the state representatives -- It doesn't matter if I'm wearing my DNR hat or my council hat or what have you, but our message is the same, in that we need to continue to have a unified voice when it comes to best fishing practices, descending devices, getting engaged in reporting and requirements, just general fishing requirements.

We had folks that showed up at these meetings who have been participants in the process, and they still learned new things, and so it is a massive amount of information that nobody can retain and hold, and so I encourage folks from Florida and North Carolina to be involved in those, as they continue to go forward. It was amazing to talk to all the folks, and it was really fun, and interactive, but the information exchange, and the relationship building, was huge, and so I hope that there can be continued funding in this momentum for best fishing practices, and that citizen science can continue, and so thank you very much, ladies, and your team.

DR. BELCHER: Trish.

MS. MURPHEY: I will just echo what Amy said. You guys rock, and that's all there is to it, is you all rock, and so I really appreciated you guys coming to our 200-year jamboree, which was actually about a year ago this week, I think, and so I know everybody was excited to have you guys there, and my husband thought your booth was the best, but so I really appreciate, and I do plan -- When you guys come to North Carolina, I will plan to participate.

One thing that I just wanted to comment on, on the pie chart, where you had the emails, how it was very helpful -- I thought it was interesting that the emails from Florida and North Carolina gave a big jump to participants, because our communication team did an informal survey, and the feedback we actually got was our folks, at least who took the survey, they prefer getting emails, and news releases, and going to the website, and there was a little bit of support for social media, and Facebook is the one to go to, that they go to as far as social media, but their preference was actually emails and news releases and websites, and so it's kind of cool to see that kind of being demonstrated there.

DR. BELCHER: Kerry.

MS. MARHEFKA: One of the reasons that I think this is even more important -- Amy and I were both council members at I suspect the most recent seminar, if you will, at Haddrell's, and one of the reasons that we were there is because, leading up to that seminar, there was a lot of chit-chat online, you know, obviously red-snapper related, and, you know, people sort of, you know, blowing up and acting like they were going to be real angry when they were there, and so we sort of went into the meeting thinking that was going to happen, but, really, because we were there, and because our staff is amazing, and knows how to talk to people, that seemed to calm down.

Outside of it being for best fishing practices and citizen science, what also happens is I feel like it takes a lot of steam out of people, just to be there, and it's almost like a mini public hearing, if you will, where people have a chance to engage in the process, without coming and yelling at a public hearing, and so I think it's really, really important that we continue. As you see, again, 41 percent

of the participants we get are through, you know, being in-person with these people, and so I just hope, in the future -- I know they're time-intensive, and I know that they cost money, but I think it's very clear that, in many, many aspects, we're getting our bang for our buck by going and being in-person, especially having staff in these places, and so I just wanted to make sure that we remember that in the future.

DR. BELCHER: Other comments or questions for Julia and Christina? Gary.

MR. BORLAND: So, John, you've got a challenge. We need like ten more teams, and a little more budget, right? I mean, they're one small team, making great inroads, and the challenge is going to be how to scale it and grow it.

DR. BELCHER: Judy.

MS. HELMEY: Well, no doubt about it, and the team is awesome. I got to spend some time with them, and it was a lot of fun, and their practices are good, and we did save a lot -- We did catch a lot of fish, and we saved a lot of fish, thanks to the practices, and it was nice getting to see it put in -- I mean, we do it, but it's nice to see somebody else doing it, and I think it's great that you do help diffuse the fishermen that actually do want to feed us to those hungry sharks, and I think Kerry was right when she said that you all help us in that way, and we appreciate that, and you all just got all the spirit, and your willingness is unbelievable, and so thank you.

DR. BELCHER: Robert.

MR. SPOTTSWOOD: I've gotten a lot of good feedback from the tackle shops, particularly down in Florida. Ashley, thank you for the folks that you all met with down there, and it's great to see that going. The comment I have is I think that, at least going forward, social media is a really, really important component of at least how most people I know are getting information, and so, as I look at the Instagram page, and it's great content, and great stuff, but I'm wondering what the strategy is to try to get our following to a really high number, and it's really good, effective way for us to push stuff out, and so I would suggest that maybe one of the ways to try to scale it is leveraging social media, and maybe even considering paid advertising, doing some partnerships and some other things, and so I think we can get some big return on effort.

DR. BELCHER: Thanks for those comments, Robert. Anyone else at this time? Okay. What I'm asking for is a little more patience. We have Sam Rauch here, who is going to come up and talk to us quickly and address the council. Then we'll talk a little bit more about the procedure once Sam is done.

MR. CARMICHAEL: So, just to let you all know, remember that Sam is the Deputy Assistant Administrator for Regulatory Programs, out of Silver Spring. He likes to get around to the councils, and say hello, and talk to you guys, and really have a chance to talk with you guys about issues that you may have, or pretty much anything under the sun, and I will point out that Sam will be here tomorrow night as well, and so you'll have a chance to talk to him in an informal setting as well, and get to know him a little bit better, and I think he just has a few remarks here, and we wanted to make sure that, you know, we introduced him, so you know who is in the room.

MR. RAUCH: Thank you. I'm Sam Rauch, and I am one of the three deputy directors of the National Marine Fisheries Service out of Maryland, Silver Spring, Maryland. I oversee all of the regional offices, including the Southeast Regional Office, and the Protected Resources Program, the Sustainable Fisheries Program, the Habitat Conservation Program, and our Office of Policy at the National Marine Fisheries Service.

I like to come around and talk to the councils and just talk about how important the work that you're doing here is. It's hard to be a council member. For those of you in the audience, it's really hard to be a council member. You should thank these folks. They do a great job, and the staff do a great job, too.

We manage across the country collectively, through the council process, 506 species in forty-five fishery management plans. Of those 506 species, only 6 percent are subject to overfishing, and that is a great metric, and that could not happen without the work of the councils, without all the staff work, without all of the difficult decisions. Some of them are ones we know about, and they're really difficult to address, but the people here -- You all make really difficult decisions to help us achieve that level of providing fish, both for the present and for the future, and I thank you for that.

Only forty-seven total are overfished, and that's 18 percent, and we just rebuilt our fiftieth species since 2000 this year, and so that was great, and we meaning both the Fisheries Service and the councils did that together. Fishing is a hugely important economic driver, whether it's commercial fishing or recreational fishing. \$321 billion in sales from fishing in the country last year, and, of that, about \$181 billion was commercial and about \$138 billion recreational.

Recreational fishing is a huge economic driver, and it's very important to the fabric of our coastal communities. It's not just a pastime. It's an important thing, and the Southeast is the place where recreational fishing is predominant, and it's more important here -- It's not that it's unimportant everywhere else, but it is more important here than elsewhere, and we understand that there is -- \$15 billion in sales for recreational fishing come out of the Southeast. There are 4.5 million recreational anglers, and they took 36 million trips. That is a lot of recreational fishing that comes out of the Southeast.

Commercial fishing is also important. The whole Southeast Region, and not just the South Atlantic, but including the Gulf, is the second-largest in volume, in terms of the number of fish landed. It's the third-most in revenue around the country. It's a really important area. Fishing drives 2.2 million jobs in the country, 1.6 million commercial jobs and 700,000 recreational jobs, and so all of this is really important to what people are doing here. It's important to how they get fish, and fish protein is important to coastal economies, coastal states, and it's important to the nation, and it could not happen without the work that the councils do, and so I wanted to take a moment and reflect and express appreciation from the National Marine Fisheries Service, for all the work that you do and all the time it takes to do that.

These are really difficult things to do, and the presentation that you just had about best practices - - That kind of stuff is not required by statute, but it's stuff that is good to do, and it's important to do, and it really helps.

A couple of the initiatives that we've been working on nationally, that I just wanted to share with you, is we have gotten, through Congress in recent years, several hundred million dollars to invest in fisheries issues, and most of that has gone towards habitat work, to protect fish habitat around the country, to work on fish passage issues, and, if we can't protect the habitat, then none of us will have any fish that we can fish on, and that's been very good, and we've also been investing in climate-ready fisheries, dealing with the issues of climate change.

It has affected how we do our surveys, how we collect our data, and it's affecting what fish are out there to be caught, and so it has caused us to fundamentally rethink the science of how we provide the information to this group, and we call that the Climate Ready Fisheries Initiative, and we are investing in that. We are investing some money in the councils, in order to help the council process along, but, all in all, it's a large-scale investment, but it is time-limited. It is only money for five years, and then it goes away, and so we'll try to look at how we can invest that wisely in the time we have that, so that we can make good decisions and take advantage of it while that money is here.

Last year, we circulated a National Seafood Strategy, which looks at the importance of seafood to not only just the coastal economy, but the communities around the country, in terms of how we provide fish protein to folks, and it's highlighting the importance of maintaining, and increasing, the amount we can get from our wild-capture fisheries, but also investing in our aquaculture fisheries, looking at international issues with how our fish producers are competing with other foreign products in our marketplaces and making sure that that is fair.

We have -- I think you've heard from me before about our equity and environmental justice strategy, which we issued last year, and both of those strategies are large national strategies, and we're working on regional, more localized, detailed step-down plans for at least the EEJ strategy, which I hope will come out here in the next month or so for the South Atlantic, that is coming out of SERO, their regional plan.

We've also worked on the governance policy, to look at how we look at council jurisdiction if stocks are shifting, as many of them are suspected to be doing, because of climate change. You know, they're coming into and out of various council jurisdictions, and the Secretary has a statutory authority to set the jurisdiction of the councils, but we want to do that in a transparent manner and think about under what circumstances would we change that, if at all, and be transparent about that, and so we issued a governance policy that we shared with the Council Coordinating Committee in the last month or so.

We also shared -- We completed work on our Magnuson-Stevens and Endangered Species Act integration policy. That was a policy that's been around since 2012, and we worked with the councils to update that, to better integrate how we interact with the councils, where fishing might be impacting endangered species and what is the role of both our agencies and the councils on that, and, lastly, we expect, in the near future, to issue a revision to National Standards 4, 8, and 9.

Obviously, any revisions to the National Standards are very important to the councils, and we intend to work with the councils on that. That would be a proposed rule, and we would work with the councils on that, before finalizing that rule, and we would hope to -- We hoped to have that out before the CCC meeting a couple of weeks ago, and that did not happen, and we are still hoping

to get it out this summer, and, with that, and I think that was about five minutes or so, and I'm happy to take any questions, if you would like.

DR. BELCHER: Thank you for that. Questions for Sam at this point? My understanding is you're here for the dinner tomorrow night, and so, if folks have other things you would like to talk with him about offline, we've got that available too.

MR. RAUCH: Yes.

DR. BELCHER: Okay. At this point, I'm going to propose we take a ten-minute break. We're going to rework some of the afternoon scheduling, to accommodate some folks and timing, because we're pushed a little bit later today, but we'll have a heads-up when we get back, and so please be back at five after.

(Whereupon, a recess was taken.)

DR. BELCHER: We have a couple of presenters that are time-limited, and so we're going to reorder a few things on the agenda. Mandy Karnauskas is going to be doing the dolphin management strategy evaluation update for Cassidy, and, because she has a time limit, we're going to do her first, and then, after that, we're going to reorder and do the Southeast For-Hire Integrated Electronic Reporting, or SEFHIER, improvement item, because Geoff White is only here until eleven o'clock tomorrow, and so making sure that we get that covered, and that's the plan. Then, if we have additional time, then we'll come into the limited entry, but that may hold over until tomorrow, and so we'll start out with the MSE, go into the SEFHIER improvement discussion, and then we'll see where we're at at that point. Chip.

DR. COLLIER: All right. Mandy, you can unmute.

DR. KARNAUSKAS: Thank you, and I greatly appreciate you accommodating my scheduling limitation. Thank you, and so thanks for having me online today, and I'm happy to give you a quick update on the dolphin MSE process. Before we start, I just wanted to acknowledge all the team members who've been involved in this effort. As you know, there's been participation from the Science Center and the Regional Office, and we've also got council staff, academic institutions, and private organizations with expertise in the species, but I particularly want to thank the MSE working group, and the workshop participants, you know, whose feedback has been really critical in this process, as this entire exercise wouldn't be possibly without their input, and so we greatly appreciate their time.

You have seen this diagram before, and we just want to go back and look at the project outlook and let you know where we are and give you an update on that. First, we've completed a base operating model, and I will touch more on that in a second, and we've prepared a contract for a new management strategy evaluation lead analyst, and this is following the departure of our previous analyst, who we actually didn't lose completely, and we just hired him into another branch of the Science Center, and he's taken on some other duties, and so he'll still be involved, Matt Damiano, but this won't be his primary duty anymore, and we've got a new contract for a lead analyst to fill his gap.

Then we also, as you know, selected the stakeholder group, or, well, you all selected the stakeholder group last December, and we've been moving forward with that small group, with that great group of people, and we've been embarking upon iterative feedback, with that group, to build and refine the management strategy evaluation.

Now we're moving into a little bit more detail on the MSE modeling dynamics, and so, you know, part of the input from the stakeholder group is being used to design the operating model, and so this is reflecting the feedback that we're receiving in those meetings, and some of the examples of the specific feedback that we received, and how that feeds into the modeling decisions in the table here, and I won't go through this entire table in detail, but just a few examples.

In terms of the spatial resolution of the model, we decided to go with seven regions, four in the U.S., as reflected in this map, and then three internationally, and this, of course, represents or is based on the feedback that we received from stakeholders, in terms of how the populations and the fisheries themselves operate on a regional scale, and so within the boxes are areas that are more or less operating within a similar manner. Also, the stakeholder feedback, you know, has clearly distinguished management objectives, and fisheries dynamics, by region, and so we have made sure to build this into the MSE process as well.

Then we wanted to give you a bit more detail on the operating model, or the OM, and so the operating model is meant to simulate a hypothetical reality from the management system, and so, really, this is just a computer accounting of the fish in the population, and, you know, it's very similar to the stock assessment. The operating model keeps track of how many fish there, where they're new, how they grow, how they reproduce, how they die, if that death is from being fished or from natural deaths, and it also simulates how the fisheries target the population.

Remember that we're creating this simulated world so that we can measure what the population is doing, and the fishing fleet response, what those would be, two different management measures, and then so we can determine whether we're managing in such a way that it would actually meet the stated management objectives from the stakeholders. Again, operating models are very similar to the stock assessment, and it can be pretty complex, or it can be very simple.

In this case, our operating model is pretty complex, and that's kind of a necessity, given the stakeholder objectives, the way that the stock moves in time and space, you know, the migrations on a seasonal scale, the way that the fleets operate very differently across the region, and all of the system uncertainties that we want to include, and so we did a pretty -- It's a relatively complex operating model.

Just to go through how this works, we start by simulating the operating model dynamics, to simulate structure, dolphin population dynamics and fleets, and then the next step is to condition that operating model on total landings data, and that's just to make sure that the actual simulated population represents, you know, reality, and then the third step is to simulate the population, the fleets, and the indices relative abundance, and then, finally, we fit the simulated indices to observed indices, and this is done to ensure that these indices are representative of the stock, because it's these observed indices that we're probably going to use as the basis for a management procedure going forward.

Then we wanted to dive into a little bit of the key uncertainties that we're considering, you know, and so the way I think about this is we're sort of playing the what-if game. These different uncertainties allow us to understand how the management procedures will perform under different sorts of uncertainties, and so what if migration patterns change, what if landings are higher than we thought, and, again, because this is a simulated reality, we can really test anything that we want in this framework, but, of course, we want to build a set of operating models that reasonably plausible to the types of uncertainties that we think are out there, and so each of these operating models are going to represent a unique hypothesis of current and future stock, fishery, and ecosystem dynamics, and so these are different states of nature, or possible states of nature, that we want to consider in the simulation exercise.

Then what we do is we test the candidate management procedures across all of these different operating models, and the idea is that the best procedures are going to be ones that can successfully manage across the different operating models, and those would be considered robust to the uncertainties that we have in the system.

Again, we're using information that we've gathered from the stakeholder group to inform the uncertainties that are listed here, and this table shows the uncertainties that we have preliminarily identified in those workshops, and also an explanation of how those uncertainties will be incorporated into the operating model.

Again, I'm not going to go through the whole table, but, just as an example, you know, we want to consider, for example, shifting movement over time, and, again, the operating model has been configured so that we can simulate different patterns, like movement patterns, and, for example, if the stock is moving north earlier in the year, in the season, and, again, testing whether the management procedures are robust to these uncertainties or changes.

Then we'll touch on a little bit of what we accomplished in the stakeholder small group meetings, and so, since the stakeholder group selection, we've had three meetings, and the first meeting we covered sort of an MSE 101, getting everyone up-to-speed on what we're trying to do. In the second meeting, we talked about management objectives, and then, in the third meeting, we talked about the state of dolphinfish science, as well as some of the operating model details, and I've been helping to facilitate these group meetings, and I really -- You know, it's been a very good experience.

I will admit that I was a bit worried about the level of engagement in a fully virtual format, but I have to say that we've had really great participation, and very in-depth discussions, and so, overall, I think these have been really effective meetings. We've made the most of the fully virtual format by trying to have sort of different formats of communication, and so we have like an anonymous comment box, if people want to give input sort of outside the meeting, and, also, within the meetings, we send out these sort of mini polls, to try and take the temperature of the group and just make sure that we're kind of reading the group well, and so here's some examples, on this slide, of some of the poll results.

For example, we asked folks to rank which objectives are most important, and, as you see from the plot, you know, one of the outcomes, or findings, is that our stakeholders generally prioritize fisheries sustainability, or conservation, over, for example, quality of fish landed or improving catch rates. We also asked folks to indicate how useful they think their input is to the MSE process,

from strongly disagree to strongly agree, and, as you can see, we got pretty good feedback that folks seem to be engaged and feel that their input is being utilized in a good way.

Then I just wanted to touch on the tentative timeline and give you an update there, and so, as we move into the summer of 2024, we're going to plan to continue our iterative interactions with the stakeholder group, and we'll be discussing the operating models, the uncertainties, and then some candidate management procedures. We'll also be onboarding the new MSE developer, who is going to continue to develop the MSE itself, including the development of the projection and the feedback loops, and we're going to develop a simple proof-of-concept candidate management procedure, and we anticipate continued development of the operating models, under different base assumptions and management procedures, through 2024, and the revision of those management procedures going into 2025. Just to caveat that this may shift slightly as we onboard a new MSE lead analyst.

Then, finally, again, and you've seen this plot before, but we just want to emphasize and remind folks, you know, why we're here, and what we're doing, and what the roles of the different members are, and so, as you know, the stakeholders are essentially advising on all elements of the MSE, on the operating models, the management objectives, and the management procedures, and then, with the modeling team -- You know, we're not inserting a lot of opinions, and we're just trying to capture, you know, the stakeholder preferences, and objectives, and their uncertainties, and so we're trying to quantitatively, you know, construct the operating models, and the management objectives, based on the stakeholder feedback.

Then the SSC -- Again, the role of the SSC would be to adopt the operating models, and then, with the management objectives, they would be advising on the biological must-pays, or the objectives that are required by law, and then advising on the management procedures, and then, finally, the council, of course, would advise on the operating models and then would be the body to adopt the management objectives, and then they would adopt, and implement, the management procedure, based on performance, as measured by the MSE exercise here. I think that's my last slide, and, if there's any questions, I'll do my best to answer them. Thank you.

DR. BELCHER: Thanks, Mandy. Do we have any questions for Mandy at this point? Jessica.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thanks for the presentation, Mandy. Are there any funding concerns, or constraints, here with this proposal, or is everything on track?

DR. KARNAUSKAS: I think we're good funding-wise, and one of the things that we would like to explore is potentially getting some climate and ecosystem fishery initiative IRA funds to support the dolphin management strategy evaluation, and we think, you know, there's room to explore potential environmental impacts on the stock, and we're considering having this be sort of one of our climate ecosystem fishery initiative projects that we support with those funds, and we have a couple other funding pots that we've been able to get some funds from as well to support this, and so I don't see any issues with funding for this exercise, and, with the IRA funds that we have coming in, I think we're in good shape.

DR. BELCHER: Other questions for Mandy? Kerry.

MS. MARHEFKA: Hi, Mandy. Can you go back to the slide with the timeline on it again? Perfect, and is that the same one, and I've just lost track from our last -- Is that sort of the same timeline as we've been on since we heard from you last?

DR. KARNAUSKAS: I would have to double-check, and I think we may have been set back a few months with the loss of the one MSE analyst, and I honestly don't know, and I would have to go back and check. I can check and send an email response.

MS. MARHEFKA: All right. Thank you.

DR. BELCHER: Andy.

MR. STRELCHECK: Thanks, Mandy, for the presentation. A question about the regions, and so you mentioned the seven regions, and three I would guess are international, and where are those?

DR. KARNAUSKAS: Let me see if I can dig that up in front of me, and I'm sorry that I don't know off the top of my head, but I have the tech memo here.

MR. STRELCHECK: It's not critical, if you want to get back to me.

DR. KARNAUSKAS: Okay.

MR. STRELCHECK: A related question, and so you have the graphic on the screen, and the regions are -- They're varying sizes, and I assume that's based on kind of the availability, and the dynamics, of the fishery and how the fisheries operate in those different areas, and is that correct?

DR. KARNAUSKAS: That is correct.

MR. STRELCHECK: Okay. Then the last question, and so you showed, obviously, kind of the council's role, and so you're discussing, obviously, the operating model now, and where do you see us kind of giving that advice, and input, coming up? Is that going to be more in the winter timeframe of this year?

DR. KARNAUSKAS: Let's see. I'm looking at the timeline, and I believe so, but, again, I would want to check with Cassidy on this and get back to you, Cassidy and John. I apologize that I don't have all the answers to these questions.

MR. STRELCHECK: It's all right. Thank you.

DR. KARNAUSKAS: But I will get back to you on email.

DR. BELCHER: Other questions for Mandy at this time? John.

MR. CARMICHAEL: Just a question, looking forward to sort of the end, and the role of the council, and is the MPs likely to be something that will require the council to take action through an amendment, and are they more -- Do we consider them analogous to an ABC control rule, which the council takes action through amendments on?

DR. KARNAUSKAS: That's another question that I'm not sure that I'm the best person to answer. I don't know if Clay wants to weigh-in here, but the management procedure is likely -- Because this is a highly-environmental-driven stock, it's likely to -- It's more likely to have some possibilities where you have like, if conditions are good, do X. If conditions are bad, do Y, and so I don't know what sort of amendment would be necessary to implement a management procedure that would have like something that's potentially fluctuating on an annual basis. Clay, or others, I don't know if you want to weigh-in here.

DR. BELCHER: Clay.

DR. PORCH: So a lot is going to depend on what the secondary objectives are, but we certainly could set an ABC overall, based on the kind of catch rates we see from the indicator CPUE, but then there's also how you distribute that in space and time, as the stock migrates, and so, you know, you would be a better judge of what level the council has to play, in terms of whether it's an amendment or what have you, but those are the kinds of things that I see happening. It would influence ABC, but also how you distribute the catches up and down among the states.

DR. BELCHER: Shep.

MR. GRIMES: Thank you, Madam Chair. If we're going to change the regulatory requirements, tell fishers where they can catch things and can't or whatever, then, yes, the council is going to have to have something through the FMP to implement those restrictions. Thank you.

DR. BELCHER: Other questions? John, did you -- Okay. Thanks again for your time, Mandy.

DR. KARNAUSKAS: Thank you.

DR. BELCHER: Moving on in the agenda, like I said, we're going to reorder, and we're going to go with the Southeast For-Hire Integrated Electronic Reporting improvement item, and so Geoff White is going to talk with us about the ACCSP for-hire methodology technical review.

MR. WHITE: Excellent. I'm Geoff White, with the Atlantic Coastal Cooperative Statistics Program, part of the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission, and so thank you, first, for having me here today. While I'm not speaking directly about SEFHIER, the ACCSP project that I'm going to be talking about does have the potential to be inclusive of multiple logbook programs, and, when I was asked to provide a status update of the technical review, I realized that the actual presentation of what's in this design had not been given to the council before, and so, if you looked at the presentation that was posted online already, and I recognize that it's kind of long, and the middle section we're going to step through kind of quickly, about what the design is, because that's in a referenced PDF document of what we submitted to MRIP in February of 2023.

I do recognize, and also foreshadowing here, and, if you've looked at the presentation, a lot of this is based on northern data, due to the focus and timeframes of when this was done, and so it's a little ironic that I'm presenting to the south on these things, but it wouldn't be possible to be here without the work that we've done with MRIP with South Carolina, on a pilot study that started this off back in 2016, and so thank you to South Carolina, and those who have -- All the states that have helped us get this far.

Jumping a little bit to the end, what is the overall status of where we're at, this is a methodology for the use of additional use of for-hire logbook data to come up with MRIP estimates, and so we're a little over a year into actually submitting a design to MRIP. There was a consultant review last year, and we've been doing a little bit of the back-and-forth, but, at the moment, there's a couple of TBD dates on when ACCSP and the Rec Tech Committee need to do some more data analysis and design updates and resubmit that back to MRIP and the process, and so it's a little bit of a long timeline, with an unknown end, but let me just step through a little bit and back up and talk about -- This is a bit of the agenda for the talk today, why ACCSP is involved in this part of the design, what are the overall goals and overview.

I'll touch on the MRIP certification process and the historical perspective of what got us here, that center section of the for-hire design highlights is written up, and is available for questions, but I wanted to just touch on those things briefly and then get to the real focus of what I was asked for, which is the technical review status and next steps.

Initially, why is ACCSP involved in this design? Well, it's about inclusive development of an umbrella logbook program that would be available to state and federal agencies to adopt as they saw fit on variable timelines, and so that whole Atlantic coast perspective, state and federal partnerships, and looking to standardize kind of a base design for regional compatibility, but allow for kind of optional extensions, or timelines, for that to be implemented, and the reason I have "adaptation" underlined there is it's really a key phrase of building on a part of the MRIP program, while MRIP is certainly open and supportive of new ideas, following through the process of how to get there, and so we've had a lot of back-and-forth over time so far, but that's what really brings ACCSP, as a twenty-three partner collaborative, into this process.

More specifically, what are the goals of this particular utilization of for-hire logbook methodology and goals and objectives, and so, first, very broadly, to more fully utilize for-hire logbooks in the MRIP catch statistics, and so, right now, the GARFO logbooks are used for effort, and the dockside portions are used for catch, and then that's expanded on out, and, if the GARFO logbooks are not a part of the requirement, then the for-hire telephone survey covers the other portion of those logs, of those fisheries, to come up with composite statistics.

The intent here is to maintain compatible design, and so including vessels within a state that are under different reporting requirements, be that with or without a logbook, and also recognize that, if there were to be different implementation timelines, that the information statistics coming out would have to be compatible to neighboring states, and across state borders, for a regional approach, and so, as the Recreational Technical Committee, and the coordinating council, have talked about the way to go about this, that we have chosen, with the support of all the members, is to go through the certification process once, and then allow for the flexibility of phased implementation, and so, as any particular logbook program is ready to and wants to come online and adopt these particular components, or features, that that could be inserted into the MRIP-certified design and implemented and kind of have that trajectory of long-term approaches.

That way, having a single -- All the effort that goes into certifying a design, and implementing a program, would kind of be centralized and done at the forefront, and then allow for adoption over time, and so that's the core component of it, and, if that vision kind of works out, then that's what we're after.

What does that look like in pictures? The top row, or section, of this particular graphic is almost a current state, and so the for-hire telephone survey, or the Access Point Angler Intercept Survey, are done through state conduct, in cooperation with MRIP on their design, and those two pieces come together for the catch survey data and the effort information from the for-hire telephone survey, in some cases the GARFO logbook effort estimates, and that comes to a total catch estimation, in the for-hire fishery, for those survey estimates.

What this proposed design does is add in the whole bottom section, which would be, where there is a logbook, use those certified logbooks for the effort and catch information, use the Access Point Angler Intercept Survey, or APAIS, to do both validation of some of those logbooks as well as a comparison with the catch, use a difference-based estimator, and then come up with kind of a logbook frame estimate, which would be additive to the telephone survey estimate.

Then you end up with a MRIP composite statistics, in the green box in the middle on the right, and so that's the goal, and, really, one of the phrases, or the thought processes, that we have come about in doing this is, if there was a state, and I will use South Carolina, as I have before, where there were a federal logbook program and state-permitted vessels, under different reporting requirements, that those two boats, docked next to each other in the same marina, would both be part of a data collection system, but they would be different parts and added together at the end of that reporting period.

Then, in a neighboring state, if there was no opportunity for a logbook for the state vessels, then it would be -- Again, you would have compatible statistics, and there would be data collection for vessels without a logbook, data collection for those with a logbook, and the information for the whole region would still be compatible, and so that type of a vision is where we're after, in pictures, and why we're going through the process, through Rec Tech, over several years, to get there.

The process of certification, I will be brief about this part, but it is necessary for MSA National Standard 2, best scientific information available, and the Information Quality Act, and MRIP, again, certifies a design, and that is a separate step from the implementation, and then the transition to acceptance of those data, and so MRIP will certify kind of new, or replacement, or kind of modifications and improvements, and so this particular approach is a modification, or a recommended improvement, to the general survey, and that's why it's kind of an adaptation of MRIP, and those are referenced there on the screen.

Thanks to NOAA for sharing this process picture with us, years ago, that we keep using, but it's just another version of the certification process and where kind of we're at in the current ACCSP methodology, which is the lightly-shaded box, and it's a little difficult to see on the screen, but the triangle in the middle, and that would be -- If I can get the cursor, and I've kind of highlighted this section in here, and so there is the creation of the design, the submission, initial consultation, and I have to say MRIP was really quick, and supportive, in getting a consultant review together last summer.

Then we got that report back in October, and now we're in the process where we've gotten some feedback from that certification review, which I will get to at the end of the presentation, and that requires kind of this iterative triangle of getting some feedback from MRIP, doing some more analysis, making some adjustments to the design, and then submitting that back to MRIP for another phase of review, and so that's kind of the stage that we're at at the moment, and that is

well before you move towards a true certified design, and then implementation and transition to that, over on the far-right-hand side of the screen.

That said, a little bit of the historical perspective, and, again, back in 2016, thanks to South Carolina and some funding through MRIP, we had APAIS as a dockside component to look at and additional design for these logbooks. Some of the outcomes of that were moving from paper to an electronic format was beneficial. It helped with matching of the logbooks to the dockside intercepts, but, overall, the estimation approaches, the difference-based estimator, using all the data from the logbooks, and I think there were over 5,000 logbooks a year submitted in the state, as well as the APAIS interviews, resulted in a little bit higher estimates for some of the target species that were looked, but with tighter PSEs.

Those results would apply broadly to all the Atlantic states, and kind of mid-sized states, and scaled to larger, and some of the benefits of this were that the South Carolina fishermen were used to a logbook reporting program, since it had been going on so long, and the fact that states without logbooks still -- The outcome of that pilot study was that many other state along the Atlantic, and even in the Gulf of Mexico, were still wanting some sort of compatible data collection design for those states that didn't have or weren't capable of implementing a logbook in the short run.

Another outcome of the pilot study in 2016 was the development of the tablet data collection for APAIS along the entire Atlantic coast. We were able to implement that in 2019, and that is important, because it provided a direct linkage between the for-hire vessel identifiers that were being collected at the dock to the trip matching, to the GARFO VTRs, and other VTRs, which really helped out with matching up the date, location, vessel, for those trips.

Another benefit over time that has occurred is the Modern Fish Act provided about \$900,000 a year to the Atlantic, and, when I say Atlantic here, that's Maine through Georgia, and Florida is covered through the Gulf States Commission. That resulted in about a 30 percent increase, or 2,100 six-hour site assignments per year, and that allocation was done cooperatively between MRIP, ACCSP staff, and the state staff, and there was a heavier weighting towards states with longer seasons or greater species diversity, and, yes, you can read "South Atlantic" there.

The overall increases were a little bit higher here in the south, and the Rec Tech Committee had been working, over that timeline, since really 2019, to develop this kind of program for using the logbooks, with both the balance of the statistical rigor that MRIP and others were looking for, as well as the kind of balance of what might work out well with industry and the state support as well.

With that, on the screen is a list of the current for-hire logbook programs, and this is really included for transparency. Of these bold items, they're historically used in the MRIP general survey design for effort only, and the additional states that are listed are both participating in and following along with this ACCSP process, looking towards future choices to those programs at the time that it really works for them, and I do want to point out here that, in the proposed design, none of the -- The proposed design doesn't exactly match any of the programs on the screen, and so we were looking -- Rec Tech was looking at what are the core components that would be necessary and what might work for the whole region, and people overall, in trying to come up with that kind of composite approach.

With that, and we're more than halfway through the presentation, but I'm going to step through some of the design highlights of what was presented, and, again, this is -- All the figures and things are in the PDF document, which ends in February of 2023, and it's a .PDF title.

First of all, which vessels would be included? The frame, of course, is identifying vessels with permits associated with a certified design. This does not exist today, but it would, and then the method of separating between one of those two frames would use the MRIP vessel directory, and the permits that it has awareness of, and so the MRIP vessel directory is maintained by the states that do the state component of the MRIP surveys, and they also have a direct database link to get the GARFO and the HMS permits that are in there.

The vessels are unique, and they're identified as being eligible and active and inactive per state, and that would be the basis for defining which permit programs are certified and which of those vessels would be able to be part of the logbook frame for the telephone survey frame.

A distinct vessel would only be part of one frame in each two-month wave, and we built in a little bit of an ability to have a vessel modify its permit status during the year, and some of those details are worked out both in the documentation, and are still being looked at, but the idea is that there would be the ability for some transfer of which frame that vessel would be sampled in in a particular year.

One of the questions that had been brought up was what is the size of a vessel frame that would be affected by these federal logbooks, and I say it this way because we use the GARFO existing logbooks as the case of an example to look at, and so I highlighted here that this is Wave 4 charter, and it's looking specifically at GARFO permits, because, at the time we developed this, the SEFHIER permits weren't all in place, and so, looking a little bit at the more northern states, Maine through Virginia here, it does show that about 30 percent of the vessels have, or had, a GARFO permit at the time, and so it's not an unreasonable amount that would change the frame size.

If we looked at the headboats, that is a little bit of a different case, and there are some states with over 50 percent of their permitted vessels that are headboats that are federally-permitted, and that recognition means there is some review in the design about how those frame sizes would impact the sampling.

On core design components, the trip logbook timing is important, and so the intention of electronic trip reporting would be to start -- To hit a start button on the tablet, or the mobile device, before the trip starts, to record the start and stop times of that trip, and try and complete that prior to offload, and it would still allow for a lag between when the trip was ended electronically on that device and when that was submitted over the internet, but those time stamps were perceived as a good way to separate out those two different tasks. Also, helping out with observational independence, and was there a difference between what was reported at the point of finishing a trip versus what was potentially observed, if there was a dockside interview at the time.

The vessels would have every for-hire trip recorded, electronic reporting, and there would be a fair amount of quality assurance about logical flow of questions and time stamps and data editing that would go into the process. Additionally, did-not-fish reports are a required component, and this avoids the assumption of inactivity, when there is no report, and it helps out with compliance.

However, we recognize that's not part of the estimation process. Relative to reporting compliance, there is some additional information on the screen, and we're just going to keep moving a little bit.

There is also, because it's an electronic application, a fair level of quality control that can be done at entry control checks and range checks, and we've found that people that are entering for-hire or commercial logbooks -- When the system stops you right away, you can correct a lot of those errors before they're ever submitted, when it's fresh in the captains' minds, and so far that's working out pretty well in other areas, and it would be continued here.

One area that was considered an optional component in this design would be hail-outs, and hail-outs were looked at in helping compliance when combined with did-not-fish reports, and helping with enforcement if, and when, a vessel happens to be intercepted during their trip away from the dock. However, when we looked at this, both as a design standpoint with the recreational technical committee, as well as with the agency partners, and even in the technical review process, there was kind of an unknown balance of the impacts to operations, versus the benefits of hail-outs for the entire data collection and estimation process.

Another core component is using the APAIS design as the intercept, and APAIS, in general, is the dockside survey of the anglers, and it creates wave-level estimates, and state staff are there to collect the trip specifics of effort and catch, and, in this design, there are no changes identified, or requested, of how APAIS functions.

APAIS is done via a tablet-based application, and it automatically collects kind of date, time, and GPS timestamps for the site assignments and interviews, and the for-hire vessel information is selected from a link in the application, which looks essentially like this, and so you've got the ability to pull, from a drop-down list, what that particular vessel is, and it avoids abbreviation and typos of particular vessel names may look similar, and it is specific to the state and activity that you're working in, and so it helps avoid duplication, or confusion, in that data entry point.

On the logbook side, how would these dockside intercepts be used, and so the logbook information has the date, the start and stop times, et cetera, and then the dockside validations look at did the trip occur, what was the timeframe, the number of anglers, what was the catch that came from that, and that's used kind of in three ways, and so the matched trips have consistent effort and catch, and that's the expected result, and also to estimate matched trips with differences in effort and catch, and there's the potential for misreporting to be evaluated, and then, also, the estimation process to adjust for differences in trips that we're missing a logbook report, or otherwise labeled as nonreporting, and so all three of those components go into the connection between the logbook and the dockside intercept.

Because of the tablet data collection is in APAIS, and the electronic data reporting that, in this case, was evaluated with GARFO eVTRs, the electronic data collection and GARFO reports are forty-eight hours after the end of the trip, and you hit the completion button by the end of the trip, and so there's some similarities here, and then that trip matching occurs by vessel, date, and location.

Approximately how much data went into this particular analysis, we looked, from a raw data standpoint, at 2019 through 2022, Maine through Virginia. The amount of GARFO trip reports for each year is on the left, and the number of APAIS intercepts is on the right by state, and this

was really used to drive towards our next slide, which is what is the matching rate, and so, on the left-hand side of this frame, you have the number of GARFO boat trips, VTRs, that were represented with some sort of a -- Or intercepted with a dockside APAIS intercept.

That does range pretty broadly by state and year. However, overall, the averages were above 3 percent, on average, across most years, and, 2020, there's an obvious disruption in that. On the right-hand side, there's a little bit more of a different view of what percentage of the APAIS interviews had logbooks, and so you're kind of looking at that reverse situation, to look at how many of those vessels are -- How many of those boat trips that were interviewed had a federal permit, and, in this case, some of those numbers are significantly higher, and that does look at an evaluation of what are the frame sizes, and the impacts, to the data collection in the different frames.

A point of clarity that each APAIS interview can only be used once, and so either on the MRIP general frame for the for-hire telephone survey effort expansion or under the logbook catch estimation frame, with all those points, and so each dockside intercept can only be used once, in one of those two frames, and, in the work we've done thus far, it is about a 30 percent reduction in the amount of interviews that would be part of the FHS frame for Maine through Virginia in the sampling months by state.

To reiterate, both effort and catch records would be recorded from the logbooks. Those portions would be validated and used in estimation, and the difference-based estimator is what came out of the South Carolina pilot study, published by Breidt et al. in 2017, and this difference-based estimator was preferred over a capture-recapture methodology, because it was less sensitive to small sample sizes, and it preserved additivity across samples, and so that's both logbook estimates for all waves would sum to an annual total, and the combined estimates of the logbook frame, plus the survey frame, would come together for that envisioned green box on the earlier picture slide of what we had.

With that brief overview of the design, we did take this to MRIP, and, as I said, got their consultants to review this, and their schedule of this -- They were actually pretty quick to get a review done with us last summer, and, in October, that consultant review came back to us, and we worked, in January and March, with our committees, with the ACCSP committees, to kind of review that feedback and take some review on next steps.

The next two slides are what did the review cover. The terms of reference for any MRIP certification, and there are six here, but the survey design components must follow a formal probability sampling, and they must appropriately weight the sample data, and methods are in place to measure and/or correct for potential biases of under-coverage, non-response bias, or response errors. Terms of Reference 4 through 6 are really about sensitivity, primarily around segments of the target population that are not covered by the survey frame or other potential sources of non-sampling error, or potential errors, in the implementation of the documented procedures.

Throughout the review, and there's a bunch of green check-boxes here, and these are areas where we were pretty happy to have some good agreement with the consultant reviewers and MRIP and the proposed design, and so they did confirm that it follows a probability sampling design. They confirmed, and were good with, using APAIS as both an estimation and a validation tool, and the

estimators did appropriate weight the sample data and allow for proper estimation of variance, and there were no new accuracy concerns beyond the current methodologies of APAIS and FHTS.

However, they did recognize that there was a limited ability to measure and evaluate bias and non-sampling error, because the design was not implemented, and they had a suggestion to kind of implement and wait and see, and yet we have, on the next slide, a little bit more of an existing data review suggestion that we're going to follow-up on, and they also recognized that many components in the ACCSP design are the same, or similar, to other certified MRIP designs, and so there's a lot of parallel approaches, and that was a benefit to the overall system.

In terms of action items and next steps coming out of the consultant review, and this is where are at the moment, the did-not-fish reports were discussed at the Rec Tech Committee, and they really decided to include those as a required component of this design, the ability to say what is a null value, versus a zero value, in terms of when fishing did or did not occur, and have that signed-off by the captains, was an important step to help out with compliance, and it was not seen as too onerous by the Rec Tech Committee.

When it came to declarations, there was, again, a desire to keep that as an optional component. If any one particular program is interested in implementing hail-outs, that could absolutely be seen as a benefit to that program, but it was not required, either by Rec Tech or the MRIP consultants, as a core critical must-have component across-the-board.

The vessel frames, the consultants identified a little bit of work that we need to be doing to identify the categories of vessels that would move between frames. How often do vessels either add or drop permits are part of a logbook program, what size of the fishery is that, and may how often should this design allow for that to happen, and are one or two shifts a year enough, and what are the lag times associated with when a vessel changes a permit, and when is that information available to them, or the vessel directory, and when does the survey frame have to get drawn, and these kind of logistical considerations have to do with how fast the system can be reactive and still include the information for the majority of the vessels.

When it comes to the use of APAIS as a required estimation component, there was support for going in this direction, and the question of implementing and data analysis -- We really came to an approach with the Rec Tech Committee wanting to clarify a little bit of the data requirement, or the data analysis tasks, but to find a contractor and look at the information from 2019 through 2023, data that has already been collected, and test out some of the sensitivities that came out of the review, test out some of these calculation methodologies, and hone-in on the particulars of the estimation, the difference estimators, and the math for that performance, and so that's a step that we're looking to do, or at least start, here in Calendar Year 2024.

Then, finally, there was a question raised about what happens in the logbook methodology when there is not APAIS or the for-hire telephone survey as a data collection methodology, and there are some waves, in some states, that APAIS and the for-hire telephone survey do not occur, and so there is the --

There is, just recently, the consideration to add for-hire telephone survey in Wave 1, and potentially APAIS, when there is enough effort to warrant the extra time to out and sample in Wave 1, and so, again, kudos to South Carolina, and they wanted to do some of this sampling in 2025, and they

raised that early enough to ACCSP and MRIP, and so, the parts that South Carolina can do, they're going to do, and ACCSP is going to help with the draw, and MRIP has committed to, at least for the for-hire telephone survey, do the calculations of that part of the effort estimation, and so, again, collaborative work with it, plan ahead, and be able to get these steps in place, and so we're excited about those steps, and we're excited about where we're at in the certification process, and thank you for letting me kind of present these things to you guys today.

DR. BELCHER: Thanks, Geoff. Questions for Geoff? Comments for Geoff? Clay and then Tom.

DR. PORCH: Thank you for this, Geoff. It's really interesting, and I really appreciate the thought that you all put into this. I had a question, in terms of what do you see are the advantages, pros and cons, of an approach like this, versus something that's been on the table for SEFHIER, where everybody would submit a logbook, and then you would have representative dockside sampling, whether it's APAIS or otherwise, a logbook for every trip?

MR. WHITE: I agree with that, and the logbook for every trip, for a certified logbook design, is exactly part of this program, and so the additional step of this is that it's more of an umbrella certification, so that, as other programs wanted to adopt these set of components, that it could be certified once, instead of having SEFHIER certified, and then potentially a South Carolina logbook look for certification, and then a Massachusetts logbook look for certification, and on down the line, but, yes, this design is that every vessel that has a certified logbook frame would report every trip. It's just recognizing that not every vessel in every state is going to fall under a certified logbook program, and so how to add that up afterwards.

DR. BELCHER: I've got Tom, Andy, and then Amy.

MR. ROLLER: Thank you, Chair. I've got a couple of questions here. First of all, you commented on the hail-outs, and you said -- It was a comment on how it would impact operations, and I was just curious if you could elaborate on what you meant by that.

MR. WHITE: We've heard different feedback that the act of completing a hail-out is an additional step for fishermen to complete, and there are different programs, in different parts of the country, where, if you hail-out, then you don't get another hail-out unless the report is complete or you cancel that hail-out. That extra step adds agency burden, and it adds fishermen burden, and it adds other aspects to how the whole part of it goes together.

MR. ROLLER: Okay. I understand, because, in the core design components, it's like the idea is you start a logbook before a trip, and then you complete before offload, and isn't that essentially hail-in and hail-out?

MR. WHITE: I guess there's a nuance in when those things happen. If you start the trip before you go, you're probably starting that right on your tablet without submitting it anywhere. A true hail-out, and kind of the way we've defined it here, is you identify a few core components, like this is the time I'm leaving the dock, where I'm leaving it from, when I expect to be back, and then that is submitted over the internet, and someone gets that information before you ever leave the dock. That would be a hail-out, because you've actually left. The hail-in, as a logbook, isn't

exactly that real point in time of, yes, I'm back at the dock at this minute, and it's I've completed my report electronically on my own device, and then it gets submitted, potentially, a little bit later.

MR. ROLLER: Okay, and so that's very helpful, and so now I understand, and it's just like the nuance of when it's submitted, and so, essentially, if I was checked by law enforcement, and I had started my report, I would be in compliance, but, if that had not been submitted to whatever agency was monitoring it, to law enforcement, that would not be considered a hail-out. Okay. Thank you.

DR. BELCHER: Andy and then Amy.

MR. STRELCHECK: Thanks, Geoff, for the presentation. Tom asked my first question, and I guess two other questions. You noted, I think, reports are submitted forty-eight hours after the trip, and I'm curious kind of the rationale for that. The Gulf Council was doing kind of at the end of a trip, at the time of offload, and the South Atlantic is weekly reporting, and so it seems like a happy medium, and I'm curious of the rationale.

MR. WHITE: Thanks. The initial submission, in February of 2023, and there's a little bit of a timeline component, and so sorry for the long answer, and it was forty-eight hours after the end of the fishing week, and so the intent was to have that logbook submitted a little bit later, and that's what I believe that SEFHIER has for the South Atlantic today. What GARFO does, and the statement that I made in the middle of the presentation, is GARFO's is complete the trip on your device before offload and submit it over the internet to the agency within forty-eight hours after the end of the trip, and so those are the two kind of logistical constraints, and I think there is room for discussion about where that goes in the next submission of the ACCSP design.

MR. STRELCHECK: My follow-on question, for kind of a new survey that would be added to this, is, if they were exceeding the standards that are outlined here, do they -- Can they only meet them, or can they exceed them, because that would affect then the design and how the data would be used, obviously, for the estimation procedures?

MR. WHITE: Exceeding the core components has kind of been a standard, or an approach, of ACCSP all the way along, and so set a core component area, have optional things, and hail-outs are listed as optional, and so that would be one frame of saying exceeding, and that would certainly work. We're looking for kind of a design-based robust statistics, for both the timeliness of the report submission, the development of the vessel frames, the logbook, you know, data fields, kind of the whole picture, and so exceeding it would certainly be helpful, if any particular program wanted to go that way.

DR. BELCHER: Amy.

MS. DUKES: Thank you, Madam Chair. Geoff, I appreciate the presentation, and the work that we've been able to collaborate, and, at some point, we are going to match up with all of this fun stuff, but it gets back to Slide 11, where we talk about, of all the current for-hire logbook programs out there, none of the programs currently meet the core design components, and I was curious to - - Is it mostly the trip timing core design element that's missing? I know you mentioned a few others, but I was curious, from looking at all of those programs, what of your core design components is really the primary driver? Is it in fact that trip logbook timing component?

MR. WHITE: It's tough to pick one, and so GARFO does not have did-not-fish reports at the moment, but they're considering it. It's been on and off the Mid-Atlantic Council's agenda for some time now. The Maryland has some frame identifiers that would be a component, and I think the report timing, and the trip timing, is certainly a large component for all of these, and so sorry for the non-answer, and it's kind of specific to each program, but all of these programs --

All of these different state and federal logbook programs are likely, if I had to pick a number, 85 percent similar already, in terms of getting all trips in, what are their permit requirements, and I think there's probably some nuances in the communication. South Carolina has certainly been a leader in communicating with your fishermen and following-up about enforcement and having that feedback loop. You know, that has been a big benefit to you, in being able to have a higher compliance rate, and so --

MS. DUKES: Thank you, and, to that, and you briefly touched on it, and if a state, like South Carolina, were to have a federal vessel group that did meet these core requirements, and a state-only group, that did not, do you think that there is a way to still use a state-only requirement as some sort of tool to validate something? I am not so sure that I can convince my state legislators to meet some of these design elements unless there's a federal hook, and I'm curious -- If I can't get it done on my state-only vessels, it's sort of like a wash, and they're kind of screwed out of this, potentially, if this were to become MRIP certified, and we would not be able to use a state-only vessel unless they met every single core component, correct?

MR. WHITE: That's the intent of the certification process, but, the way we've laid this out, if there were a federal program that was certified, for some of the vessels in your state, and they saw how that was working out, then there's -- Then there would be variable implementation timelines for each program, and so, in the case of South Carolina, if SEFHIER and South Carolina logbooks had a different implementation date and timeline, but they both met the criteria for certification at some point, then that's when that transition would occur.

DR. BELCHER: Other questions or comments for Geoff? Tom.

MR. ROLLER: This is just kind of a response to Amy and the difficulty of convincing your legislature to change your logbook, and at least you don't have a law on the books that bans state collection on for-hire logbooks, like we do in North Carolina. Thank you, North Carolina. I am just being sarcastic, just for anyone listening.

DR. BELCHER: John.

MR. CARMICHAEL: Geoff, thanks for that, showing us the whole background there, and I do appreciate that. You know, the certification is one of the questions that came up with SEFHIER for us, and it's one of the issues that's out there, and so it seems -- You know, that can be, from what I understand, at times, a cumbersome and drawn-out process, and so it does seem that this would provide basic criteria that say, yes, you do these, and you're certified, and it would simply -- I mean, I assume that somebody, at MRIP or whatever, would have to sign-off on it and say, yes, you did good, and you complied with this, but you're basically certified, and it wouldn't require a digging into the program in great detail, and is that correct?

MR. WHITE: That is correct, and the MRIP certification is a process that certifies designs, and please, others from NOAA, if I misspeak, correct me, but that certifies the design and the ability for MRIP to provide some funding. The reason that I have looked at this, and presented it, as an adaptation of the MRIP general survey is this is not at all a separate supplemental or a conflicting approach, and this is an integrated part of the core design, part of the core MRIP estimates approach, that we're looking forward to, and so we want to work together to keep a consistent design, to provide stable statistics for the Atlantic coast or beyond.

MR. CARMICHAEL: The other point is, you know, I'm glad that you mentioned the did-not-fish, because I shared with the council members the write-up from the recent Mid-Atlantic Council meeting, where GARFO makes the case that they didn't feel that did-not-fish reports were worth the effort, the bureaucratic effort and such, that went into them, and so I think that's very interesting, given that, here, they're viewed as pretty important, and, I actually -- Before the meeting, I talked with Kerry about that, and she, you know, as someone who is doing this, did not agree with that opinion, as someone who has to submit those reports, and so, you know, I think it's interesting to see the different attitudes coming from different regions.

You know, the Paperwork Reduction Act is tied up in that, and I just wonder, maybe from Shep or Monica or somebody down there, and sort of how does this play out, when one region is going, you know, nope, we don't think it's worth the bureaucratic burden to make people do this, and we're saying, well, we really think it is, and does it come down to the case that is made in the amendment itself, as to why that's useful, and maybe -- You know, maybe why our fisheries are different than their fisheries, which we know they are in many ways, you know, but I just thought that was an interesting result from up there, for sure.

MR. GRIMES: Well, I don't want to not respond, but I don't really have a meaningful response to that. I don't know how that would work out. I'm not sure the Paperwork Reduction Act packages are coordinated in that way, and my expectation would be that we would proceed on different paths, justify them independently as separate regulations, and potentially have some conflict maybe in doing so, but it wouldn't manifest itself, because they were on separate tracks, and processed through different offices, and I'm not certain that's true, but that would be my expectation.

DR. BELCHER: Andy.

MR. STRELCHECK: So two things. I would point out that we always do it the right way in the Southeast, and so whatever we do should be the correct way. No, and, in all seriousness, I mean, I think the other thing is we always, you know, hear about these comparisons between regions, and inconsistency, and I would really want to understand, right, what their rationale is, in terms of why they don't see it as valuable. You know, are there other accountability mechanisms, or requirements, or things that they're requiring, or not requiring, but they see as more valuable than maybe the way we would do business down here, and maybe that's not the case, right, but it's not necessarily an apples-to-apples comparison, and so we really need to look at the rationale that underlies, you know, not requiring something like a did-not-fish report.

MR. WHITE: Having been in the room at several of the Mid-Atlantic and New England Council meetings about this, a lot of their rationale, and the difference in fisheries, has to do with the commercial fisheries, where it's a one-ticket system in the south and a two-ticket system up north,

where having a did-not-fish report in the commercial fishery was seen as less useful when they had a dealer report to go along with it. They are looking more specifically to the for-hire fisheries, where there isn't a corresponding dealer report, to bring back the potential for a did-not-fish report, recognizing the differences in those reporting structures and the ability to have another checkpoint there.

DR. BELCHER: John.

MR. CARMICHAEL: You know, the other thought I had on that is, wearing my scientist hat, is you've got a group of fishermen up there that have our permits, as well as their permits, and it noted that those guys have to file a did-not-fish report to SEFHIER, and so there's a subset of their fishermen that are filing did-not-fish reports, but they're just filing them to us. You know, to me, that's an interesting comparison of some sort, right, to see what's going on with those that aren't doing it, versus what's going on with those who are doing it, which I feel like you could really evaluate the utility of the did-not-fish reports. We've got a lot of interesting things like that, with fishermen with these crossover permits, that we may be able to learn quite a bit as we go down this path of what really is the best way to update and revise SEFHIER to make it work better across-the-board.

DR. BELCHER: Are there additional questions and comments for Geoff? Okay. Seeing none, we'll move on to the presentations from John and Myra. Thank you for your time, Geoff.

MS. BROUWER: All right. Good afternoon, everyone. I'm going to kick us off. These are just a few slides that we put together to go with the discussion document, and it's a lot easier to explain things on slides, but, if you refer to the attachment, there's a lot more detail than what I'm about to go through.

Recall that in -- I guess it was the last meeting, in March, that the council discussed, at-length, ways to -- You know, I guess getting started on finding ways to improve SEFHIER, and so the direction was improving compliance was something that the council wants to do, strengthen reporting requirements, and explore the issue of data validation, and, of course, this would be the goal, with the goal of utilizing this information in future management decisions.

In March, the council requested specific information to assist in these discussions, and so I'm just going to go through the list of what we were able to gather for you all. We've already talked, or you all talked this morning, in closed session, of assembling an advisory panel to obtain insight into how to improve compliance with SEFHIER and so you reviewed a draft charge for the new advisory panel, which would be an ad hoc AP, right, with a specific mission, and that is being done at this meeting, and so the intent is for those advisory panel seats to be advertised, for the council to appoint the participants in September of this year.

You also requested information on how the AP in the Gulf was structured, and the Gulf Council did appoint thirteen individuals from across the region, and they did this back in December of last year, and they also have an Ad Hoc Charter-For-Hire Data Collection AP, and they did also approve a charge for the AP, which is on the next slide, and I'm not going to read all of that to you, but, basically, the gist is the same.

I think the Gulf Council also wanted that AP to look to lessons learned from SEFHIER, and also, I guess, anticipated reporting and economic burdens associated with recommended program requirements, and so that's a little bit different than what we have in the charge that we've put forth for your advisory panel, but the gist is pretty much the same thing, and it's a wide-range group of folks that are people that are very familiar with SEFHIER, and have been reporting through it, people that maybe don't agree to it as much, and so, you know, the intent was to have a whole bunch of different viewpoints and perspectives.

Additionally, you asked us to look into which aspects, or components, of the SEFHIER program contributed to the lawsuit, and what were those components, and what all happened, and so, basically, there were two things. The MSA did not authorize NMFS to require the twenty-four-hour-seven-day-a-week vessel monitoring system, and that was one of the things, and then, also, the rule was not promulgated in compliance with the Administrative Procedures Act, because NMFS did not address comments that raised privacy concerns under the 4th Amendment, and so it did not provide proper notice that the logbook would require the type of economic data that was required in the final rule. This is the gist of why, you know, the Gulf SEFHIER program was stayed.

You also asked us to go back and review concerns that were raised by NMFS with the initial amendment, and the caveats on data usage based on the program criteria, and so there was a letter, that is included actually as an appendix to your discussion document, and that was sent to the council in 2018. In it, the Southeast Fisheries Science Center stated that the information would not be considered useful for official estimates of catch and effort from the for-hire fishery until the approach was certified as statistically valid by MRIP.

A primary concern was that vessels were not required to report before offloading, and, therefore, there could not be this independent validation of the catch, and, of course, we've all heard that, you know, there needs to be multiple years of side-by-side data to compare with the MRIP surveys, and that's just a component that needs to be there, and so then we requested also, for this meeting, that the center, and the region, again state in writing what the issues are, what the deficiencies are, in the current program that prevents us from using the information in management.

The center, and the region, collaborated in submitting a letter to the council, which was dated May 30, and it's included as Attachment 4c in your briefing book, and, in that letter, NMFS reiterated the same concerns, and so I'm not going to read that quote on your screen, but, basically, the data are not considered best available information. We need that MRIP certification, and we need to have validation.

Additionally, you requested kind of an analysis, or an evaluation, of which potential actions are realistic for data validation, what are some methods of validating a program of this type, and which actions could be taken to improve compliance, and also sort of a listing of, among those things, which ones would be allowable, under the current authority, and which ones may require additional authority or an associated amendment.

At this point, I would like to toggle to Attachment 4b, and so we'll get to a table, which begins on page 4, which is -- So all this stuff above it is what I just went over in the slides, but this table basically is the meat of what we prepared for you guys, and we did this in collaboration with SERO staff, and, basically, it's, you know, the improvement action, how the action is going to, you know,

improve things, and then what resources might be needed, and so that is how it is structured, and Item 1 is improving outreach, and so that is something that has been shown to be very effective in improving compliance. As far as resource needs, there would need to be additional funding for NMFS to hire developers and create automated protocols and then just beef-up the outreach that's been done. Funding for NMFS to additional SEFHIER, and, currently, they don't have enough staff.

Increasing monitoring and enforcement, we did include the potential for a requirement of VMS, although that is not something that is being recommended, and it's not really something that the council has shown interest in, but we did include it, because it is -- You know, the outcome of that would increase monitoring and enforcement.

Increasing law enforcement officers and intercepts is another potential thing. In terms of resource need there, more law enforcement officers, which, as we know, is not -- You know, it's a very difficult thing, and there's a shortage of law enforcement officers. Potentially shifting joint enforcement agreement priorities to allow more of these activities to be conducted through JEAs, and then a note there that North Carolina does not have a JEA. There could also be an addition to the notification, like a notification measure to the existing system, and then there would need to be some IT development to go with that.

Creating new summary settlements, and apparently this is something that could be done, just simply by the council requesting the Office of Law Enforcement, from what I understand, to have SEFHIER-specific summary settlements, and so that is something that's potentially a consideration.

Holding permit renewals, I think we heard, from the presentation that we had back in March on the headboat survey, that holding permit applications, holding the renewal of a permit, is pretty effective at increasing compliance, and, for that to happen, there would need to be a strengthening of the regulatory language, and so, again, another potential action that does not require an amendment.

Modifying reporting frequency, and so, here, the council would potentially need to do an amendment. There is some language in the Code of Federal Regulations currently that seems to already allow this to happen, but it's unclear, and, you know, I suspect that the council would probably need to do an amendment to modify the reporting frequency. Requiring a declaration, or a pre-landing hybrid on a pre-landing hybrid form, you know, this is something that's been talked about, and potentially an amendment to do this, and then additional IT resources to do all the changes that need to be done to the system on the backend.

Landing locations is another thing that's come up as a potential thing, and it could be done in conjunction with this pre-landing declaration. This would require an amendment, and then there was -- You know, it was unclear, and we thought that maybe loading and offloading locations are already being reported in the current system, and so we're not sure, you know, if that information is sufficient, I guess. I'm going to go through these kind of quickly, because I know it's pretty late, and some of these are not things that the council really wants to entertain.

Increasing data quality, you know, we get into a repeat of some of the same actions that are going to have an additional -- What am I trying to say? Improvement, I guess. Modifying the reporting

frequency, there is -- Here is sort of an example from the SEFHIER folks, that, you know, it would really help to improve compliance. The delayed reporting increases missed reporting, and some people are submitting did-not-fish reports because they didn't keep good records to submit a logbook, and so it's just easier to do a did-not-fish report.

I'm not going to go over 3b and 3c. We've already covered those, and observers are not something that is really feasible at this point, although they would be very efficient and useful. Increasing dockside sampling, of course, that would be very beneficial, providing verification of landings and allowing biological samples to be taken for use in stock assessments, and apparently an amendment would be needed for that, and funding, of course, to increase dockside sampling for all for-hire and headboat vessels.

Requiring electronic monitoring, it's considered often an alternative to observers, and, again, it's not something that is recommended, and then, in terms of rendering the data useful for management, modifying the reporting frequency would accomplish that, and then this validation survey, which was a recommendation from the for-hire workshop in 2019 for a capture-recapture type of survey design, and this may also need an amendment, and the action in the amendment would need to make that validation survey mandatory for permit holders, and, of course, there would need to be funding to support that. I think that may be close to the end.

The VMS, we've already covered. Requiring activity reports, this is something that I think the headboat survey does, but it's not something that is a recommended solution for SEFHIER, although it would be useful. Back to observers, and then, on the bottom, enforcing the requirement that doesn't allow a permitted vessel to harvest or possess fish until reports are turned in, and so this is already in place. There could be some automation to allow law enforcement to step in and find out which are the vessels that are non-compliant each week, and there could be a way to build in a buffer for any legitimate submission delay, and so, again, here the resource need would be to let law enforcement officers know that this exists, and they can use it, and then there would need to be IT support to automate a non-complaint list for use by law enforcement for each time period.

Then, finally, the one that kind of opens up the discussion that you're going to have tomorrow is to make permits limited-access, and we'll be talking about all the details of how that would be accomplished, and, of course, an amendment would be necessary for that to be put in place.

If you scroll down a little bit more, we've already heard from Geoff about what ACCSP is doing, and so the next steps, at this point, would be, given the information provided, the council could discuss about, you know, whether to immediately move forward with developing an amendment to the three FMPs that would allow for whatever improvements to SEFHIER are deemed feasible at this point or to deter -- Not to deter development, but to delay development of an amendment until after the ACCSP for-hire methodology technical review is completed.

If the intent is to move forward right now, then we would want some guidance on what general topics should be developed into actions and any feedback on the range of alternatives to consider, or maybe topics that you guys would want the ad hoc for-hire AP to take on, and so I will leave it at that, and I will be happy to answer any questions.

DR. BELCHER: Thanks, Myra. Trish.

MS. MURPHEY: So this is just my suggestion, and, to me, I would go with the Next Step Number 1, that we -- Why don't we wait until ACCSP gets their methodology done, and certified, since that's what NOAA is saying that we -- That it's not useful until it's certified, and then, thinking of workload as well, and, to me, if we're doing this now, we'll be kind of operating in a silo alongside ACCSP, in their own silo, and working, you know, to try to get all this, and so I'm just going to throw that option out, since it's late, but that's kind of where I was reading, after reading all of this.

DR. BELCHER: Tom.

MR. ROLLER: I'm with Trish, because we should be waiting until the methodology technical review is completed, because my look at this, as a for-hire fisherman, is, if this data is not useable for management, there's no point to collect it, and, if we're going to have a program that doesn't do anything, and have a big burden on the fishermen, we don't need it, and so, personally, I really, really want this program to work. I want it to be useable for management, and I want it to be useable for stock assessment, and I want it to be useable for fisheries disaster declarations, and that's really important to a really important industry, and so whatever we need to do, with a bare minimum, making sure that this program is working, should start with that technical review.

DR. BELCHER: Andy.

MR. STRELCHECK: Well, I'm going to provide a different perspective. I think we often kick the can down the road, and we wait for whatever is next, and, until today, I think most of you didn't even know what ACCSP was doing, right, and so we got a presentation today, and now, all of a sudden, we're going to decide to delay this action, yet we've sat around and talked, at the table, about the need for improvements, and you have a letter from the Fisheries Service that says this program is inadequate, and can't be used at this point, and so we'll wait for a review, which is a timeframe that's uncertain at this point, and then, ultimately, we might start an action down the road.

I see this as something that we can be doing in tandem, as the ACCSP review proceeds, and I think what Geoff presented today could easily show alignment with improvements, and changes, that we would make to the SEFHIER program, and that it's prudent for us to go ahead and start making a scoping document now that can ultimately be aligned with, obviously, whatever that review ultimately tells us down the road.

DR. BELCHER: Other comments? Tom.

MR. ROLLER: Well, based off of Andy's comment, I will walk back my previous comment a little bit, because my point is that we need to be moving forward with this quickly. My idea is definitely not to kick the can down the road, to be clear, Andy, but, if you believe that we can do this in tandem, step-in-step, with ACCSP, I'm game for that.

DR. BELCHER: Clay.

DR. PORCH: I wanted to agree with Andy's intervention. What I heard from Geoff is that the proposed modifications to the SEFHIER program are quite consistent with the framework that he outlined, and they fit in right well. You will recall that, when this started, Gregg Waugh was the

Executive Director, and he described this as a baby step, the system that's in place now, and Cisco Werner sent a letter to Roy Crabtree, that he relayed to the council, and mentioned that the program that was initially adopted, the baby step, wasn't going to be particularly useful, and it would provide a minimum estimate of effort, and not much more, but we anticipated maybe more baby steps, but it just seems like we just went back to the crib, and so I think we need to make progress now and move forward with some of the alternatives, particularly 2 and 3. Thank you.

DR. BELCHER: Trish.

MS. MURPHEY: I guess I'm with whatever -- I'm with you guys, but my concern -- I'm going to just still state my concern that, you know, if we get -- We've already got a system that's not working, and I agree that I'm all for baby steps, and I'm still just a little concerned of getting ahead or going the wrong route, before ACCSP gets done, but, if we can --

I don't know, and, if we can keep the conversations going, with what they're proposing and working on, maybe it's doable, but I'm just concerned that we would do things that will end up impacting certification, and that's my concern, and there are some things that it looks like we could do now, like, you know, get law enforcement to do this -- You know, enforce the requirement that does not allow permitted vessels to harvest -- You know, go ahead and do some things that can already be done now. I think, from the law enforcement presentation, you guys have been doing some SEFHIER stuff, I think you had said, right, and so -- I mean, if everybody feels like we need to move forward, I won't stop it, but those are my concerns about getting too far ahead.

DR. BELCHER: I have Pat and then Amy.

LT. O'SHAUGHNESSY: I just wanted to point out a couple of things. I listened to Myra's report, and, first, on OLE personnel, I would just like to remind the council that, when SEFHIER was put in place, the South Atlantic didn't receive a single enforcement officer to assist with that program. The Gulf of Mexico received six, and the South Atlantic received zero, and so, when I say we need more people, it's kind of funny that the Gulf got six and we got zero.

As far as the summary settlement comments, that a new summary settlement is needed, there's already a \$500 summary settlement for nonreporting, and that exists for all reporting, and not just SEFHIER, and that's what my guys regularly write, and so I don't see a need for a summary settlement update for SEFHIER alone.

Letting LEOs know that there is a reg that exists that does not allow a permitted vessel to harvest or possess fish, we're well aware of that regulation, and we don't need reminding of that, and we often use that as the hammer, that, if you don't get your logs caught up, and you go out again, you're now adding additional violations to the one you already have, and so we do use that quite regularly. However, we cannot prevent a vessel from getting underway to go fishing, and so I just want to clear that misnomer up there.

As far as the permits shop, the permits shop does bounce off the Science Center, as far as logbook reporting. However, there are some limitations to that. If it bounces off and finds that they're all up-to-date on their commercial logs, but not their SEFHIER logs, it comes back with a yes, and the permit may get issued anyway, and so there is some fine-tuning with that that we can do, and, as far as the comments about I'm just submitting did-not-fish reports, we've talked to the SEFHIER

program, and I would like to get the names of those individuals that are doing that, because that's fraud, and, if they transmit it over the internet, from one place to another, that's wire fraud, and so, if they would like to escalate their nonreporting issue to something else, I am more than happy to accommodate that and set an example for everybody to learn what fraud results in.

DR. BELCHER: Just quickly, Tom has a question for Pat, and then we'll still come back to Amy.

MR. ROLLER: What is the summary settlement for being caught without having your permits?

LT. O'SHAUGNESSY: Caught without --

MR. ROLLER: So if I'm fishing, a for-hire operation, and I don't have South Atlantic permits, and I'm grouper snapper fishing, for example.

LT. O'SHAUGNESSY: It depends. In the South Atlantic, it's an open access, and it's a \$500 summary settlement, getting caught fishing without your permit, and, if it's not open access, it's on a summary settlement schedule for \$3,000. However, that actually now has to go to GC, instead of doing a \$3,000 summary settlement, but, for open access, it's a \$500 summary settlement.

MR. ROLLER: So the same as not reporting.

LT. O'SHAUGNESSY: Correct.

MR. ROLLER: Thank you.

DR. BELCHER: Amy.

LT. O'SHAUGHNESSY: One other clarification, and the comment for Myra was to talk with OLE about correcting, or changing, the summary settlement schedule, and General Counsel actually oversees the summary settlement schedule, and so it would be General Counsel for any summary settlement changes, and not OLE.

DR. BELCHER: Thank you for that, Pat. I've got Amy and then Tim.

MS. DUKES: So, Pat, I'm going to need you to email me that language about wire fraud, because I'm so using that in my outreach, because that scared me, and I don't have a for-hire permit, and so can you email me that language, because I'm pulling that with my South Carolina boys. Are you listening, South Carolina boys? It's coming.

I am with Trish. I really -- It's not that we're kicking the can down the road, and it's not that we're trying to just belabor this conversation, and it's the fact that, if we wait to have a certified program, from a methodology standpoint, that outlines the core design elements that would have to go into an amendment to change SEFHIER, so that that data could be used, that is a huge hook, a huge outreach component, that we have to gain the constituents in this program, for them to buy-in, so that, maybe when it is implemented, then we already sort of have -- Like they know it's coming.

You know, outreach -- We talk about it, and I wish we had all the money in the world, so that we could take all of our outreach efforts and just multiply them, but I think if the constituents know

that we're changing SEFHIER, and exactly why we would want to change SEFHIER, and the fact that their data would then have an I'm-going-to-be-used check-box next to it, it's going to have a huge plus for us, as council members, if we start this amendment that says you're going to have to do trip start, and trip end, before you -- You're going to have to declare that your trip has started, and you're going to have to declare that you're completing your trip before it's offloaded, which I'm with you, Tom, and it's so close to hail-in and hail-out that I'm going to have a hard time articulating that, and I want to make sure that it is all designed in a pretty little package that we know that we can go in front of our constituents and say your data is going to be used, that there is an MRIP-certified methodology that says your data is going to be used, and, right now, we don't have that. To me, that is an important aspect of getting these folks to complete -- To report completely, timely, and accurately.

DR. BELCHER: I've got Tim and then Tom and then Andy.

MR. GRINER: Thank you. A couple of things. One, a question for Pat, and is that possession, or is it fishing? I mean, if a for-hire vessel was in the EEZ, and it had lines in the water, is that a violation, or do they actually have to possess a fish?

LT O'SHAUGNESSY: They do not have to possess a fish. If they're actively fishing, and, for instance, a charter vessel had paying customers onboard, and we could document that they have paying customers onboard, you're still violating the law, even if you are a bad fisherman and haven't caught anything yet.

MR. GRINER: That's what I was hoping. As far as the timeline, you know, I -- Personally, when I look back at how long it's taken to get commercial logbook reporting, and, you know, we could have started adjusting SEFHIER two years ago, and you're still not -- You will never catch up with what ACCSP is going to do, and so, you know, I think it makes a lot of sense to not get ahead of ourselves, but, you know, it takes this council a long time to do anything, and so, you know, you've got to start somewhere, with something, or we'll never get it.

DR. BELCHER: Tom and then Andy.

MR. ROLLER: Thank you for that comment, Tim, because that's where I was going. This council has been very slow to take action on this. We've been stuck in a baby step for a decade on this program, and when are we going to take another? I mean, I think it's time to take the diapers off, and put the big-boy pants on, and make this program actually work to some degree. You know, we talk about needing outreach, and I agree with Amy that we will, but let us add that there is not much faith in MRIP from the fishing community right now, and so I don't think it really matters.

We still have really high-liner fishermen on our APs, who are really involved, who think the SEFHIER program is going to be used, and they don't understand that it's not usable, and, if these fishermen think that it's good, then the community at-large doesn't have any idea. At some point in time, we're just going to have to move forward with this stuff, and I agree with the comments that let's not get ahead of ourselves, but I don't think we're -- I don't think that moving ahead right now is going too quickly, as long as we're careful in how we do so.

DR. BELCHER: Andy.

MR. STRELCHECK: Geoff, if you wouldn't mind, could you come back up to the table? Where I'm struggling here is I feel like the -- What Geoff talked about was the use of logbooks to improve the MRIP catch design, and so maybe I'm missing something, right, in terms of what you just presented to us, but SEFHIER -- If that's the direction we wanted to go with SEFHIER, right, then, ultimately, that would be a redesign of the program, and how we estimate the statistics, and everything I've heard around this council is wanting to move away from MRIP and not toward MRIP, right, but, Geoff, can you clarify that, first and foremost?

MR. WHITE: I can try. I just had a scared look on my face, for anybody online not seeing this. A lot of the way that I perceive SEFHIER is as a census data reporting program for those vessels that have that permit. A key distinction of what the ACCSP design is looking at is recognizing that -- It's, again, nuanced terminology, but, as the MRIP folks would say, a census survey -- So it's close to a census, but there's still estimation that occurs, because of recognized nonreporting, or misreporting, that occurs in that process.

No, I would -- Stepping back, I don't see the choice before the council as really an either/or. I was really looking at this as almost a both approach. We've worked with the SEFHIER folks for years, in what that design is, and how that reporting flow occurs, and they're absolutely a partner in the process of the on-the-water applications, while they lead the data use and compliance components of that, and so I think there are ways to align movement of SEFHIER development, and what the council wants to do, with kind of the umbrella plan that ACCSP, and the Rec Tech Committee, are looking to develop, and so these things do take time, kind of developing that consensus outreach central theme of how this goes, and I think parallel is better than sequential.

DR. BELCHER: Thanks, Geoff. So additional comments and discussion from the group? How do we want to proceed with this? Spud.

MR. WOODWARD: Well, while Geoff is up here, another question. I'm trying to understand. In this certification process, is validation capacity going to be integral to certification, because that's what we've heard over and over again, is, unless there is validation, then the data can't be used for management purposes, and so is that -- Is the capacity to do that integral to certification? I mean, it's like, okay, so there is certain elements of SEFHIER, but, if you can't do the validation, it doesn't make any difference what the elements are, because you're not validating the data that you generate from the elements.

MR. WHITE: Either way -- The definition of the "validation" gets us in our own way, but having some component of the self-reported logbooks have another data stream to confirm that activity, whether that is a dockside intercept or a did-not-fish report or a hail-out, but some other piece of information to say did a trip occur or not occur.

Once that trip occurs, the dockside validation difference between the initial implementation of SEFHIER in the Gulf, that had a separate dockside survey, instead of the APAIS dockside survey, and that was intended to increase sample size, to my understanding, and please correct me where I go wrong, Andy, but, also, having -- In the ACCSP approach, being able to look at historical data from GARFO is kind of that -- It's validation of did this trip occur or not occur, and did the catch report on that trip match the catch observed on that trip from a dockside sampler, but, also, it's integral to the estimation math of expanding those logbooks to all the fishing activity, and so that wasn't a perfect answer, but I tried to include the theme. Did we get far enough?

MR. WOODWARD: I think you said yes, but I'm not sure exactly what version of yes it is, but I'm satisfied with that for the time being.

DR. BELCHER: Amy.

MS. DUKES: Andy, I really appreciated your comment just a second ago, because it sort of made me think about it, and bringing Geoff back up, and, just to remind us, in the future, this gets certified, and SEFHIER meets that certification, with its core data elements, and that trip has an APAIS interview, and that interview will either be matched to a logbook, for an estimation process, or not matched to a logbook estimation process, and then that's when your for-hire telephone survey would come into play? I'm just trying to make sure, because you made a comment, Andy, that we aren't necessarily going to use SEFHIER as a census data collection effort, but, rather, an estimation frame estimate tied to an APAIS interview in MRIP. Am I off?

MR. STRELCHECK: I was not stating that, and I was indicating that, if SEFHIER was going to get redesigned to fit more of what Geoff was presenting, that's a redesign of the program that we would be talking about around this table, right, and SEFHIER is -- At this point, it was initially designed to be a census, with some adjustment for nonreporting, and we're falling well short of that, because of a lot of the challenges we've talked about today, right, and so I think that's where I was struggling initially about postponing, is what Geoff is presenting on is a little bit different model, but it still could work, obviously, for SEFHIER going forward.

I still strongly believe that we need to go forward with starting a scoping document to look at, obviously, ways we can improve reporting and compliance, and I thought Myra did a very good job of outlining a number of things that are under the authority of this council that could be included in an amendment, and there are certainly some things that fall outside of the purview of this council that we could work on as well.

DR. BELCHER: Okay. So, with all that said, what's the pleasure of the group to try to move this forward? Are we deferring this? John.

MR. CARMICHAEL: I mean, it seems, to me, that, as was sort of discussed, and I think Tom and others said this, is sort of proceeding with these parallel, because it takes us time to do an amendment, and they're pretty well along on this process, and, at some point, it will go through the certification review. It seems, to me, that we should continue to work on some of the issues here, to get an idea of what needs to be done.

We have some pretty good input, I feel like, from where the technical review is so far, about some things that really need to happen, and they've addressed some of the things, as Geoff's flowchart showed, with like validation, and it shows how APAIS can be validation tool, which is -- If you look at the letters we received, validation is a huge, critical question, and, well, that's the way that validation can be accomplished without having to add additional resources, and resources are always a great big issue, and it just seems, to me, that it's important that we don't complete this amendment until we get this, because that paves the way for certification, which is the other part that has come up in the various -- That you can't use it until it's certified, and it's got to be certified.

You know, then that makes me think that, regardless of what this program becomes, if it's a census or what have you, we don't really get away from MRIP, because the MRIP certification was right there from the very beginning. It was not going to be used to replace MRIP until it was certified, and so, even if we were like this is a census, and we don't need you, MRIP, for these fishermen, well, there is still the MRIP certification thing, and so it's like a clean break.

It's not like we can say, oh, we've got a census, and we don't need you, MRIP, for this group of fishermen, because you would still have to go through the MRIP certification process before the agency would term it BSIA, and then it can be used, and so I just -- You know, putting the various things that have been said together, and, as I understand this process, we don't really fully get away from MRIP, plus, not to mention, as has always been the case, even when it was discussed during development, saying that, if you did this, you wouldn't have to worry about MRIP, the reality is that not every fisherman who is for-hire in the region has a South Atlantic federal permit, and so there will always be fishermen that needed to be covered through MRIP, and that was always the case.

That was one of those things that we worked very hard, during the initial development, to say, no, that's not true, and some people may have had that in their mind, but the reality was, you know, that not every state has them, and some states, as Tom said, have a little legislative impediment to having that type of permit, and so, you know, MRIP is always going to be in play, to some extent, but, you know, there is a lot of stuff, as was pointed out in the decision document, that we can be working on.

I think there's things that we can be looking at now to explore some of the ideas that are in there, like what should the reporting timeline be, and, you know, we've got fishermen that report to GARFO, and fishermen that report to us, that are on a forty-eight-hour timeline on reporting their stuff, and so, to me, that's where it's -- You know, I think it's intriguing to dig into this data and look at it, and so, you know, people that are in GARFO in this, and reporting to them, is their compliance better than people who are just straight up SEFHIER reporting with the South Atlantic permit?

What about the Gulf? The Gulf has some different things, and we have a lot of fishermen that have Gulf permits and South Atlantic permits that are under a little bit different wrinkle in the program. We have fishermen that have HMS permits, and SEFHIER permits, that are under some other different wrinkles, and so there's a lot of classes of fishermen, and we've got like Amy's fishermen, that are reporting to both, and so there's a lot of classes to fishermen that just seems, to me, if you were to get into it, should give you some insights into, you know, are there certain characteristics that this group of fishermen has a better reporting rate than that group of fishermen, and that kind of work will take some time, but there's no reason why we shouldn't be doing that while the ACCSP project continues, to really understand what it is about our fishermen.

Then the other part, that we probably need to consider, because we must, is the fact that we do have a lot of fishermen that have GARFO permits, and we are needing to deal and be climate prepared, and climate resilient, and so I think we need to make sure that we have a voice for those guys in this process as well, when we work on say an IPT, because one of the things that happened, when SEFHIER was approved, is the council was pretty adamant to set up the program in such a way that a guy who had been reporting to GARFO for years, and now also has a South Atlantic

permit, you know, like our folks that fish for dolphin off of states like Rhode Island, and they didn't want those people to have to file a separate report, and the council was clear on that.

Then, when SEFHIER got implemented, the conclusion was reached that, well, because we were asking some different variables, those guys were forced to have to submit two reports, and so I think we need to make sure that we, you know, in this process, broaden it to include those other regions, because of our mackerel fisheries, because of our dolphin fisheries, and just to be climate prepared, as we see some stocks like in the snapper grouper unit that are potentially moving up in those areas, and those guys may have to be included.

It seems, to me, we've got a fair amount of work, and plenty of things to keep us busy while this goes, and so we could continue to work on this, but just, you know, work through these various issues, while this plays out, and make sure that whatever we submit is in compliance with this methodology and we have a clear, easy path for the all-important certification, which is definitely a big issue with where we are now, and so I support just moving these along in parallel pathways.

DR. BELCHER: Sorry. I'm thinking. Robert and then Tom.

MR. SPOTTSWOOD: John, if we do so, move them in parallel paths, is working on scoping the document, for the improvement amendment, going to take staff away from working on anything else? I know you've always got something to do, but is there -- The only caveat that I have to that is priority, and, to the extent we have the capacity now, we ought to go ahead and get that out of the way, so that, when something else comes up, we're free to do so, and so, if we're at a point where we need a motion, I would make a motion to proceed with Item b.

MR. CARMICHAEL: I mean, without looking at the workplan, which we will do come Friday, at the end of the meeting, I think it's kind of hard to say, but an important part of that is we have a number of things that are reaching some critical points, like being approved for public hearings, and, if we get those done, then there is some light at the end of the tunnel, as far as workload, and I think some opportunity, and there may be some other amendments that are down on the wish list that we may really decide that, no, it's not as important that I do that right now, and I need to do this instead, and so I think that's a conversation that we should have when we look at the workplan later in the week, but that's always a concern with anything, when we start an amendment, is, you know, having the capacity to get it done.

DR. BELCHER: Tom and then Trish.

MR. ROLLER: I mean, do we need a motion here to move forward? Is that what we're looking for?

DR. BELCHER: I mean, Robert just made one.

MR. ROLLER: He said he would like to make a motion.

MR. SPOTTSWOOD: Tom, it was partly a procedural question. To the extent we need a motion, we're at the point where I would like to try to move this forward by moving them forward in parallel.

DR. BELCHER: All right, and so, if that's the pleasure of the group, then would you like to make a motion, Robert?

MR. SPOTTSWOOD: **So moved.**

DR. BELCHER: Okay. We'll wait and see if John gets language. Myra, did you have something that you wanted to say, while John is typing?

MS. BROUWER: Thank you. Just clarification on the scoping part of this motion, and, I mean, to me, a scoping document is something that you're, you know, developing to take it out to the public, but it sounds like we still have a good bit of work to do before we are at that stage, and so I just wanted to make sure that I'm interpreting this correctly, that we're going to continue to work on it, with the intent of eventually taking this to scoping, but you guys don't want like a scoping document, you know, by December.

DR. BELCHER: So a clarification for Myra on that, and is that what the group is asking, that we're working towards a scoping document? I'm getting confused as to what --

MR. SPOTTSWOOD: Whatever the first step is to ultimately get a scoping document done, let's start there, whatever baby step that is.

MR. CARMICHAEL: I think the thing is we need to say to initiate an amendment, and I think -- Is that correct, Myra, because I don't think we've taken that step yet, and so I think the motion is to start an amendment, or to basically start a SEFHIER improvement amendment.

MS. BROUWER: Yes, I agree with that.

DR. BELCHER: Mike, did you want to come up and try to clarify? Then I will go to Andy.

DR. SCHMIDTKE: Yes, and so you did pass a motion, in December of 2023, and that one was a little bit different, and this may be clarifying, or it may be a merging of those two things, but that one was passed to initiate an amendment that would consider limited entry for the for-hire fishery, and I don't know if that's something that's part of this or this is a completely separate issue.

DR. BELCHER: Andy.

MR. STRELCHECK: I remember having discussions, and I need to back and look at the actual motion, and I don't think that I used the term "amendment", but I did make a motion that passed at some previous meeting, right, for a measure to improve compliance and reporting for the SEFHIER program, and so I feel like we're kind of rehashing that, and my disappointment right now is we could pass this, but there's no specificity to it, right, and what are we asking staff to do? What's going to be the content of that scoping document?

That is, to me, where the meat of this really lies, and where we'll give John and his team direction, and so, you know, I think we -- What I'm hearing is some general support for moving forward with development of a scoping document, or moving toward a scoping document, but I think I would recommend that we come back at a later time during this council meeting and discuss what would be the contents of that.

DR. BELCHER: Okay, and so we have the motion on the board. Is there a second for the motion? Jessica is seconding it, and so is there further discussion on that? Robert.

MR. SPOTTSWOOD: To Andy's point, do we need to give staff a recommendation to come back, before we're out this week, to put some additional detail behind what that scoping document needs to accomplish? Andy, is that what you're looking for?

MR. STRELCHECK: I mean, staff can certainly bring it back to us for suggestion, or we can give them guidance at, you know, Full Council later in the week. The other component of this that I would add, right, is align -- I would like to see at least consideration of what the Gulf Council is doing, as part of this process, right, and not to say that they've locked-in and finalized their preferred alternatives, but at least have comparable alternatives between the South Atlantic and Gulf for consideration.

DR. BELCHER: Okay. Tom.

MR. ROLLER: I'm with Andy on this one. I want to move forward with this, but I do think we need some better direction, and I definitely support the idea of at least following along with what the Gulf is doing, being that they have a lot more experience with this, and as well as it could reduce, you know, administrative burden, I'm assuming, if we kind of parallel that program a little bit, and I would ask if we need that included in there, or if we just need to discuss it more.

DR. BELCHER: John.

MR. CARMICHAEL: If you look at what's in the overview, it pretty well lays this out, and the first question is determine if an amendment is appropriate at this time, which you're saying, and then it's like, if so, basically, specify a range of actions to include, and so, to the extent to which we can make progress on that, then we're better served for the next meeting to go somewhere on it.

You know, you have a decision document, and it goes through a lot of stuff, and it's six o'clock now. We've already punted an item toward tomorrow morning, and we knew, going into this, that we have a very full agenda for the rest of the week, and so I will be honest with you that we can see how this week goes, and, if we have time to circle back on this, then great, but that's kind of going to depend on how much time we spend on all the other topics that we have on the agenda, and so, if there's some things that we can knock out here that would help staff make some progress for the next meeting in September, then that will help, but I guess I'm not optimistic of us having a lot of time to circle back on this, and to bring it up again, just knowing that we're already starting in a pretty good time hole.

DR. BELCHER: Spud.

MR. WOODWARD: I know that a lot of people are going to groan when I ask this question, but why is this being done separately in the Gulf and the Atlantic? I mean, if it's a SEFHIER program to cover both places, why isn't a joint amendment or something that harmonizes things, where you end up with the outcomes that you want, and I know what that means, but just, from an optics standpoint, it looks kind of weird that you've got a SEFHIER program, and it's like, well, the Gulf

and the South Atlantic will -- Are they that dissimilar, that it justifies doing something completely different across the two regions?

DR. BELCHER: I've got Shep, Andy, and Clay.

MR. GRIMES: To that question, I would say, well, part of it is because they're different FMPs, and there has to be independent action by the council for FMPs that we're not jointly doing, but, that being said, you know, point taken, in terms of combining the program.

I was just going to make the comment that it seems, to me, that you haven't ever stopped talking about SEFHIER, since you implemented SEFHIER, and that, to me, doesn't suggest that you need to do any scoping for it. You've been scoping it ever since you first talked about the concept, and it's an early process, where you're developing identifying issues, and I think you've covered that well, right, and now it seems to put it in sort of the old parlance, when I started this job, of you get an options paper that has a list of things that, you know, we've talked about generally what we want to do, and it seems, to me, that what you have here is at least a start of that options paper that is laying out -- So maybe that's the way to go.

While I have the floor, if this does proceed to an options paper, and it moves along, as I've said before, let's get rid of the limited-access option, right, and, as I said at the last meeting, improved reporting, standing alone, is legally insufficient to support limiting access. Limiting access must be in order to achieve optimum yield, and so optimum yield needs to be the driving consideration in the program. All of this talk about limiting access to improve reporting could be problematic and come back to bite us, in the end, should we eventually limit access and have all this discussion that might bely any other rationale that we proffered. Thank you.

DR. BELCHER: Andy.

MR. STRELCHECK: So, Spud, you might even have been on the council at the time, but, at one point, we actually had a joint amendment, or were working toward a joint amendment, and I think when the Gulf went to VMS, that's when we deviated, right, between the South Atlantic and the Gulf.

To move things forward for tonight, and I guess we have a motion and a second, and is that correct? So I would suggest that, instead of saying "incorporating", to say "start a SEFHIER improvement amendment considering the ACCSP for-hire methodology technical review as information becomes available", because I don't know how it will be incorporated at this point, with the sub-bullet, and I'm fine with that, and I think we should add a couple of additional sub-bullets.

One would be consideration of actions and alternatives being considered by the Gulf Council, and then I guess I would add a third bullet, and this would be maybe where I would need some help, but, based on the table that Myra presented, that we would want to consider, in this amendment, actions to modify reporting frequency, hail-in and hail-out, landing locations, and I guess validation requirements, or like validation surveys. No fishing reports. Sorry. No fishing reports.

I recognize that we may not select some of those as preferred, but I feel like that's kind of the range of things that the council would need to consider as part of the actions and alternatives, and so it's up to the person that made the motion and seconded.

DR. BELCHER: Robert.

MR. SPOTTSWOOD: **I'm good with all those adjustments.**

MS. MCCAWLEY: Yes.

DR. BELCHER: All right. Spud.

MR. WOODWARD: Just a quick follow-up, and so the for-hire AP that we're going to -- That you all -- Excuse me. That you all are going to constitute, and you're going to depend on them also for some input into this as well, or are they strictly to be a reactionary body to this, just so I understand what their role is.

MR. CARMICHAEL: Well, I think they would be providing feedback on these items, but I think it would be -- They could bring up other things as well, and I don't think we would rule that out, and we usually don't. You know, I think this is some good direction to get things started, and to keep this ball moving, but I don't think it's all-inclusive, and nor is it binding. That's the best way I can think of to put it. There may be more, and, in some of these, you may just say you're not going to do as Andy said.

DR. BELCHER: Okay, and so any further discussion on the motion and the modifications, as they're currently on the board? Amy.

MS. DUKES: Andy, do you mind adding additional outreach to your last bullet, since that was number-one in the tables provided by Myra?

MR. STRELCHECK: I was thinking that was incorporated in the first bullet, but if you think otherwise, because that wouldn't be a requirement of the amendment, unless you're thinking of specific regulatory requirements for outreach.

MS. DUKES: Thank you for including the language.

DR. BELCHER: Other discussion? Okay. **Any opposition to the motion, as it currently stands?**

MR. CARMICHAEL: Let's read the motion.

DR. BELCHER: Okay. Robert, would you be willing to read your motion in?

MR. SPOTTSWOOD: Sure. **Start a SEFHIER improvement amendment considering the ACCSP for-hire methodology technical review as information becomes available. There are sub-bullets that also focus on incorporating actions to be taken in the near-term without an amendment, including additional outreach, consideration of actions and alternatives being considered by the Gulf Council, and consider actions to modify reporting frequency, hail-in and hail-out, landing locations, no fishing reports, and validation surveys.**

DR. BELCHER: All right, and so, again, any further discussion from the group on the motion? **Any objection to the motion, as it's currently written? Okay. Seeing none, that motion will carry.**

Okay. Any further action, or discussion, that we need to have at this point on the SEFHIER discussion? Everybody is pretty much tapped out. Tomorrow morning, and thank you everybody for sticking through, and it's quarter after six. We'll start tomorrow morning at the designated time of 8:30 and beginning with the limited entry discussion.

(Whereupon, the meeting recessed on June 10, 2024.)

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JUNE 11, 2024

TUESDAY MORNING SESSION

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The Full Council Session I of the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council reconvened at The Shores Resort & Spa, Daytona Beach Shores, Florida, on Tuesday, June 11, 2024, and was called to order by Chairman Carolyn Belcher.

DR. BELCHER: We are going to pick up with the last item that we had in Full Council yesterday to go over, which was the consideration of limited entry in the South Atlantic for-hire fisheries, and we'll be starting out with a summary of comments from the Southeast Regional Office. Nik.

MR. MEHTA: Good morning, everyone. Here is a summary of comments on the control date for the federal charter vessel headboat, or the for-hire component, of the recreational sectors of the Atlantic coastal migratory pelagics, Atlantic dolphin and wahoo, and South Atlantic snapper grouper fisheries. The comment period started on February 8 of 2024 and ended on March 11 of 2024. Here is the link for the FR notice.

A total of twenty-eight comments were received, including one test comment from me, which I did not post, and here's the link, if you want to read all the comments, because, in this summary, I'm not including all twenty-seven comments, and I'm just capturing the main points and the substantive comments. If this link doesn't work, for some reason, if you just go to regulations.gov, and then you type in the part starting with "NOAA", then you'll be able to see all of the comments in their entirety.

Out of the twenty-seven comments, only three comments were in favor of the control date. Four comments, including the three positive comments on the control date, were in favor of limited entry for these sectors. All the other comments were in opposition to the control date, and/or limited entry. Now, there were some pretty colorful comments, which I did not capture in this summary, but they are posted in their entirety.

The North Carolina Fisheries Association supports consideration of both control dates of June 15, 2016 and December 8, 2023, and limited access for these species in the charter-for-hire fisheries,

and they also said these actions support five National Standards, or NS, and so NS 1, and the recreational sector, which includes charter-for-hire, accounts for a significant amount of removals in the South Atlantic region, and has been for decades, yet there has been no conservation or management actions to accurately account for these removals or any mandatory data collection for recreational fisheries. If we are going to prevent overfishing, and continually achieve optimum yield, accurate, verifiable data needs to be available from all sectors.

NS 2, unless we have verifiable, mandatory recreational data to help calibrate MRIP, these concerns will do nothing but continue to plague conservation and management. NS 4, setting a control date, and establishing limited entry in the charter-for-hire, is necessary to ensure fair and equitable treatment to both commercial and recreational sectors, concerning all South-Atlantic-managed species. NS 8, to provide sustained participation and minimize economic impacts on fishing communities, all sectors must be held to the same accountability standards. Effort cannot be reduced for decades in one sector while effort and participation remains open access in the other.

NS 9, bycatch and dead discards from the recreational sector has become a leading source of removals in many of our South-Atlantic-managed species. While many argue that these numbers may not be accurate, it is currently the best scientific information available, and, even at the lower confidence levels, it is still a cause for concern, and better data is needed. Until we establish a validated, mandatory recreational reporting system, we will never know how accurate this removal data is. Limited entry and a charter-for-hire control date is the critical first step in this process.

The Southeast Fisheries Association supports the implementation of limited entry in the for-hire sectors for the species, but it has an issue with the proposed control date. They felt that too many existing permits are already in place to harvest limited species, and a limited-entry permit will provide improved data reporting, more accountability for the for-hire sector, and should work to improve stock assessments, which should result in longer fishing seasons and increased opportunities.

I am going to skip some of these, because you can read all of these, and I don't want to take half-an-hour of going through these four pages, but, if you have any questions about some of these points, I can always scroll back up.

The control date is a problem, because current permits are open access and are issued for one year and must be applied for again to continue being permitted. In order to protect those who have been permitted, and are active in the fishery, to ensure they won't be prevented due to a permit expiring, and then obtaining a new one issued after the control date, a simple program must be in place by NMFS to record when a person first obtained a permit and obtained a new permit each year while fishing to allow eligibility for a limited-entry permit. NMFS should create a database, as soon as possible, and enable access to records of previous open-access permits to provide vessel owners, who have had permits in the past, an opportunity to cross-check the data and ensure the records are correct.

North Carolina Watermen United endorses the council taking no further action to control entry or access to the federal charter vessel for-hire component. Federal agencies are relying on a demographic that is historically unaccustomed to computer-driven analytics, and many of the watermen find the reporting confusing and cumbersome. In addition, many of these federal permit

holders are not fulltime for-hire operators, and they make fewer than a couple of dozen trips a year. There is also a subset of operators that are buying the permits under the premise they might be of use, and ultimately never actually fish, and this group does not have the same initiative to complete the required reports as our fishermen who make their living on the water.

For the fishermen who may not fish for these species for a season, for whatever reason, like weather, health, vessel problems, and do not report, a did-not-fish report, they would be ineligible to apply for a permit the following year. What strikes as even more unfair is the cost required to enter the fisheries to the next generation of watermen that we are going to have to rely on to provide fresh seafood from our waters.

Before imposing any control date, we implore the council to extend the comment period, as many owners and operators were not aware that a control date was even being considered. One commenter said that, after fifty years of making my living from fishing the Atlantic, it would be the first time I have actually seen a law passed that made sense. Please pass limited entry for charter boats. Our resources will be governed better, and you will have only the responsible charter captains, that will give you better reporting on catches.

One commenter said they strongly opposed any council action towards permitting control dates at this time, as we are already burdened heavily with poor economic conditions after the pandemic, and the results of other socioeconomic conditions, consequently affecting our domestic well-being. One commenter opposed the current suggested changes and felt that it sounds like a great way to kill charter fishing. The December 5 control date really needs to be reconsidered. As for our reporting, why is it important for you to know our income? That side of the reporting is a huge turnoff to a lot of people.

If weekly reporting is to stay the norm, please simplify the apps and require about fish information only. Most people do not trust NMFS data. Have more scientists dockside and ride offshore on well-established charter vessels and headboats and hire well-known captains to take you to collect data. You need to gain people's trust back. One commenter said take no further action to control entry or access to the charter or headboat component of these fisheries. You will never have the information you need to make an informed decision, even if ever charter or headboat reports every fish, because we're way outnumbered by recreational boats.

One commenter said do not set a control date of December 2023 for these fisheries, and, instead, SERO should work on getting accurate data from the recreational fishermen, who largely go unchecked, with nothing at stake. The recreational fleet should be held to the same standard as the for-hire fleets.

One commenter said the 2016 control date should have been enforced, and then actually limited entry. If you change the control date to 2023, you need to proceed with enforcement of the rule. Make the permit a limited entry with a moratorium. The effort level is a problem for charter-for-hire and the recreational sector in the South Atlantic, and this last comment in my summary is the old control date of 2016 needs to be implemented and not a new one in the for-hire industry. If they choose not to be compliant with reporting, which needs to be verified with observers and/or port agents, then they should be rationalized out of the for-hire industry. That completes my summary.

DR. BELCHER: Thanks, Nik. Any questions for Nik? Okay. Thank you, Nik. Furthering on into the discussion, we'll now have an overview of the options, and this is a presentation between John Hadley and Myra Brouwer.

MR. HADLEY: Yes, and, Chip, I have a slide presentation ready to go, if you want to -- If you can make me the presenter.

DR. COLLIER: All right. We're seeing your presentation.

MR. HADLEY: Okay. Excellent. Thank you, everybody. Sorry that I couldn't be in the meeting room there. I woke up this morning feeling a little under the weather, and so, rather than potentially share whatever germs I may have, I am presenting remotely today, and so, without further ado, I wanted to go over some of the information that was put together in the decision document, and so this information is pulled from Attachment 3b under your Full Council 1 briefing materials.

Really, what this is, it's just a summary version, pulling, you know, salient pieces from that document, to make it a little bit more digestible, and so I'm going to go over some slides instead, and, generally speaking, provide a little bit of background information, you know, why the council is considering limited access in the for-hire fisheries, recent AP feedback, introduce some of the decision points and considerations, and so, as requested last time, we wanted to bring up some of the points, and the items, that were included in Snapper Grouper Amendment 47, which included a moratorium and limited access, and so we'll get into some of the, you know, potential decision points that the council will face down the road, if you do end up implementing a moratorium, or a limited-access program, in the for-hire fisheries.

Then we'll kind of, you know, end with a next-steps discussion, and so, really, we'll be requesting guidance from you, the council members, on, you know, generally speaking, what's the major process that you're envisioning, and do you want to consider a moratorium, sort of freezing the footprint on for-hire permits, and then implementing a limited-access program down the road, or do you want to go straight to a limited-access program, and so that sort of information is very helpful for whenever the IPT is formed for this amendment, and, you know, helping me come back to you with the information that you are looking for.

We'll touch on whether or not to consider a geographically-specific limited-access program, and so, as you may recall, at the last meeting, that's something that came up, and, really, just general feedback on any other guidance that you can provide and what other information would be good for you to see at this point.

Why is the council considering action? Just to orient everyone, you know, based on the previous discussions of the council, the council is considering limited access to improve management of the for-hire components of the big three, if you will, finfish fishery management plans, and so Snapper Grouper, Coastal Migratory Pelagic, and Dolphin Wahoo, and so all three of those FMPs are under consideration at the moment.

Also, as noted, you are responding to feedback from the fall 2023 Snapper Grouper and Mackerel Cobia APs, recommending that the council consider limited access into the for-hire fisheries, and, again, I just wanted to brief you on some of that feedback and remind you of what the APs mentioned.

The Snapper Grouper AP noted that, particularly in the Florida Keys and South Carolina, there is a large growth in population, and increases in the number of for-hire operators on the water, and there is increasing prevalence of illegal charters, and so unlicensed charters, and particularly being advertised through social media. It was noted that many snapper grouper species are becoming a very limited resource, and the AP suggested that you revisit the control date, which we just heard feedback, and public comment, on that, and you have started that process, and to look towards the Gulf for for-hire management. The Gulf currently has limited access in their reef fish and coastal migratory pelagics for-hire fisheries.

One other item that we'll come back to at the end is that the Snapper Grouper AP noted to consider an exemption for limiting access for headboat, and so potentially exempt headboats from consideration of limited entry, and they noted that headboats have limited methods, and target species, compared to six-pack vessels. Headboats have additional regulatory requirements, particularly U.S. Coast Guard inspection requirements and other regulatory measures that headboats must follow, and, also, sort of a lower barrier -- There's a lower barrier to entry for smaller charter vessels, and it was noted that private vessels can be insured to serve as a charter vessel as well, sort of easing entry into the for-hire fishery, whereas that regulatory playing field, if you will, that barrier to entry playing field, is higher for headboats.

Switching gears over to the Mackerel Cobia AP feedback, limited entry would -- This AP noted that limited entry would control the expansion of the for-hire recreational harvest, and professionalize the for-hire fleet, and they suggested exploring new and unique structures for a limited-entry program, and they recommended a workgroup, which we discussed yesterday during closed session, and I imagine that we'll come back to during open session on Thursday or Friday, but standing up an advisory panel, perhaps an ad hoc advisory panel, made up of for-hire operators to discuss limited entry in for-hire fleets, and, actually, I take that back, and I forgot that's focused on SEFHIER, and so I need to revisit that, but they suggested putting together a workgroup to discuss limited entry in for-hire fleets.

At the March meeting, the council came up with a list of requests to come back to you with at the June meeting, and so I wanted to take a minute to acknowledge those requests and kind of give you an update on where some of those stand. You know, the other items that were requested, we'll get into in just a minute, regarding the items and pieces that were pulled from Amendment 47, but I wanted to kind of acknowledge these items upfront.

You just received a summary of public comments on the revised control dates, and you have acknowledged the recommendations of AP members on the meeting record from the Snapper Grouper and Mackerel Cobia AP and their request to consider limited entry, and there was a request to look at the purpose and need statements from Snapper Grouper Amendment 47, and so this amendment was put together several years ago, and we did a little digging, and the amendment only made it through scoping, and so there's not -- There was never a purpose and need statement put together for that, and so the council would need to come up with a purpose and need statement from scratch, if you will, since that only made it through scoping, and then work on the amendment was stopped by the council.

You noted that you would like to hold off on scoping until recent permit information is available, and I believe we'll get an update on it later in the week, but the SERO permitting system is still

continuing to undergo updates, and so the timeline for scoping of this amendment really is fluid, and to be determined at this point, and you also requested further discussion by the council's APs, and, you know, this item is still on the worklist, but it has not been completed thus far. The Snapper Grouper AP was not able to discuss this at the spring meeting, and it was not added to the list of approved items for the spring meeting, but the tentative plan is for the APs to discuss for-hire limited access at their next AP meeting, and so this would be the fall for the Snapper Grouper and Mackerel Cobia APs and the spring of 2025 for the Dolphin Wahoo AP, and so that's the next planned meeting of those APs.

It was also noted that for-hire limited entry has been a topic of discussion during mackerel port meetings, which you'll hear a little bit more about later in the week, and summary feedback will be provided to the council when the port meetings are completed, and a summary report has been put together, and so, again, just addressing some of those items from your previous meeting, and, with that said, we'll get into a more in-depth discussion on a moratorium, options for a moratorium, and potential limited entry, and so we'll start off with consideration of a moratorium.

The presumed purpose of considering a moratorium, and limiting access, would be to limit expansion of the number of operators in the three major finfish recreational for-hire fisheries and improve compliance with existing reporting requirements, and so we had that SEFHIER discussion yesterday, and, as you will recall, that was one of the items that could potentially -- Limiting access could potentially help with satisfying the reporting requirements under the SEFHIER program.

A few considerations for implementing a moratorium may include the start date and duration of a moratorium, and permit speculation, whether or not that's really a concern, or you believe that's a concern, and permit eligibility and transfer requirements, an appeals process under the moratorium, and a target number of permits.

To take a little bit of a deeper dive into those bulleted items, the start date is important for determining which permit holders would retain access once a moratorium becomes effective, and, really, that's up to the council's discretion, for the most part, and so you have -- You just discussed the feedback on the potential new control dates, which the council will be free to use, or you could -- You're free to choose another set of control dates, you know, that encompass a totally different suite of options, as far as determining who would maintain access and who would not.

The council could establish a time limit for a moratorium, and so, if you did want to go the moratorium route, and so, again, freezing that footprint, if you will, on the number of for-hire permits, and you could include a sunset provision, so there's, you know, a hard stop, say in a year, two years, three years, four years, and, you know, that's something to keep in mind, that you could have a sunset provision for a moratorium, and, during the moratorium, it would be expected that baseline datasets would be developed, and that would include permits that did and did not meet the moratorium criteria, and so, essentially, during the moratorium, you would be gathering information, perhaps leading to a limited-entry program.

You need to look at permit eligibility and transfer requirements under a moratorium, and so do you want to consider transferability provisions under a moratorium, and you could also consider exceptions for the -- As far as the criteria for who meets -- For the criteria for the control date, and so an example of some of the exceptions could be vessels under construction, as of the effective date, or the control date, and it could be sort of grandfathered in, and you could look at a --

You could look at a historic captain's scenario, and so, if you have individuals who worked on vessels under the permit of another person, or entity, and they were not -- You know, they were working on a permitted vessel, and they were running that vessel, but they did not necessarily have the permit, and so you could come up with a historic captain's scenario where that person would be -- Where they would be kind of covered under the moratorium, and an example of that is in place in the Gulf of Mexico. Another option that was included in Amendment 47 was looking at including commercial permit holders who intend to diversify their income with for-hire fishing.

Looking at permit speculation, the target number of permits, and an appeals process, under a moratorium, the council may need to consider whether or not permit speculation is an issue, and I know that was a topic that was brought up during the public comments.

You could consider, you know, what is the ideal number, what is the general target number, for the number of permits that should be allowed in the for-hire fishery, and so you could look at freezing the footprint at its current level, and so maintaining the current number of permits, or you could allow for an expansion, and so a given number of permits beyond what is currently allowed, or what is currently occurring, in the fishery, or you could decrease the number of permits from their current number, and so you could have a discussion on, you know, do we want to allow some expansion in the meantime, and you may wish to specify the process to resolve disputes over the records used to establish eligibility, and so, if a permit holder feels like they meet the control date requirements, you know, what is the process to resolve that dispute and kind of address that permit holder's concerns?

Possible design elements of a limited-access program, and so we're kind of switching gears here from a moratorium, where you're freezing the footprint of permits, and we're moving over to a limited-access program, and so this is more of the permanent program, if you will, and so, if the council pursues a limited-access program, it may want to consider to allow new entrants and how to recoup the use of permits that are retired over time, and there are really several options that the council could go with.

You could look at specifying the transferability requirements, establishing a permits pool for new entrants, and so looking at ways to get new entrants into the fishery, and another option would be sort of a greenhorn, or a new entrant, permit, and you could look at different types of permits, based on perhaps how long a permit holder has held a valid for-hire license.

Looking at transferability requirements, you know, this is one of the major decision points that the council would need to examine, and so there's a wide range of options here, and the council could have the for-hire permit fully transferable, and able to be sold, and so this would essentially monetize the for-hire permit, and it could be transferable to immediate family members, or it could be transferable between vessels with the same owner, and so say a for-hire operator buys a new boat, or a new vessel, and they can switch the permit over to that new vessel, or you can make the permit non-transferable, and so the idea here is that those permits would be retired over time, and this may allow for sort of a permits pool, and so, as the permits are retired over time, they would go into a permits pool to allow new entrants into the fishery.

You can also look at establishing different permit types, based on who did and did not possess a permit on or before the control date, and so an example of this would be, you know, if a for-hire

operator has -- Or a for-hire permit holder has a permit as of the control date, that permit would be transferable. If they had the permit after the control date, they could still stay involved in the fishery, but perhaps that permit would not have the same open transferability provisions involved.

A permits pool, under a limited-access program, and so, depending on the transferability, the council can consider ways to allow new entrants. You can establish a permits pool made up of permits that become available if the participation drops to a certain level, and so, you know, put a floor in on the number of active permits, and, if that's triggered, then additional permits become available. You also need to consider when the permits would be made available. You know, as they're retired, they instantly become available to new entrants, and perhaps on a specific day each year they become available to new entrants, and you need to consider how permits would be distributed, and so do you want to set up a lottery system, a waitlist, that sort of discussion, and those sort of decision points, on allowing new entrants into the fishery under a permits pool.

As mentioned, you could consider a greenhorn permit, or a new entrants permit. Perhaps, under this scenario, the permit could be renewed for a limited number of years, and, if that permit holder could show proof of for-hire fishing activity, perhaps submitted by the SEFHIER program, or a certain percent of income derived from for-hire fishing activity, that greenhorn permit would sort of progress into a full-blown, if you will, fully-transferable for-hire permit.

Other options that could be considered under the new entrant permit, at least as previously discussed by the council, include a probationary period, requiring an annual U.S. Coast Guard safety inspection, only allowing harvest of certain species for the new entrants' permit, and requiring logbook training.

Here's a few items that you kind of touched on last time, particularly the geographic-specific measures, and so you could establish, as mentioned, a sunset provision, and so temporary versus permanent measures, and you could establish a sunset provision for a moratorium, kind of noting that, after that moratorium expires, it would either go back to an open-access program or you would implement a limited-access program after that sunset provision is met.

The council may want to examine options that would limit access in one region, while allowing access in other regions, and so we got into this discussion a little bit last time, but this would address movements of fish stocks due to climate change, as they become available to new participants, and it's likely especially applicable for the coastal migratory pelagics and dolphin wahoo fisheries, since these fishery management plans cover regions to the north of the South Atlantic, and, if the council does want to limit access in the for-hire fisheries, really, you know, we want to start engaging stakeholders in those regions to the north, and so fishery participants, fishery management councils, state agencies, to really make sure that those constituents are engaged, if the intent is to limit access in those regions.

The ability of the council to implement regional limited access would likely depend on, you know, what is the council envisioning for this, and so it would be helpful to have additional discussion on this, and, you know, what is the rationale for limiting entry in one geographic region, while another region is open access, and we may need to look into splitting the for-hire permit into different permits, and so maybe two permits that are geographically specific, or create an endorsement to clarify which permit is open access and which permit is limited access within a fishery management plan, and further information can be gathered to provide a really definitive

statement on, you know, what are the boundaries of the council's authority to limiting entry geographically, but it would helpful to have additional discussion, and rationale, on what the council is envisioning.

A few more slides here, and it was -- At the last meeting, you discussed, or you requested, additional information on Magnuson-Stevens Act considerations and National Standard Guidelines, and, really, there is -- The Magnuson-Stevens Act, and National Standard Guidelines 4, allocations, and 5, efficiency, provide guidance on considerations when implementing limited access, and so, essentially, it establishes limited access as a fishery management tool of the councils, but there is really a suite of considerations to go along with that.

The council really has started to address some of these considerations, but this isn't really a one-meeting sort of discussion, and this is something that the council will address the guidance from the National Standard Guidelines, as well as the Magnuson-Stevens Act, through several meetings, and so you've already started the process, and, you know, you're talking about permit transferability, and qualifying criteria, but, for example, the economics of the fishery, and more information will be provided as an amendment is developed, and so that's really a multi-meeting process, to address that guidance and the considerations that the council will need to go through if establishing limited entry.

You also requested some initial equity and environmental justice considerations, and so this is far from a comprehensive list, but it was noted that limiting access may disproportionately affect some communities, and so additional information on those affected communities will be provided as the amendment is developed, and more information can be gathered, and it was noted that climate-change-induced shifts in stock will require flexibility, and limiting access can reduce flexibility, but that can be addressed, depending on how the program, the limited-access program, is designed, and, as noted at the council table, and during public comment and during the Snapper Grouper AP meeting, there are EEJ considerations for headboats, as these vessels offer a relatively low-cost way to recreationally access fishery resources that are really otherwise unavailable to many constituents, and so one way to potentially address that is to consider whether headboats would be part of the limited access permitting program that is put together.

This is where I hand it over to the council. We're looking for just general feedback on next steps. As I mentioned towards the beginning, it would be helpful, particularly for when the IPT really has a chance to dig into this, you know, what is the council considering?

Do you want to have a two-step process, where you want to implement a moratorium, and so kind of freeze the footprint on the number of for-hire permits for several years, and then follow that up with a limited-access program, or do you want sort of a one-step process, where the permit essentially remains open access, and then there's a limited-access program once an amendment is put into place, and so sort of a one-step versus a two-step process, and what's the desire of the council to consider, and does the council want to consider geographically-specific limited access, particularly, as noted, for the Coastal Migratory Pelagics and Dolphin Wahoo Fishery Management Plans, and, if yes, what is some of the rationale? Let's get a little bit of discussion, and, you know, what are you envisioning for this process? Do you want to look at two permits? Do you want to look at an endorsement on the existing permit?

Presumably, the South Atlantic would be limited access, while regions further north would be open access, and is that a correct assumption? You know, additional discussion, and, if you do want to look at geographically-specific limited access, you know, what are you envisioning? Then, finally, are there any additional topics that you would like to see further information on at the next council meeting where this amendment is discussed, and so thank you. I'm happy to answer any questions.

DR. BELCHER: Thanks, John. Starting out with Tom Roller.

MR. ROLLER: Thank you, Mr. Hadley. A quick question for you. I'm curious if we could better define moratorium versus limited access, because my question was, if we were to engage in a moratorium, how would that allow for new entries into the fishery?

MR. HADLEY: I think the distinction there is a moratorium is really freezing the footprint, and there may be some exceptions to that. As I mentioned towards the beginning, and it was a while back in the presentation, but there are some exceptions to the moratorium that the council could establish, but a limited-access program is really a more in-depth, long-term -- It's a long-term program, if you will, whereas the moratorium is sort of geared towards freezing the footprint in the meantime, if that makes sense, and so I guess how complex it is.

MR. ROLLER: Absolutely, and I guess I just have a concern, because of the issues that, you know, I brought forth in this is that I would only be really supportive of a program that allows new entries a way into the fishery, right, like you discussed here, and I think that's a really important part of it, and I think that's where I get a little hung up on a moratorium, and like how does that allow that, but I guess we would have the flexibility to make some special clauses in there, if we were to start with a moratorium, hypothetically.

MR. HADLEY: Yes, that's correct, and, you know, the council has a pretty good bit of flexibility here in how you would want to develop it, if you do go down that road.

DR. BELCHER: Okay. Other questions? Shep.

MR. GRIMES: Thank you, Madam Chair. Well, I would just comment one thing on that, and so, in the eyes of the law, it's a limited-access system, and that's the terminology used in Magnuson. If you're doing it temporarily, or if you're doing it indefinitely, it is still a limited-access system. It's the same thing, but one just has a sunset on it, and the other doesn't, and so the considerations that go into it are the same, but you could tailor it however you want, and, at least in terms of new entrants, having watched the Gulf through this twice with moratoria, the new entrants isn't as big of an issue if you're just talking about limiting access for five years, right, and then, you know, how much is that immediate need, and those permits -- They can buy in, just like others. The value of that permit is going to be less, because it's only a moratoria for five years, and it may go away, and why would you invest a lot of money in it, when it could possibly revert back to open access soon, and so those are just considerations. Thank you.

DR. BELCHER: Thanks, Shep. Spud.

MR. WOODWARD: Just a question, I guess for you, Shep. If you decide to implement a moratorium, what is the obligation for notice of the implementation of a moratorium? I mean, what's -- Can you -- You've got to tell the public there's going to be a moratorium, and what kind

of lead time are we obligated to do, to tell them, because they can go buy one up until the point the moratorium goes into effect, in an open-access system, right?

MR. GRIMES: Well, at least theoretically, right, they're already on notice, and you've given multiple control dates, over the history of this council, indicating that you're considering limited access. You would consider limiting it from that date forward, and so people have already been provided some notice.

In terms of notice and implementation, the council would develop it, right, and it's a public process, and everybody is going to hear us, and then, as we implement it, you know, you would have picked the date, you know, that anybody after this date will not be assured entry. Then, once that's submitted to the agency, we would go through the rulemaking process, and, if you didn't meet the eligibility criteria, that would be it. There is no additional special notice that would go along with it, and it's just our, you know, typical rulemaking process, with the addition of the control date notice that you've already provided, which is not a legally-required thing, but sort of a courtesy, and, you know, icing on the cake for us, additional notice.

DR. BELCHER: Okay. Andy.

MR. STRELCHECK: To state it, I guess, in a similar way, that control date is not binding on this council, right, and so there is flexibility there, but the way that we voted on it, and it kind of was structured, was to put people on notice, with the intent of cutting down on speculative entry, which is kind of what you're pointing to, right, is that, if we start talking about a moratorium now, and then, all of a sudden, we get a run on permits, right, are we allowing all those permits into the fishery at this point?

Maybe that's what we want to do, and I wouldn't want to do that, right, but, ideally, what we, I think, need to consider is probably moving forward with an action that's not mutually exclusive of a moratorium versus limited access, that potential considers both in that action, and, as this progresses, we can kind of make these decisions as we get more information and are informed of the data and kind of the trends and changes, obviously, in the fishery that we've seen over time with the permitting.

DR. BELCHER: Okay. Additional discussion on this? All right, and so the main thing is we need to be cognizant of what staff has asked for us to provide information going forward, and so, again, continued conversations about the three questions. Shep.

MR. GRIMES: I will reiterate one thing that I said yesterday, and so remember this has to be optimum-yield focused, and I haven't seen any mention of optimum yield in this, and I get limiting the number of entrants, right, in order to achieve that, but, you know, you could look at where we are, in terms of optimum yield for some stocks, and incorporate that. Thank you.

DR. BELCHER: Thanks, Shep. Robert.

MR. SPOTTSWOOD: Shep, thanks for that comment. As I sit here looking at this, I think, if we went around the room and asked everybody why we were doing this, we would probably get a lot of different answers. Not having developed a purpose and need and others, I think this is just -- For me personally, I think we are trying to solve a different issue, with, you know, a system here

that doesn't -- This just doesn't seem to be the solution we need for some of the issues we've talked about, and so I don't know why we're doing this. Like truly, even looking at the APs, there's feedback, and some people want to protect their own seat at the table, and some people just want to reduce the amount of fishing, and, you know, it varies, and so I don't -- I think we're spending a lot of time on this, ultimately, to get somewhere that -- There's no real benefit to this, for any of the other issues that we're dealing with, in my opinion, at this point, and I think we're spending a lot of time, and a lot of resources, on this.

DR. BELCHER: Thanks, Robert. Tim.

MR. GRINER: Thank you, Madam Chair. You know, as I think more about what Shep keeps reiterating, that's where I really start to struggle, because, if we're going to do this to achieve optimum yield, you can't separate just the for-hire, because optimum yield is optimum yield, and it doesn't matter whether you're a recreational fisherman or you're on a for-hire trip. Optimum yield is optimum yield, and so, if we're looking at this to achieve optimum yield, it doesn't do that, and I don't think you could ever make an argument that that's why we've done it, because you've completely left out of the rest of the recreational sector in trying to achieve optimum yield. Thank you.

DR. BELCHER: Shep.

MR. GRIMES: Thank you, Madam Chair. Well, I don't want to argue this, but I don't think -- That is not correct. I mean, we have for-hire moratoria in the Gulf, or limited-access systems in the Gulf of Mexico, and while, you know, it is one permit, and one part of the fishery, just one -- Actually one component of the recreational sector, and you can do it, and the argument is limiting access in that sector is limiting the growth, right, and it's limiting -- You could argue that it's going to help limit discards, which you can help turn those discards into landed catch, which is going to increase actual yield. I mean, it's easy to make the argument for it, and so whether or not you want to do it is a different question, but, from the sort of analytical and legal standpoint, it seems like it's an easy thing to do. Thank you.

DR. BELCHER: Spud.

MR. WOODWARD: I think, in theory, yes. I agree, but, in practice, has that actually happened? You know, we know what has happened in the Gulf. It has monetized permits, and it's made them very expensive to acquire.

I mean, we know that there are theorized intended consequences, and then there are unintended consequences, and I think that's what troubles me, is I've looked at the Gulf experience, and seen the unintended consequences, but yet not really sure that the intended consequences have ever become reality, and, for us to go down -- I mean, this is an extraordinarily complex thing. There are lot of human dimensions parts of it, and a lot of things that will take a lot of time to develop, and with great uncertainty as to whether they will actually be fruitful or not, and so I just -- I have been skeptical about these kinds of limited-access programs, and I remain skeptical about them.

I mean, I'm all for investigating the proper solutions to the problems, but, you know, we have limited time, and limited resources of people and money, and I just -- I'm not sure that this is the path to go down to get us to where we need to be.

DR. BELCHER: John.

MR. CARMICHAEL: Just a question, and the Gulf has sector separation, right, between the for-hire aspects and the private rec, and so, to the issue of OY, does that affect -- Has that made this an easier discussion, you know, in response to Tim's question about we have one recreational, and they're all in there together, and so it would seem like, to me, through sector separation in the Gulf, you have a way to parse out your OY even finer, versus, for us, you know, we have commercial versus recreational, and so we can look at OY, and we can parse out OY.

Back when we did visioning, we did an exercise of looking at, you know, what OY likely is for the bulk of our species, and how close are we to achieving it, and so, you know, we can do that work, right, and it sounds like it's absolutely necessary if we pursue this, but I just wonder if we aren't going to hit a bit of a bigger snag, as Tim mentioned, because of the lack of the sector separation, and maybe that helped the Gulf, and I just wondered what Shep thought of that factor.

DR. BELCHER: Shep, and then I've got Tom.

MR. GRIMES: Well, we implemented limited access for the for-hire sector when I first started this job in 2001, and it predates sector separation by more than a decade, and so, you know, limited access was there first, and, I mean, I would say -- Well, it's long-existing.

MR. CARMICHAEL: But was limited access as tied to OY back in 2001 as it is now? I got a sense that maybe that's something that's been a lot more stressed in the more recent limited-access efforts.

MR. GRIMES: Well, it comes from Section 303(b)(6) of the statute, and, as far as I know, it's been in there since at least the mid-1990s, and it may be original text, and I'm not sure, and so, I mean, that requirement has been there. I mean, how much it's stressed may vary, but I think, in the context of the Gulf of Mexico -- When I came in, it was Gulf of Mexico red snapper, and we were in litigation, or had been in litigation, over red snapper rebuilding, and constraining red snapper harvest, and you had seen expansion in the for-hire sector, a lot in the recent years, and that was part of the conversation with rebuilding, and they thought that, if you capped that, and you capped the increases in effort associated with the for-hire industry, then you could help rebuild red snapper. Then that sort of led into a rebuilding plan for red snapper, and then more litigation and another rebuilding plan.

DR. BELCHER: Tom, and then I have Andy.

MR. ROLLER: I think it's important to note, when we always talk about the Gulf and what they've done with limited access, that their fisheries are very different than ours. They have really large ACLs for a lot of their fisheries, and we don't have that, and I don't really see how we can ever really have some sort of sector separation, and, as we talk about the idea of optimizing yield, I'm not saying that I'm struggling to make an argument there, but I feel like we've kind of come at it from a different sort of way, because I don't see how we optimize yield without having much better data for this sector, right, and that's a very complicated thing in an open-access charter fishery that looks very, very different than anything ever looked like in the Gulf, and I'm going to come back to this as I kind of try to rearticulate my argument a little differently.

DR. BELCHER: Thanks, Tom. Andy.

MR. STRELCHECK: Good discussion, and I think, before we can even go through some of the questions on the board, we need to have this, you know, discussion of whether or not there's agreement about moving forward with limited access. What I guess I would say is, you know, it's maybe not a fair comparison with the Gulf, and the fisheries are different, as Tom is pointing out, and the fisheries are smaller, but I will say that we've wrestled around this table, for well before my time, decades, to address overfishing and overfished status, for many of our snapper grouper species in particular, and I think, right now, there is upwards of a half-a-dozen that are on the overfished list, or undergoing overfishing, and so the capacity of our fisheries right now, for-hire included, but not exclusive, is outstripping the resources that we have.

Ultimately, we are wrestling with problems where there is so much effort, right, that discards alone are preventing us from opening fisheries like red snapper for extended periods of time, and so, if limited access isn't the solution, right, then I would love to have that discussion of what would be that solution, and what ideas are around the table, because I certainly haven't heard that over the last several years.

DR. BELCHER: Robert and then back to Tom.

MR. SPOTTSWOOD: Tom, I think you hit on -- You know, you hit the nail on the head, and, as I recall, kind of we've gotten to this discussion over trying to improve data, right, and trying to understand, you know, who is fishing, what is being taken, what's being put back, and, you know, Andy just touched on it again.

I really think it's hard to move forward with some of this until we have better data, and there's other things that we're talking about. You know, in Florida, we're working on the EFPs and others, but I think we need to be focused on how are we getting better data from the people that are fishing before we just continue to make rules that we think are getting to solving the problem of optimum yield, but we don't really know, and I think this conversation, and the feedback from the AP, has just kind of highlighted that, and it's just throwing a dart at the dartboard, and hoping we're going to have the intended outcome, and I don't think that's fair to the folks that are trying to participate in the fishery and our recreational fishermen.

DR. BELCHER: Tom.

MR. ROLLER: That's a good, interesting point, Robert, because I still come at this from a way that I don't see how we enforce an open-access reporting program, without some sort of monetized permit that can be taken away, and I still see that as a way towards getting to optimum yield eventually, and I know we have a lot of questions to ask before we get there.

I think, generally, as a for-hire operator -- You know, we've heard a lot about regime shifts in fisheries, and I think the real regime shift is going to be the recreational fishing industry. I mean, while a lot of our fisheries, you know, nationwide are not overfished, things are really looking tough in the Southeast, and I can speak from experience. You know, seasons are getting incredibly short, and we just have a lot of fisheries that are overfished, and we have a lot of fisheries that have limited data, and a lot of our state and interstate fisheries are in horrible condition.

I'm looking at, you know, my business protections going forward, and I'm trying to see how people are necessarily going to survive, and there is also a lot of, you know, other market forces really affecting the for-hire industry, which my opinion is reducing, you know, the optimum yield of the fishery, things like third-party booking sites, that are dropping profitability, and, you know, just - - You know, just a lot of extra people coming into this fishery over the years, and that's definitely something we've experienced in North Carolina, and I know a lot of other people haven't.

It's not so much about protecting the seat at the table, and I think it's more important that we're just getting a better idea of what people are catching, because I don't see how we have -- It's like going into the whole recreational reporting thing, which we're discussing, and this council has been discussing, for well before many of our times, is how we can have better data to make sure that our fisheries are better managed and open for longer periods of time.

DR. BELCHER: Jessica.

MS. MCCAWLEY: I mean, this is a good discussion, and I don't know how you want to proceed here, Madam Chair. Are we waiting for someone to make a motion to initiate an amendment, or make a motion to discontinue work on this, and us voting on that, because I kind of agree with Andy that we need to figure out -- We can't really answer these questions until we're sure that we're moving forward with this, and so I just feel like we're a little bit at an impasse.

DR. BELCHER: Yes, and I'm kind of feeling the same exact way, only because I still go back to thinking about the previous amendment, and we still don't have a purpose and need. I mean, to me, if we can't all -- That's with not seeing everyone coming heavy to the discussion, with an idea of what we're doing moving forward, and it really does feel like we're not going to be able to move forward with answering the questions. Tom.

MR. ROLLER: That's a good point, Madam Chair. One of the big issues for me there is I really want to see that SERO permit data before I can really make some decisions here, and I think that's really important, to see what things have looked like, in the last few years in particular, and I know we're waiting on the backend of that.

DR. BELCHER: Jessica.

MS. MCCAWLEY: What's the timeline for that data? I thought I saw, in one of the documents, that it was going to be ready in May.

DR. BELCHER: Andy.

MR. STRELCHECK: With all good IT problems, we've made great progress, but we uncovered another issue with permit data, where it was being -- Multiple permit data, on the backend, was being merged together, and it's about 10 percent of the permits, and so we're working to resolve that issue before we can, obviously, continue to fix the system, and so, until that's resolved, we are still kind of in a holding pattern, in terms of providing that data.

DR. BELCHER: Robert and then John.

MR. SPOTTSWOOD: Would it be appropriate then to make a motion to pull this -- You know, just punt this until we get the SERO information, and bring it back at a later meeting for discussion? You know, kind of a question for Tom, and I'm prepared -- I think we have other things that we need to focus on, and I'm prepared to make a motion to just stop work on this, and focus on our other efforts, and try to figure out how to improve reporting, but, you know, Tom, I want to have some discussion with you on that.

DR. BELCHER: Tom.

MR. ROLLER: Thank you for that, Robert. I think it's a little early to just completely stop work on it. I think, first of all, we still have that data coming down the pipeline, and I think, as we're looking into this big effort to look at SEFHIER, and I know we've had some disagreements on whether or not limited access, and SEFHIER, can, or should be, related, and my personal opinion is, if we're going to have a really good reporting system, we can't do it with a permit that you can just lose and then go buy another one, right, and so, looking forward at that, I think that we're a little premature, maybe, in just completely stopping work on it, and at least having this floating out there, as we develop some of the SEFHIER stuff, may be a little bit more beneficial, because it's still an option.

DR. BELCHER: Robert, Jessica, and John.

MR. SPOTTSWOOD: My concern there, Tom, may be that, you know, the charter-for-hire is not telling the entire story, you know, and so we're still going to have a gap in recreational catch data that I think we'll then -- We'll have this discussion then, trying to figure out where we go, and we'll just have a snippet into, you know, perspective, and I will just -- I will go back to the Gulf. I mean, where I'm from, there is more big, private recreational boats going out and fishing, you know, between Pulley and the wrecks and everything else than there are charter-for-hire.

The ecosystem has shifted, in between GPS and all the technology and everything else, and, I mean, it's not hard to get to those wrecks, to get to Pulley Ridge, or get to those other places, and so I think we're just kind of kicking the can again here, and, you know, trying to be respectful for the work that's been done here, but I want to be more respectful for the amount of resources that we're going to continue to spend in spinning our wheels, and not making progress here, when I think we agree what we need to figure out is how do we get better data, and reporting, from all sectors of the fishery.

DR. BELCHER: Okay. I've got Jessica, John, and then back to Tom.

MS. MCCAWLEY: So I feel like the getting better data, that we talked about that yesterday, and we're putting together an AP for that, and I feel like we are working on it. I guess back to you, Madam Chair, and are you thinking that we just end this discussion today, and then, when we look at the workplan, figure out at what meeting it's coming back, with the additional data, and then we take it up then, because I don't see how there's really anything that council staff can work on until we have this additional data, nor can committee members answer these questions or anything until we have this information, and it just feels like we're stuck.

DR. BELCHER: I agree with you, and John has a suggestion.

MR. CARMICHAEL: Yes, and I think you're exactly right, Jessica. I think, based on what people are saying, we need to see that permit data, and we don't even have that, and so it's hard to understand the nature of a problem, and so we don't need to like -- We don't need to make a formal motion that we stop work, but you just need to say your direction is you want to get the updated permit data, and be able to go through that in great detail, as you've talked about several times, and so then what that allows us to do is, once that data becomes available, then we can bring it before you, if it's September, or if it's later, et cetera, and we can do that.

Then I think the other point is, you know, as Shep said, this needs to be tied to OY, and not as a way of enforcing reporting, and we need -- We recognize the need for better data, but it doesn't seem like, you know, using that as a justification for this is a successful strategy, and it's going to get us into some troubles.

You know, I think, when we talk about how do you use permit availability, and tie to back to enforcement, and being able to remove permits, it's that is limited entry the only way to be able to take away a permit from a person, because, if you're a private person, you can lose your rights to fish and hunt in a state without any of those licenses being limited entry, but you can lose your rights not to be able to get a license. I can lose my right to drive an automobile, but there's no limited entry on, you know, driver's licenses, and so there's ways, within other systems, that keep individuals from getting licenses to do activities that aren't tied to just making those licenses limited entry.

Now, we may have processes, within how we issue licenses, that make that easy, and it makes it easy for people to, you know, essentially get a fake ID, as someone will want to do is they wanted to get another driver's license when they lost theirs, but, you know, that's another kind of problem, and like is this -- It doesn't seem like limited entry is the only solution to having the hammer of removing somebody's permit, and I wonder, on that front, and, Amy, I don't know if you all's are limited entry, or if you have the ability to take a person's permit, and is there anything that somebody could do, but there must be other places where this is explored, and it seems like that would be another thing we could work on, and we could also work on the OY stuff, and so I feel like there's stuff to work on while the permit data gets itself in order, which we'll just bring it to you when we have it.

DR. BELCHER: I have Shep, to that, and Amy to that, and then coming back to Tom, and then Kerry had a question.

MR. GRIMES: Thank you, Madam Chair. Well, I mean, that sounds like an enforcement action, right, and, I mean, someone gets caught, and I don't believe the penalty schedule includes permanent disbarment from participation in fisheries, and I don't think it ever will, and so, you know, that, to me, is a very different thing, and the council can't sit here and say, oh, well, we're going to start, you know, busting more people for these things, and take their fishing licenses away when we catch them, and you can provide that, you know, your view of what penalties and settlements should be to the enforcement folks, but that isn't how it would really work, and it wouldn't be an effective management tool, I would say.

One thing I would encourage you, in terms of information to think about, is I keep saying optimum yield, but think about this on a stock-by-stock basis, where we have optimum yield, and it's a long-term average, right, and where we are with most of the stocks, at least the assessments I've seen

lately, if we're way below the long-term average, because we have these huge discard problems, and we have overfished status, and overfishing issues, and so optimum yield, that we're trying to achieve, is not the annual catch limits that we're getting today, and it's the long-term average that we would be achieving, were the stocks in better shape. Maybe information about, you know, about where that OY would be on a stock-by-stock basis would be good to include as well. Thank you.

DR. BELCHER: Okay. Amy, to that.

MS. DUKES: Thank you, Madam Chair. John, yes, at the state level, there are infractions, and so, if a for-hire permit is to receive citations, it's a point system, and so they would actually have to have several tickets, that are then adjudicated through our magistrate courts, and then reach enough points to then suspend that license for 365 days, but it is a -- It's usually four tickets within a certain timeframe. You can earn your points back, if you go 365 days without an infraction, but it is cumulative over time.

Having said that, it does happen very infrequently. The permit hold on the renewals, which is very similar to SEFHIER, is also applied for a South Carolina for-hire license, and so, at the time of renewal, if that particular vessel is not compliant, that entity must meet with folks from the fisheries statistics section to become compliant, and that is another opportunity for us to provide a little outreach.

I guess I had a question, at the same time, if you don't mind, Madam Chair, more specific to SEFHIER, and so I know that there is the hold on the permit renewals at SEFHIER, and I understand that these are open access, but is there any sort of stopgap, if you're doing a renewal if they're not compliant at the vessel level, and so, for instance, I own a boat, and I'm not compliant, and so, instead of not being able to renew my current SEFHIER permit, under my name, and I change it to my business, and it's still that same vessel number, and is there any sort of cross-checking of that information before a SEFHIER permit is renewed, or it is just that the name of the business is changed, and so therefore you would go ahead and provide them a new permit?

MR. STRELCHECK: I would have to ask my permit team directly.

DR. BELCHER: Okay. Back to Tom, Kerry, and then Andy.

MR. ROLLER: So just food for thought on your last comment, Amy, and I can tell you that one boat that I have owned has been owned by several people in the charter industry, and so let's say one of them wasn't complying, and, I mean, what are we going to do? Just because they change between company names, I don't see how it would be fair for -- If the boat is being sold, and the person before them wasn't compliant, and I don't see how the permit system can go through that, when they're under the name of an LLC or an S-Corp, because we're heard that a lot of times. If there's an issue, people just change their company name and go buy another permit, right, and I think that's something we're going to see going forward.

John, I will go to your comments regarding enforcement and the ability to say lose a permit, and I can say that, in North Carolina, our infractions are very, very weak in saltwater, and we really don't see that much sort of stuff. We have this new reporting program, and it's getting started, and the reporting violations are kind of a joke, to be frank with you, but I asked, on that, and is that

something that we can actually do from this table, and I don't really think that's possible, right, and so I always look at what we're doing here, and look at these issues, and say what we can do from this table, and not what we can hope from the federal Senate and Legislature or any of our state, you know, state house and senate.

We talk about optimum yield here, and I still don't see how we get to optimum yield without better data, and I don't see how we get better data without a reporting system, and, to go to Robert's comments, regarding like the greater recreational fishing at-large, and not wanting to parse out the data from the for-hire sector, well, the for-hire sector is important, and there's a lot of good reasons to have better data for them, that are economic data, better fisheries disaster recovery data, better data from our increased hurricanes and storms, and I can say that, you know, in North Carolina, when we had Hurricane Florence come in 2019, and we had a big fisheries disaster, it took, what, five years to get that money distributed to the for-hire sector, and most of the people who really needed that help were out of the business by the time that program was done.

On that same note, if were to say like, well, we can't look at the for-hire data separately than the recreational fishery -- I mean, we could parse that out and look at the entire fishery and say, well, why bother doing the commercial side, and we need it from everybody at the same time.

Realistically, in fisheries data, the for-hire sector is kind of a low-hanging fruit. You've got a smaller group of people, and they use the fishery very differently, and we have a really good way -- Not to say a really good way, but we have an opportunity to get better data from them, so we get better discard data, and all this sort of stuff we need from our fisheries.

DR. BELCHER: Kerry.

MS. MARHEFKA: Thanks. I'm sorry if I should know this, but can someone remind what exactly the data that we're waiting on from them is going to contain? As someone who is on the fence on this, that will help me a little bit.

DR. BELCHER: So can anyone speak to what the ask has been for that? Andy or John?

DR. COLLIER: John, could you provide some details on that?

MR. HADLEY: Yes, absolutely, and so that information will be essentially an update of what was presented in March, and so you're looking at permit data, and that permit data cutoff in I believe it was 2020, and you will have information on the distribution of permits geographically, and so how a moratorium may affect, you know, for-hire fleets on a state-by-state basis, and so you had information on like geographic distribution of permits.

Additionally, the trends, and so it's kind of unclear, and, obviously, 2020, the COVID years, were tough years, and we made a lot of changes in the economy, and just, I guess, day-to-day life, and so we don't have that information just yet, but what that will give you is a look on, you know, what's happened since 2020, as far as permit trends, distribution of permits, and then looking specifically at an FMP-by-FMP basis.

DR. BELCHER: Thanks, John. Does that answer your question, Kerry? Okay. Thanks. Andy.

MR. STRELCHECK: I was going to ask a similar question, and so I appreciate Kerry asking that, because I think that informs us, and it provides more information, but it shouldn't be a reason not to move forward, and so I go back to -- You know, I'm leaning heavily on a lot of the input and stuff that we saw from our advisory panel members, and, yes, better data will always help us manage better, right, and that is always our goal, and that is, obviously, a goal that we need to aspire to, but we can't let it hinder us from preventing us to manage the fisheries as well.

I think it goes hand-in-hand that we're going to continue to work toward improving data, but, in the meantime, we also have to take steps, and efforts, to, obviously, manage the resource based on the tools we have available to us.

You know, I go back to the challenge here, right, and so, to me, you know, we had a presentation by John, and, you know, people are noting population growth, the increasing number of for-hire operators, and I've talked about the decline in stocks, and, you know, we essentially have overcapitalization, overcapacity, in our fisheries, right, and the only sectors, or sector, that we've limited access so far in the South Atlantic is the commercial, right, and so why is it okay for the commercial but not for the for-hire, or even the private sector?

I appreciate Robert bringing up the private sector, right, and this is wildly unpopular, right, but we only have so much in the way of resources, and, ultimately, at the end of the day, we have to figure out are we going to continue down the path of these really ridiculous short fishing seasons, and very restrictive limits, or are we going to figure out ways that we can actually provide better fishing opportunities for people, and maybe make it a better fishing experience, in the long run?

You know, limited entry is not a new concept, and it's regularly used for wildlife management. I'm a big national parks fan, and I have to get limited entry into the national parks, right, and so I feel like what we need to do is maybe, in September, we should come back to this, and we should really have a thorough discussion about the purpose and need, why we're wanting to do this, and I'm optimistic that maybe we'll have permit data at that point, and we could inform the council better, with regard to trends and information and data, and then, from there, go forward with more of an informed discussion about how to proceed.

I will note that, back in December, when we voted on this to move forward, it was a unanimous vote, I think with one abstention, and so now the reversal, potentially wanting to set this aside, has caught me by surprise today.

DR. BELCHER: I've got Robert and then Trish.

MR. SPOTTSWOOD: Thank you for that, Andy. Tom, I was just going to circle back on, you know, the -- If we need better data, and we want people to give us data, you know, excluding people in the future from entry to this, in order to make the people who are currently participating, who have licenses, provide that data, it just -- It seems a little bit, you know, like there may be a better way, and it's wildly unpopular, Andy, and I agree, but I think what you're talking about, Tom, is just should we have mandatory reporting for everybody who is fishing, regardless of what sector you're participating in. I think that's ultimately how we'll get to knowing exactly where we are, and how we make really, really sound decisions going forward.

In Florida, we take a little bit different approach, and, rather than a hammer, it's, hey, here's an opportunity to participate in a fishery that you can't otherwise get into, unless you agree to these reporting requirements, and so trying to use the, you know, carrot approach there. I don't know by September, and I just asked Jessica if we'll have any of that data, but it would certainly, I think, be helpful for this discussion, if we were able to even preliminarily pull some data to check what we think about the discard mortality numbers we've seen out of MRIP and what we're seeing in this new program, that I think is going to be very helpful in understanding exactly what is being caught and what is being discarded.

DR. BELCHER: I've Trish, and then Andy, and then we're going to wrap this back up.

MS. MURPHEY: So thanks, and I think this has been a really good discussion, and I've just sat here and listened and tried to weigh out everything. I think what jumps out at me at this point is the fact that we don't have data since 2020, and so I feel like any decisions that we're going to be trying to make -- That we're going to be flying blind, because we don't have four years' worth of data, and a lot of the discussion points, permit speculation, geographic stuff, we're flying blind on any kind of discussion on that, at this point, until we have that data.

I am kind of with probably a mix of Andy and Robert, in that I think we should at least wait until we have that data to look at, and then decide whether we need to move forward, and so I'm not saying kick the can down the road, but let's just wait until we have all the pieces before we start - - Before we decide the direction we're going to go in, and so that's my thoughts.

DR. BELCHER: I've got Andy and Robert.

MR. STRELCHECK: Just two points, and so I just wanted to emphasize that this is not just a red snapper problem, right, and this is a snapper grouper fishery problem as a whole, and so red snapper is one component of this broader issue, and then, to me, the benefit of limiting access, right, is -- I'm hearing a lot of focus on the reporting aspect, the improved reporting, and that is one, to me, small part of this, right, and so that will help with SEFHIER reporting, and some of the challenges we have with people just dropping their permit and renewing a different permit, right, because it's open access, but certainly I don't view that as a main purpose for any sort of limited entry.

DR. BELCHER: Robert, you have the last word, and then we're going to talk about what to do.

MR. SPOTTSWOOD: The last observation I will make to this data that's coming is I think over the last five years, really since COVID, we've seen an influx, and this might be anecdotal, but it's my own experience in Key West, and there's been a lot of opportunity for people to enter the fishery.

They've been pushed out of office jobs, and they've been given incentives to move to a place like this, and buy boats, and, you know, gas was relatively cheap, and things have changed now, right, and there's -- Just as an effort perspective, boats are going out less today, and, you know, we're selling less fuel at the docks. I don't think it's as attractive for a charter guide, or somebody graduating from college, to move to the Florida Keys today and try and buy a boat and buy a place live, or rent for that matter, and so, at least from where I'm at, and some of the initial feedback, I think it has changed over the last twelve months, and we're going to continue to see a trend, and

so we need to just consider that as we think about that we've seen this huge, you know, influx of new entrants to this industry. I don't think that that growth rate is the same today as it was twelve months ago or twenty-four months before that.

DR. BELCHER: Thanks, Robert. Okay, and so, again, we've got a lot of good discussion, but, obviously, it's not advancing us further down in the directives of what we've been trying to do today, and there are current directions to staff, and we're acknowledging that there is a large hole in available information for us to inform on, and the other thing is remembering that this isn't just one fishery, and there's two other fisheries that this is applying to, that we're also -- We don't know how this give-and-take is going to go with the coastal pelagics or dolphin wahoo, and so I think that there is enough information for us to provide back to staff, to help us be ready to re-look at this, and the question will be when, based on what we'll talk about at the end of the week with what our scheduling looks like. There's current direction to staff on the board, if folks will look at that and see if they feel that that's adequate to move us off of this topic at this point. Kerry and then Jessica.

MS. MARHEFKA: I'm comfortable with that, I believe. One of the things that I'm struggling with is this sort of lack of, you know, a very clear purpose, and I'm trying to struggle back to the last time we had to really create a purpose and need from scratch, and the sort of mechanics of that, and is that something -- You know, often, it's been very clear, right, and like staff can hear what we say at the table and go back and synthesize for us, and I think, in this case, that's not the case.

I would suggest that maybe the folks that have a strong sense of where they want to take a crack at it, and bring us back their version of what a purpose and need might look like, for the next discussion we have on this, based on the discussion we had today, because that's the one place that I'm still a little bit lost.

DR. BELCHER: I agree with that. Jessica and then Tom.

MS. MCCAWLEY: The thing that I'm struggling with -- So the first bullet up there, to postpone further discussions of for-hire limited access until updated for-hire permit data is available, and so that seems to be somewhat in conflict with what some other people are saying, and like, hey, come back to the next meeting, and we'll talk about this more, and I feel like we're going to be in the exact same place we are now, with a lot of good discussion, but it's kind of amorphous, and like it's not focused, and there's no purpose and need.

I guess I'm in the place of I really want to postpone further discussion until we have this data, and I don't want to keep having this amorphous discussion, across these different fishery management plans, until we have that additional information, and so I just wanted to point out that I feel like some people are in that camp, and then other people are in the camp of, well, let's continue to talk about this at every single meeting, until we get that data, and so I just want to try to be clear here.

I could actually make a motion to postpone further discussion of for-hire limited access until updated for-hire permit data is available, and I would actually say motion to table further discussion of for-hire limited access until updated for-hire permit data is available.

DR. BELCHER: Okay, and so that's the motion that's set forward. Is there a second for the motion, so we can continue discussion on that? Trish is seconding.

MS. MCCAWLEY: A motion to table is not debatable.

DR. BELCHER: Shep.

MR. GRIMES: Well, I just had a question, and I think it's still not clear to me, and maybe I wasn't paying sufficient attention, but the question wasn't answered of exactly what for-hire data are we waiting for. Thank you.

DR. BELCHER: So that was John Hadley, and he basically indicated what they were trying to get information on, so we could look at the geographic split-outs of the permits, the numbers of permits, because there is four years of lag in the information that's available, and so it's just more information that we currently don't have to be able to assess some of the proposed options that are there, was my understanding of that. Shep and then Amy.

MR. GRIMES: Well, so I presume then that is the for-hire data that this is talking about, that we're waiting for, those four years. Thank you.

DR. BELCHER: Correct. Amy.

MS. DUKES: Thank you, Madam Chair. I just procedurally have a question. This won't negate the conversations from the APs, perhaps the for-hire ad hoc AP, from continuing these discussions, and this is just for this group, correct? I just want to make sure. Thank you.

DR. BELCHER: Okay, and so I guess my question is, again, because I'm not as versed in Roberts Rules, which I apologize for, and so do we need the formality of the motion, because if the data, as Andy said, potentially could be available for September, and, I mean, it seems like to put the motion out there is more or less just shutting down the conversation, and is that what we're trying to do with this? Again, I'm trying to figure out the procedure of this. I agree that we have no purpose and need, and continued conversation at this point, to me, is just all it is, and it's banter around the table, and I want everybody to be heard, but, if we can't direct our staff towards what we're aiming for, I don't see how any more conversation is providing them additional information, other than what the direction is there.

There's nothing that says that we have to do anything in September, and back to the workload, and we don't know when the data will be available, and so there's kind of that up-in-the-air to that, and can we not just work off of direction to staff? Why table it for further discussion, other than just to shut it down today, and that's my question to you, Jessica.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Because I don't think that the permit data is going to be ready in September. You know, based on what Andy said on the information, and, you know, now there's another hitch in the system, if you will, and it's not ready, and, thinking about the deadlines for the briefing book, et cetera, I don't think it's going to be ready in September, and so I heard, around the table, this dichotomy between let's just keep having an amorphous discussion at the next meeting, versus let's wait until we get this additional piece of data, and so I am trying to definitely say, and put out there, to not just have another amorphous discussion in September, but figure out exactly when

they can have the information ready and slot this in then, and that's -- I'm assuming that's going to be December, is just what I'm thinking, and so I don't think that we should -- I am saying, definitively here, that I don't think that we should slot this in for September, until we absolutely know when the data is coming.

DR. BELCHER: Okay. John has a comment to this, and then we'll --

MR. CARMICHAEL: Just a point of order, and really what you're saying, Jessica, is not table, but postpone, and like a motion to table you make if someone has got a motion, and you don't want to talk about it anymore, and you would move to table that motion, and you're right that that's not debatable. People have to decide do we want to keep chatting, or are we going to table this motion and move on, and it could come up in the meeting after some other business is done. Really, what we are truly talking about is postponing, just procedurally, to make that clear, and then that lets us discuss it, as we're clearly doing, and so we can just change that, Chip, I think, to postpone further discussion, and then we could continue.

DR. BELCHER: Trish, you're good with that change? Jessica, you're good with that change?

MS. MCCAWLEY: I think so, but, to me, a motion to table is to table until a time certain, and I put the time certain up there, and so I felt like, procedurally, the motion was within the realm of - - I don't think you can only table within this meeting, and the reason that I say this is because the Gulf Council does this all the time.

DR. BELCHER: Okay. I've got Tim, and then Trish, and then, like I said, I really want to put a nail in this thing.

MR. GRINER: I think John Carmichael is absolutely right. I think you postpone to a time definite, and that is debatable, and so I think we are wanting to postpone this until such time as we have that data.

DR. BELCHER: Okay, and so we're back to typing "postpone" again, Chip.

MR. CARMICHAEL: You table a motion, and you don't --

DR. BELCHER: All right. Tom, Andy, and then, like I said, seriously, we're going to move on. Trish is in there too, and so Tom, Trish, and then Andy.

MR. ROLLER: I just want to be clear, just to show that I'm actually on the same page with Jessica, and, I mean, I think it is not helpful to keep having this discussion without the data, and just to show that -- I don't know the right path to go there, but we do need that data before we can have a robust discussion and figure out how to move forward, or not move forward, with this.

DR. BELCHER: All right. I've got Trish and Andy.

MS. MURPHEY: I was just going to say I'm with -- I'm totally with Jessica on this, and, in my mind, until I see the data, I don't know if we have a purpose, or a need, and I need to see the data before I determine if there's a purpose, or a need, and so that's where I am, and I will shut up now.

DR. BELCHER: Okay, Andy.

MR. STRELCHECK: So I am probably on an island, but I disagree that we just need this data in order to proceed. You know, the data is going to provide us trends and information, in terms of permitting over time, right, and it will tell us geographically where those permits exist, but, to me, the main focus of where we need to dig in isn't on the data at this point. Yes, the data will come along and be provided to us, and that will help inform our decisions, and it is why are we doing this, and why is this so important, and I feel like that's being lost, because no one thinks that there is this problem with overcapitalization of this fishery, and that we need to actually do something substantive to help reduce effort in this fishery, and so I'm frustrated, because I feel like we're, once again, kicking the can down the road, and I realize that it comes back to my office, and the frustration that I have with not being able to deliver that permit data, but, at the end of the day, we should be talking about that purpose and need.

We shouldn't be stopping work on things, and we should continue to move forward with things, and then, when the data and information, whatever else comes along, we continue to plug that right in, but it seems like we want to either do this all-in or all-out approach, and, to me, that's just not efficient, or effective, with the use of our time.

DR. BELCHER: Okay. Seriously, I can't -- We're going to sit here, and we're going to chew this up, and we clearly have an impasse. We can't get anybody to help advance this forward, and I would prefer that we work off of directions to staff, because, from where I sit, and hearing the OY component of it, there's a group at the table that really don't understand, or can't visualize, how the OY aspect is feeding into what the original ask was for, and so, until we understand the OY component of that, I think we're kind of stuck.

Again, if there's more information that Shep has that can talk about it, because of prior discussions, prior to sector allocation, and there's a lot of that that might be helpful, but I don't think we're well-versed in that to have that conversation, and so I don't -- I feel like, if there's more that can be brought to us for information, then -- If it's available in September, then great, and we go in September. If it's not, it's just not added to the agenda, and it doesn't have to be on the agenda in September, correct, John?

MR. CARMICHAEL: No, and this item doesn't. In fact, when we get to Friday, something has got to come off of the agenda for September, quite honestly, and so there is an issue there, but, you know, you do have a motion, and so just make sure we don't lose track of that, but I agree that we need to get clear direction one way or another, and, even if you didn't discuss it in September, it doesn't mean that staff is not going to potentially be able to continue working on like this OY question, because that is fundamental.

I'm not sure how long that will take, but we can come up with an approximation of OY for everything, and even though better data would help that, the fact is that we're required to specify -- OY requires from MSY, and we're required to specify MSY for all of our fisheries, and, even in snapper grouper, you've got it for stocks that represent 75 percent of the landings, you know, just through your things that are assessed, and so we have information. We may not always think it's the greatest information, but we do have information, and so we can make progress on that. Whether or not we can have that for September, or December, is a question that will take a pretty deep dive into all the other things that people are working on.

DR. BELCHER: Okay, and so, again, if we need to formalize it with the motion, then let's talk to the motion, and are you still holding on your motion?

MR. CARMICHAEL: You could move to table the motion.

DR. BELCHER: So Jessica is still holding, and you're still supporting on your second. **Anybody opposed to the motion that's on the table?** Andy.

MR. STRELCHECK: I request a roll call vote.

MR. CARMICHAEL: It's a roll call vote, and it's a committee roll call vote, or we're still in Full Council. Thanks for reminding me. That will make it easy, because it was going to get complicated, but, yes, we're not in committee. That's good, because I was looking like what committee is this under, and so let's see. We go alphabetically. Mr. Borland. Mr. Borland just slipped out of the room. We'll come back around to him. Ms. Dukes. **I will just remind, and so the motion is to postpone further discussion of for-hire limited access until updated for-hire permit data is available.** It's a roll call vote. Ms. Dukes.

MS. DUKES: Yes.

MR. CARMICHAEL: Mr. Griner.

MR. GRINER: No.

MR. CARMICHAEL: Ms. Helmey.

MS. HELMEY: Yes.

MR. CARMICHAEL: Ms. Marhefka.

MS. MARHEFKA: No.

MR. CARMICHAEL: Ms. McCawley.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Yes.

MR. CARMICHAEL: Ms. Murphey.

MS. MURPHEY: Yes.

MR. CARMICHAEL: Mr. Roller.

MR. ROLLER: No.

MR. CARMICHAEL: Mr. Spottswood.

MR. SPOTTSWOOD: Yes.

MR. CARMICHAEL: Mr. Strelcheck.

MR. STRELCHECK: No.

MR. CARMICHAEL: Ms. Thompson.

MS. THOMPSON: Yes.

MR. CARMICHAEL: Mr. Woodward.

MR. WOODWARD: Yes.

MR. CARMICHAEL: Mr. Borland is still absent. Dr. Belcher.

DR. BELCHER: Yes.

MR. CARMICHAEL: **The motion carries eight to four with one absent, or abstain, I suppose.**

DR. BELCHER: Okay. All right. We do still have the direction to staff. Is there anything additional on the direction to staff as this point? Just as a placeholder, to fill in as time allows. Amy.

MS. DUKES: Madam Chair, just please make sure that those discussions with both the existing APs and the new APs is in play with staff. Thank you.

DR. BELCHER: All right, and so we have finally finished Full Council I business. Let's go ahead and take a ten-minute break. It's three after, and we'll go to 10:15, and so everybody come back at 10:15, and we'll start in the Shrimp Committee.

(Whereupon, the meeting adjourned on June 11, 2024.)

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Certified By: _____ Date: _____

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Amanda Thomas
July 24, 2024

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Full Council I

JUNE 10, 2024

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SEDAR Coordinator

Position Open

843-225-8424

SOUTH ATLANTIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

Full Council
Tue 6/11

2024 COUNCIL MEMBERS

Voting

Dr. Carolyn Belcher, **Chair** ✓
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SOUTH ATLANTIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL
2024 COUNCIL MEMBERS (continued)

Full Council
Tue 6/11

Non-Voting

✓
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Warner-KramerDM@state.gov

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Representative
TBD

Rick Devictor
Monica Smit-Brunello
Greff white
Dr. Marcel Riechert
Dr. Clay Porch
Dr. Kestley Banks
Sonny Gwin
Pat O'Shaghnessy
Nik Menta
Shep Grimes

Full Council
Tue 4/11

SOUTH ATLANTIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL
COUNCIL STAFF

Executive Director
John Carmichael ✓

843-302-8435

Deputy Director - Science ✓
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Deputy Director - Management
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Open Position
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Administrative Officer ✓
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SEDAR Coordinator
Position Open
843-225-8424

FULL COUNCIL - ROLL CALL VOTE

Date: June 11, 2024

Meeting Location: Daytona Beach, FL

Issue: Postpone further limited entry until update permit data

	YES	NO	ABSTAIN
DR. BELCHER	✓		
MR. BORLAND			Absent
MS. DUKES	✓		
MR. GRINER		✓	
MS. HELMEY	✓		
MS. MARHEFKA		✓	
MS. MCCAWLEY	✓		
MS. MURPHEY	✓		
MR. ROLLER		✓	
MR. SPOTTSWOOD, JR.	✓		
MR. STRELCHECK		✓	
MS. THOMPSON	✓		
MR. WOODWARD	✓		

9 4

SAFMC June 2024 Council Meeting

Attendee Report: (6/10/24 - 6/14/24)

Report Generated:

06/17/2024 01:32 PM EDT

Webinar ID

270-060-715

Actual Start Date/Time

06/10/2024 01:34 PM EDT

Staff Details

Attended

Yes

Interest Rating

Not applicable for staff

Attendee Details

Last Name

First Name

Alhale

Sydney

Atkinson

Seth

Baker

Scott

Barrows

Katline

Beal

Bob

Bianchi

Alan

Brennan

Ken

Brouwer

Myra

Bubley

Walter

Bunting

Matthew

Byrd

Julia

Cermak

Bridget

Chansky

Brian

Cimo

Laura

Curtis

01Judd

Davis

Jefferson

DeVictor

Rick

Delrosario

Leeanne

Dixon

Michael

Dyar

Ben

Emory

Meaghan

Finch

Margaret

Fluech

Bryan

Franco

Dawn

Geib

Rob

Gentner

BRAD

Gervasi

Carissa

Glazier

Ed

HILDRETH

Hadley
Helies
Helmey
Hollensead
Howington
Hudson
Iberle
Jacobs
Johnson
Johnson
Karnauskas
Kean
Kittle
Klasnick
Knowlton
Kraiss
LaCombe
Lam
Lazarre
Ledet
Lee
Lee
Locascio
M Borland
MCCLAIR
Malinowski
Marhefka
Masi
Matter
McGovern
Mehta
Mendez Ferrer
Moore (NC)
Murphey
Neer
Newman
O'Malley
O'Shaughnessy
Oliver
Ostroff
Petersen
Potter
Ramsay

DELAINE

John
Frank
Judy
Lisa
Kathleen
Joseph
Allie
Allie
Denise
Jia
Mandy
Samantha
Christine
01Kelly
Kathy
Marisa
Marshall
Sarah
Dominique
Vicki
Max
Jennifer
James
Gary
GENINE
Richard
00Kerry
Michelle
Vivian
Jack
Nikhil
Natasha
Jeff
Trish
Julie
Thomas
Rachel
Patrick
Ashley
Jenny
Andrew
Caroline
Chloe

Records	David
Robertson	Captain B F
Roller	00Tom
Seward	McLean
Shertzer	Kyle
Silvas	Rachael
Smit-Brunello	Monica
Spurgin	Kali
Stemle	Adam
Stephen	Jessica
Stephens	Haley
Sweetman	CJ
Thompson	00Laurilee
Townsend	Maddie
Travis	Michael
Walia	Matt
Wamer III	David
Wiegand	Christina
Williams	Erik
Withers	Meg
Wolfe	Wes
Woodward	00 Spud
carvalho	avelino
collier	chip
foss	kristin
gloeckner	david
laks	Ira
marinko	Jeff
moss	david
oden	jeff
oden	jeff
sandorf	scott
thomas	suz
vara	mary

SAFMC June 2024 Council Meeting

Attendee Report: (6/10/24 - 6/14/24)

Report Generated:

06/17/2024 01:38 PM EDT

Webinar ID

270-060-715

Actual Start Date/Time

06/11/2024 07:50 AM EDT

Staff Details

Attended

Yes

Interest Rating

Not applicable for staff

Attendee Details

Last Name

First Name

Atkinson

Seth

Bajema

Jordan

Bajema

Jordan

Baker

Scott

Barbieri

Luiz

Barnhill

William

Barrows

Katline

Beal

Bob

Benyshek

Elizabeth

Bergmann

Mike

Bianchi

Alan

Bogdan

Jennifer

Bonura

Vincent

Brame

Adam

Brennan

Ken

Brouwer

Myra

Bublely

Walter

Buntin

Jesse

Bunting

Matthew

Byrd

Julia

Carrigan

Abby

Cermak

Bridget

Chansky

Brian

Chen

Leyi

Cheshire

Rob

Clarke

Lora

Corbett

Ellie

Cox

Jack

Cross	Tiffanie
Crowe	Stacie
Curtis	01Judd
Dale	David
Dancy	Kiley
Davis	Jefferson
DeVictor	Rick
Delrosario	Leeanne
Dixon	Michael
Dover	Miles
Dyar	Ben
Eguia	Leonardo
Emory	Meaghan
Fauble	Joshua
Finch	Margaret
Fletcher	Brad
Flowers	Jared
Fluech	Bryan
Franco	Dawn
French	Lindsay
Gentner	BRAD
Gervasi	Carissa
Glazier	Ed
Gordan	Alexander
Gray	Alisha
Guyas	Martha
Gwin	Earl
H	T
HILDRETH	DELAINE
Hackney	Heather
Hadley	John
Harrison	Alana
Harrison	Alana
Haymans	Doug
Helies	Frank
Helmey	Judy
Hemilright	Dewey
Hordyk	Adrian
Horn	Calusa
Howell	Samantha
Huber	Jeanette
Hudson	Joseph
Iberle	Allie
Johnson	Denise

Kaalstad	Simen
Karnauskas	Mandy
Kean	Samantha
Keener	Paula
Kellison	Todd
Kent	Russell
Kittle	Christine
Klasnick	01Kelly
Knowlton	Kathy
Kraiss	Marisa
Krug	Stephanie
Larkin	Michael
Lazarre	Dominique
Lee	Max
Levy	Mara
Locascio	James
Lombardi	Michael
Lovell	Sabrina
M	Amanda
M Borland	Gary
MCCLAIR	GENINE
Malinowski	Richard
Mallory	Ryan
Marhefka	00Kerry
Masi	Michelle
McGirl	Maria
McGovern	Jack
Mehta	Nikhil
Mendez Ferrer	Natasha
Merrifield	Mike
Meyers	Steve
Montañez	José
Moore (NC)	Jeff
Murphey	Trish
Neer	Julie
Newman	Thomas
O'Shaughnessy	Patrick
Oliver	Ashley
Ostroff	Jenny
Owens	Marina
Package-Ward	Christina
Pate	Jessica
Petersen	Andrew
Poholek	ariel

Potter	Caroline
Puglise	Kimberly
Putman	Nathan
Ramsay	Chloe
Records	David
Reeder	Kelly
Riley	Rick
Robbins	Megan
Robertson	Captain B F
Roller	00Tom
Rose	Tyler
Runde	Brendan
Sauls	Beverly
Scerbo	Sabrina
Sedberry	George
Seward	McLean
Shertzer	Kyle
Silvas	Rachael
Smit-Brunello	Monica
Spurgin	Kali
Stemle	Adam
Stephen	Jessica
Stephens	Haley
Sweetman	CJ
Townsend	Maddie
Travis	Michael
Treece	Andrea
Walia	Matt
Wamer III	David
Wiegand	Christina
Williams	Travis
Williams	Erik
Williams	John
Wilms	Sean
Withers	Meg
Wolfe	Wes
Woodward	00 Spud
Yandle	Tracy
carvalho	avelino
colby	barrett
collier	chip
foss	kristin
gloeckner	david
hallett	fletcher

laks
lavine
moss
oden
sandorf
sica
thomas
thompson
vara
wilber

Ira
craig
david
jeff
scott
Xavier
suz
laurilee
mary
pace