

SOUTH ATLANTIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

COUNCIL SESSION I

**Villas by the Sea Resort
Jekyll Island, Georgia**

March 3, 2026

Transcript

Council Members

Trish Murphey, Chair
Jessica McCawley, Vice Chair
Dr. Carolyn Belcher
Amy W. Dukes
Gary Borland
Judy Helmey
Dewey Hemilright
Tom Pease

James G. Hull, Jr.
Kerry Marhefka
Charlie Phillips
Tom Roller
Robert Spottswood, Jr.
Andy Strelcheck
Robert Beal

Council Staff

John Carmichael
Myra Brouwer
Dr. Chip Collier
Julia Byrd
Dr. Judd Curtis
John Hadley
Kathleen Howington
Allie Iberle
Kelly Klasnick

Dr. Julie Neer
Ashley Oliver
Emily Ott
Dr. Mike Schmidtke
Nicholas Smillie
Suzanna Thomas
Christina Curtis
Rachael Silvas
Meg Withers

Attendees and Invited Participants

Shepherd Grimes
Dr. Marcel Reichert
Sonny Gwin
Dr. Clay Porch
Rick DeVictor
Johnny Marquez
Nikhil Mehta

Major Michael Paul Thomas
Kathy Knowlton
Kristen Foss
Jennifer Line
Lara Klibansky
Bob Zales II
Karyl Brewster-Geisz

Observers and Participants

Other observers and participants attached.

The Council Session I of the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council convened at the Villas by the Sea Resort in Jekyll Island, Georgia, on Tuesday, March 3, 2026, and was called to order by Chairman Trish Murphey.

MS. MURPHEY: We'll go ahead and get started, and so welcome, everybody, to the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council here in Jekyll Island, Georgia, and thanks for allowing some flexibility so that our subcommittee could get together again, and so, first, I would like to introduce Johnny Marquez from the Gulf Council. He's our liaison for this meeting. Thank you, Johnny, for being here, and then, of course, Sonny. Our old buddy Sonny is here from the Mid-Atlantic, and so thanks again, Sonny. It's always great to see you.

I'll go ahead and go with the Adoption of the Agenda. Does anybody have any objections to this agenda, or any changes? Then I will call the agenda approved, and then I need to do the Approval of the Minutes from the December 2025 meeting. Any major changes or anything? Anything beyond typos? Seeing none, any objections? Okay, and so that's approved, and then, also, our January 2026 webinar council meeting. Any need for changes in those minutes? Any objections to those minutes? All right. Then we'll call those approved. Shep, do we have any litigation briefs you would like to share with us today?

MR. GRIMES: No, I do not.

MS. MURPHEY: Okay. We're beating right through here, and so we'll go ahead and go into our reports. We'll go ahead and start with state agencies. Florida, would you like to start, or would you like me to start? Okay. We'll go with Florida.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. Thank you, Madam Chair, and so we had a commission meeting in February, and I was going to say earlier this month, but it's already March, and so we had a commission meeting in February, and some of the items that we covered in February included our Gulf and South Atlantic Council updates.

We also had a final rule on spotted seatrout regional management, and so that will set up the holistic management system like we have for redfish and snook. It's setting that up for seatrout, and so that's nine management regions around the state, and we review the management of all of those regions for those three species once a year and then determine if we need to bring back regulatory changes.

We also had some cold-weather events that affected some of our inshore fisheries, and so we're watching that, and this new structure will allow us to stay on top of some of those inshore species that might be sensitive to cold weather events even more.

Then we also had our federal legislative update that we do at the first commission meeting of the calendar year, and then we had a proposed rule for Special Activity Licenses Phase 3 changes, which are changes that include changes to manta rays, and so I think we've talked about before the manta that happened -- That was collected off of Florida, in the Panhandle, under a special activity license, and lots of interest in that, but there's other things inside that rule package, like changes to Florida Marine Science Educators Association special activity licenses and non-profit special activity licenses, et cetera.

I think that -- Well, one more update, and you guys can ask more questions when we get into Snapper Grouper, but we're in Quarter 3 of our three exempted fishing permits, and so we're in Year 2, Quarter 3, and that's still going well, and so I'm happy to take any questions when we get into Snapper Grouper about that.

MS. MURPHEY: Any questions for Jessica? All right. We'll go to Georgia and Carolyn.

DR. BELCHER: Thank you, Madam Chair. Just a couple of items, really. Starting out with red drum regulation changes, we recently held two town hall meetings, last week, to help gauge some of the interest of where folks would like to see us go with meeting the new requirements that are coming forward under the FMP. We have an additional survey out that's still collecting more input from the public, which will be open through March 12th, and, after that, we'll examine the outcome and determine what our preferred measure is going to be that we're going to present to the DNR board at the end of April.

Once we present to the board, we'll follow it with another comment period, which will give more of a free form right in, where currently the survey that's out is just commenting on the five options that we presented to the public. If people want to write in on more open options there, they can do that, and so all this to meet with the implementation plan for September.

Similar to Florida, we were keeping eyes on our cold snap that hit in early February, specifically relative to the EEZ closure for shrimping. We monitored two different data stations for water temperature, one offshore of Fernandina and one inshore at the Meridian Dock in McIntosh, and, while the offshore temps didn't dip below 9 C, we had inshore temps that were below 9 C for approximately seven days.

We did our February assessment, and, because of the north having probably more of the impact, because we were hearing stories from South Carolina DNR about what they were seeing around Charleston Harbor, we figured that first half of the state to the north would give us some insight on what the abundances looked like, and the assessment showed that we were down some, but definitely not near the 80 percent that would be required for the request for closure, and so, at that time, we did not feel we had strong support to trigger a request for that closure.

We also didn't have any noted cold kill events, whether it was shrimp, and we didn't hear anything about any cold stun events for fish, and so I think we dodged a bullet, just based on the time window at which the temperatures stayed low.

Following up on red snapper, our endorsement for the fishing license for landing offshore species specifically for red snapper, as well is in the house rules committee. It's expected to move to the floor after March 6, which is our crossover day, and so stay tuned on that, and then, along with the other three states, we resubmitted our EFP addressing comments and questions from NOAA Fisheries, and the next four months are expected to be pretty crazy with efforts surrounding outreach, if the EFPs are approved, and so, with that, that's all I have for Georgia.

MS. MURPHEY: Thank you, Carolyn. Any questions for Carolyn? All right. Thanks, and now we'll go to South Carolina and Amy.

MS. DUKES: Thanks, Madam Chair. I'll jump on that bandwagon with Florida and Georgia and start off with our cold-stunned both shrimp and spotted seatrout. We actually documented no cold weather events, and we did have some shrimp that were inside crab traps, but still moving, still kind of doing their thing, but no reports of cold-stunned fish or fish kills with our cold temperatures, and so I think, again, we dodged that bullet, and no need for any closures or anything like that.

Our red snapper discard project received a no-cost extension, and so we are continuing with that red snapper discard project for the next year, as well as our dedicated snapper grouper observer project in the for-hire fleet. That continues to gain momentum and traction within the fishery, and it's nice to see a charter captain who is now involved in that offshore observer program trying to actually solicit and recruit additional charter captains to participate in that. It's a nice little within-the-family network going on.

In addition, we have our charter summit meetings coming up next month, and that will be another opportunity to talk about the observer project, the exempted fishing permit for red snapper, and our legislation that was introduced last week for red drum, and so, kind of highlighting into that, we did have a bill that was introduced last Thursday specific to red drum.

It is going to -- The proposed regulations is changing the possession limit from two red drum down to one red drum per person per day, and not to exceed a two-red-drum vessel limit, which is down from six. In addition to the bag limit and vessel limits going down, the slot is changed slightly, with now, instead of a fifteen to twenty-three-inch slot, we're looking at an eighteen to twenty-five-inch slot, as well as some changes to requirements to use 4/0 or larger circle hooks when deploying natural baits, and those circle hooks would have to be non-offset and non-stainless steel.

The interesting caveat with that particular regulation is it's not only just for red drum, but it would be a codified change to the saltwater game fish laws of the state, and so that would be inclusive of spotted seatrout, cobia, tarpon, and billfish, and so we'll see how that continues to go.

From a vessel ops standpoint and our fishery-independent sampling, I am -- Well, the Lillian is still in the yard. She has had a significant retrofit. For right now, we've got tons of new internal spaces, and bridge electronics have been completed. There's new generators onboard. The engines have been replaced, and we actually did a reinforcement of the trawl doors, the outriggers, which were a little aggressive in size, were removed and replaced with a smaller set of outriggers. We still needed some stability there.

We're waiting on a couple more engine parts to have her final watertight seal done, and then she is likely to splash later this month, and then being returning home by the mid-part of March to the end of March, and with our first coastal trawl survey sampling trip scheduled for April 20 of a couple more days to get her settled.

The Palmetto is actually in the boat slip. Our two vessels are going to alternate their yard schedule, and so the Palmetto is home with some minor yard updates, or I'm sorry. Some minor updates to her while sitting in the slip. We are waiting on a weather window, which I hope actually happens tomorrow, and she's going to go out to conduct a state-wildlife-grant-funded pilot comparison to look at artificial reefs versus natural reefs, using our SERFS chevron trap videos equipped with the stereo cameras, so we can document the fish that are entering and not entering the traps.

This winter sampling is really unique, in the fact that it will be our first experience using our ropeless and on-demand gear, and so we've been testing that in the boat slip, and making sure that everything seems to be working right, and so they're hopefully going to be dropping some traps starting tomorrow. Of course, those ropeless on-demand gears will minimize that vertical line and floating lines in the water, because of our right whale migration season that's currently going on, and then this effort will actually be replicated in the summer as well.

We're still working on those SERFS expansions to the southern zone, working with Florida FWRI with that work done in the Keys, with the baited cameras in their SERFS chevron traps, and that also will coordinate efforts with the Gulf G-FISHER survey, and we're going to see kind of what works best in that area to better characterize what's happening down in the Cape Canaveral to the Keys, and the Palmetto will start her regular sampling on April 27.

The only other thing I'll add is that we did receive some congressionally-directed spending funds from Senator Graham's office, and that will continue to be able to be used to support additional changes to the Lillian, as we continue to get her into a tip-top shape, and so she'll probably be going back to the yard in Alabama in the coming years, to get a little bit more work done, but it's really nice being able to have two vessels that we can then work off of. Thank you, Madam Chair.

MS. MURPHEY: Thank you, Amy. Does anybody have any questions for Amy? Dewey.

MR. HEMILRIGHT: You mentioned the use of ropeless gear for the right whale season. Have you ever had any interactions, or suspected interactions, with right whales on any of the gear that you all have been using in the past?

MS. DUKES: Dewey, I'm going to steal a phrase from Dominique and say I've got to call a friend, and so we -- As the SERFS program, we are bound by the same sampling limitations, as far as the seasonality of when the chevron traps can be dropped, because of the ropes. This will be the first time that we've used the ropeless gear, and the use of that gear was just added to our LOA recently.

We don't necessarily have a ton of funding to be able to do chevron trap sampling in the winter, but this would be an opportunity to showcase its viability and maybe have an expansion in the future, but I can let you know if we've ever had any right whale interactions, just even a visual sign, during our regular sampling.

MR. HEMILRIGHT: I just worry about the interactions, and I don't care about the visual. Thank you, and I'll wait for that later offline.

MS. MURPHEY: Tom.

MR. ROLLER: Thank you, Amy. A quick question, and you mentioned that bill regarding redfish, and you mentioned that the circle hook language would impact all South Carolina gamefish, and what fish have gamefish designation in South Carolina?

MS. DUKES: That's certainly a good question. It would be red drum, spotted seatrout, cobia, tarpon, and billfish.

MR. ROLLER: That would just require, if you're using natural bait in the pursuit of any of those, you would have to use circle hooks?

MS. DUKES: Correct. 4/0 or larger.

MR. ROLLER: Okay. Thank you.

MS. MURPHEY: All right. Any more questions for Amy? Thank you, Amy, and so I'll finish up with North Carolina. Basically, we do have a new Colonel of Law Enforcement. We hired Colonel Chris Lee in January, and so he has been with DMF for eighteen years, in various roles throughout law enforcement, and he is -- So now he is the colonel of everyone there.

We are making changes to sheepshead regulations, and it started March 1. We now have a fourteen-inch total length size limit, with a five-fish bag, and then, commercially, pound nets can take 1,500 pounds. All of the gears have a vessel limit of 300 pounds.

We did have a significant cold stun for speckled seatrout in February. We got a crazy amount of snow, is all I can say, and so we closed speckled trout to -- Or spotted seatrout. We closed that in February to both recreational and commercial, and we'll reopen on June 30, and this is to protect those fish that survived the cold stun to spawn.

Our commission met in February, and they are proposing a five-fish bag limit on Atlantic bonito, as well as proclamation authority, and this will begin the rule process. It will probably take a couple of years for that to go. We are also -- This will be the first year we've had -- We'll be having a spring Gulf flounder season, and this is in the ocean only, for two weeks, from March 9 to the 22nd, and it will be a one-fish bag and a fifteen-inch size limit.

Because of the snow that killed the trout, it also killed our Lines of Communication that we had planned, and so we'll be -- That's been rescheduled for the end of March, and that's really pretty much for North Carolina, and so if anybody has got any questions. All right, and so that is it for state agencies. We'll go ahead and go to the council liaisons. Johnny, would you like to tell us about what's going on in the Gulf Council?

MR. MARQUEZ: Sure. Thank you, Madam Chair. The Gulf Council had our last meeting in New Orleans from January 26 to 28. The council began the meeting by deciding to re-advertise for membership for two of our APs, the Red Drum and Coastal Migratory Pelagic Advisory Panel. Solicitation for the applicants will be sent out in the next few weeks, and, actually, that has been sent out, I believe.

For red grouper, the Gulf Council took final action on Reef Fish Amendment 62, which considers increasing red grouper catch limits and eliminating the recreational shallow-water grouper closed season. For red grouper, the council decided to phase-in the total annual catch limit increases over a three-year period, established a 68.2 percent commercial and 31.8 percent recreational sector allocation, and maintain the current 5 percent commercial and 9 percent recreational buffers between their respective annual catch limits and annual catch targets.

The council also decided to eliminate the February 1 to March 31 recreational shallow-water grouper closure beyond twenty fathoms. This amendment will be transmitted to the Secretary for consideration and implementation as soon as practical.

For shallow-water grouper, the other shallow-water grouper complex, which includes scamp, yellowmouth grouper, yellowfin grouper, and black grouper, the council developed Reef Fish Amendment 58 to split the shallow-water grouper complex into two separate complexes, because the stock assessment was conducted on scamp and yellowmouth grouper separate from the other species.

After hearing public comment, the council decided to delay final action on the amendment based on uncertainty associated with private recreational landings estimates generated by the federal recreational data collection program, the Marine Resource Information Program Fishing Effort Survey, and I'm sorry. The council is hesitant to base sector allocations on the scamp complex on MRIP-FES estimates before the Scientific and Statistical Committee can review the results of the pilot study being conducted to address MRIP-FES overestimation issues.

In the meantime, the council expects the framework action finalized by the council in June 2025 will be implemented this year. That framework will set the annual catch limit for the other shallow-water grouper complex at 322,000 pounds gutted weight, and the recreational season will open from July 1 through December 31.

For the for-hire sector electronic reporting, the council resumed work on a draft amendment that includes developing a new federal for-hire data collection program. The council's current preferred alternatives will require owner-operators of federal for-hire vessels to submit a trip declaration for each for-hire fishing trip, the complete electronic reports for each trip before offloading. Additionally, a portion of vessel owner-operators would be selected each year to submit electronic data on charter fishing activity. A did-not-fish report will have to be submitted weekly when fishing does not occur.

During this meeting the council primarily focused on its discussions on economic data reporting requirements and the availability of funding to implement the program. The council plans to review public hearing drafts of this document during the June 2026 meeting and expects to gather public comment through virtual public meetings and written comments over the summer before taking final action.

Recreational reporting of deepwater grouper, the council began discussing the potential use of mandatory reporting systems for the recreational deepwater grouper fishery to reduce uncertainty in estimates used to make management decisions. The council anticipates that collecting and validating recreational deepwater grouper data will be difficult, because of the varying compliance with other recreational reporting programs and because recreational deep-drop fishermen are difficult to intercept for validation by dockside samplers. The council will continue discussion on this at future meetings.

For the commercial individual fishing quota program for red grouper, the council heard a presentation on consideration of establishing a pilot program that would establish an IFQ quota pool for red grouper and distribute the annual allocation to participants of the grouper-tilefish IFQ program. the quota pool would be established using a percentage of the quota increase that is

expected to be distributed from Reef Fish Amendment 62, and the council expects to review a draft of this amendment during the April meeting. The Red Snapper Grouper-Tilefish IFQ advisory panel will also have an opportunity to review the document and provide feedback to the council.

Permit requirements, the council resumed work on Reef Fish Amendment 59A, which addresses participation requirements in the IFQ program. Participation requirements being considered include requiring ownership of a valid or renewable commercial reef fish permit or dealer permit to obtain and maintain an IFQ shareholder account, to obtain IFQ shares, or obtain annual allocation. The amendment also considers allowing shareholders time to divest before shares are reclaimed if they do not meet requirements for participation. The council expects to review a public hearing draft this amendment during the June 2026 meeting.

With respect to greater amberjack, we considered regional management. The council heard a presentation on the key decision points on recreational regional management of greater amberjack. The council decided to develop a draft document with the intent to incorporate new information from the anticipated interim analysis for greater amberjack and results of the Greater Amberjack Count, as it becomes available. The council expects to continue work on this during the June 2026 meeting.

Recreational working group for reef fish management priorities, the council reviewed the background and workplan for achieving the six prioritized recommendations resulting from the recreational initiative, an effort to evaluate past and current reef fish management and explore innovative management approaches for the future. The council identified that, of the six goals, two of them are already incorporated into the council process, and the remaining four are on the council's priority list for future work. The council will continue to work on state or regional management for greater amberjack aligning with Working Group Recommendations 4.3 and initiated work to modify recreational accountability measures aligning with Working Group Recommendation 3.2.

With respect to proposed NOAA shark regulation changes, the council decided to request an extension of NOAA's Atlantic Highly Migratory Species comment period on a proposed rule that would reduce the recreational bag limit for Atlantic sharpnose shark and bonnethead sharks from one person per trip to one per vessel per trip. The council would like the opportunity to provide input, given the abundance of those species, and since the reduction does not appear to be related to any recent stock assessment. The council will also request a presentation from the Atlantic HMS during its April 2026 council meeting.

With respect to regulatory streamlining, the council reviewed a draft plan to streamline the regulatory processes and improve climate readiness. The council discussed the use of exempted fishing permits to test novel management changes and using categorical exclusions to quickly develop minor management changes. The council also considered designating low-priority species as ecosystem component species, so they no longer require annual catch limits or annual quota monitoring. The council plans to continue work on this effort during a future meeting.

Red snapper, for-hire red snapper management, the council initiated a document that would consider allowing NOAA Fisheries to modify federal for-hire fishing regulations for red snapper, such as the bag limit, size limit, and season dates on an annual basis. This could allow for greater flexibility in federal for-hire management.

With respect to private recreational red snapper, the council initiated work on a document that explores options to enhance flexibility for private recreational red snapper management by allowing uncaught quota to be carried over to the following year within the state and to allow transfer of uncaught quota between states within a fishing year. This action was inspired by the Recreational Fishing Initiative 3.2.

Finally, lane snapper, the council initiated work on a document to increase lane snapper catch limits based on an interim analysis and resulting advice from its Scientific and Statistical Committee. Interim analyses are health checks performed in between full stock assessments to help the council stay informed respond more quickly if conditions change. The lane snapper analysis was optimistic and resulted in new catch advice that will allow harvest to increase by 200,000 pounds. That concludes my report, Madam Chair. Thank you.

MS. MURPHEY: Thank you, Johnny. Does anybody have any questions? All right. Then we'll go ahead and turn it over to Sonny to give his Mid-Atlantic report. Go ahead, Sonny.

MR. GWIN: Thank you, Madam Chair. The council met in Washington, D.C. in December. We actually had two meetings, one in February too, and I was not able to attend the December meeting, because I took something home with me from North Carolina, but, at that meeting -- I'll touch on some of the things that would be interesting to this council.

We approved a 20 percent liberalization in recreational harvest of black sea bass for the 2026 and 2027 season. We reviewed and provided guidance on revised draft alternatives for the recreational sector separation amendment, and we also -- We reviewed a draft range of alternatives for the recreational tilefish reporting framework and recommended several modifications, and I will touch base on that one, for the tilefish reporting.

Part of the scope of the problem is, in 2020, there was 447 permits given out, and, in 2025, there was 1,447 permits, and we seem to have a problem of reporting, when in 2020 it was 2 percent, and, with all the more permits, there was only a 4 percent reporting rate, and so we're working on that to try to make it easier for the reporting process of recreational tilefish.

Then we also met in February, and that was online, and let's see. We appointed Dr. Ming Sun and Dr. Jennifer Bigman to the Scientific and Statistical Committee, and their applications and resumes are amazing, and I think they'll be great for the science committee. We reviewed some comments on NOAA Fisheries Executive Order 14276, and part of that was -- It isn't in the highlights, but we had a letter wrote to the council from a commercial fisherman in Virginia, and the reason I'm bringing this up is because that great presentation on permitting that you all had yesterday.

A gentleman wrote a letter to the to the council, and he had bought a vessel. He has a moratorium black sea bass permit, and he has it on a vessel with 160 horsepower, and a thirty-eight-foot vessel, and he bought another boat, and they denied him to be able to allow him to put that permit on that boat, because, on the Northeast, you're bound by horsepower and length, and he wanted a wavier to try to be able to -- Because he had bought fish, and he had the permit, but he wasn't able to put it on his new vessel.

Up in the Northeast, like I said, you have a 10 percent on length and a 20 percent on horsepower on moratorium permits, and it's a suite of permits, and so, if you have all these permits, except for lobster, they have to stay together, and so if you go looking for another -- To upgrade, you have to be bound by the baseline of that permit, and I thought it was interesting that he was, you know, trying to get a waver, and, you know, they denied it, but it's really tough trying to find another vessel with upgrades to stay on a baseline of a vessel, and so I thought that was of interest to this, but, other than that, that's it, Madam Chair. If there's any questions, if I can't answer them, I'll be here all week, and we'll find out the answer to the questions.

MS. MURPHEY: All right, Sonny. Thank you. Does anybody have any questions for Sonny? All right. We'll move on to the staff report, John.

MR. CARMICHAEL: I'll just direct your attention to it. You have the document, and take a look at it, and hopefully you already have. It really documents a lot of the things that are going on behind the scenes that you don't see, and all the work that comes before you in this briefing book related to amendments and everything else, but it updates you on our activities, the website, and lots of website and communication and outreach going on, as always, and an update on MREP and an overview of what's been happening in the citizen science world.

MS. MURPHEY: All right. You guys are always busy, and so any questions for John, and, like he said, there is the staff report to read. Now I'll go to Major Thomas. Would you like to finish up your report for the Law Enforcement AP? We heard from you yesterday, and so we get to hear from you again today.

MAJOR THOMAS: Yes, ma'am. Thank you, Madam Chair. I'll pick up where I left off yesterday. As I said, the Law Enforcement Panel met back in January, and so, picking up where we left off, enforcement and compliance in spawning SMZs, we were asked to complete a survey to help evaluate enforcement compliance within these zones. The survey results showed planning objectives generally rated positive by several respondents, but with some disagreement on the sufficiency of evidence. Roles and responsibilities and coordination rated weaker in multiple responses.

Enforcement resources and monitoring were frequently rated insufficient. Compliance and stakeholder support were mixed. Most respondents identified enforcement, compliance, and outreach and communication as the top needs for improvement.

Challenges, the spawning zones are often far offshore, which creates difficulty for patrols, limited law enforcement resources, fewer vessels and personnel and coordination with NOAA, Coast Guard, state law enforcement, and CBP Air and Marine presents challenges as well. We discussed yesterday, briefly, that VMS enforcement only -- You know, it shows presence, but it doesn't show the actual activity of what is taking place. Visual flights combined with VMS, you could possibly build a case, but, as we discussed yesterday, it's better to have a boat alongside, to catch the gear actually being used in these zones.

Buoys were another question that came up. We saw it as unnecessary for establishing enforceability. They're vulnerable, and they can introduce other hazards for shipping and entanglement with whales, and so we didn't see a need for that.

Compliance, outreach and education and community buy-in are critical. Add the locations to the electronic reporting, verify that Fish Rules has the locations, and there's not a bounding box on the app, but the rec app does indicate whether you're in an open or closed area.

Technology and monitoring, use of aircraft overflights from the Coast Guard, and usually CBP, to gather intelligence and shape patrols, and we discussed a little bit of that yesterday. VMS could be beneficial for vessels that already carry it, but would not cover all user groups. Improvements in radar detection range, but not necessarily prosecution without corroborating evidence. Again, you know, it's better to have a boat onsite. Research gaps, a strong desire for concrete evidence of biological benefit, which can be expensive, and the benefits may take many years to materialize. Any questions on the spawning zones?

All right. Vessel limits for headboats for another topic that the LE AP discussed and offered the following. Enforcement depends on a clear simple rules and the ability to verify passenger counts and fish onboard. Counting passengers by either a captain's manifest, or any kind of headcount tool they use for the boat, and checking fish in ice holds, you know, that's pretty much just hook-and-bullet game warden stuff there, that, you know, X number of people on the boat, and X amount of fish on the boat, and that's something that we can we can do the math on that.

Avoid percentage-based limits, and use simple multiples per six passengers or clear vessel cap limits. Require headboats to maintain the manifest or records that can be reviewed at the boarding. That allows for a quick verification of the allowable catch per passenger.

Multiple vessel sizes and capacities complicate management. Any vessel-specific entitlement based on COI or permit would require accessible information for law enforcement. They would have to have that, you know, going into the check. Consider that vessel-based limits could effectively increase total catch for some species, and consider conservation impacts and potential reallocation across other user groups.

Amendment 61, the council requested the AP's feedback on enforcement concerns or benefits from potentially removing seventeen species from the federal conservation and management. Clarity of regulations and outreach and education to reduce stakeholder confusion are critical. For some states, federal management helps with consistency in regulations between state and federal waters. Try to avoid mismatching regulations between state and federal waters. Again, education would be key for all stakeholders.

Maintaining species in the federal FMP keeps the species within the focus of federal law enforcement officers. If state management only, it may not be a priority for federal officers. The preference is for consistent state-to-state to state regulations to reduce angular confusion. However, not all states can extend regulations into federal waters when species are unmanaged federally.

In Florida, to use the example, removal from federal management can incentivize targeting of these species as pathway species used to qualify for a restricted species endorsement on their state products license, resulting in increased commercial pressure. North Carolina had concern of different procedural processes and the potential for quick proclamations with little public notice. There could also be also insufficient enforcement presence beyond the state waters.

Removal from federal management could be viewed as a free-for-all among recreational anglers, and then consider whether changes to reporting requirements would be necessary. For-hire requirements exist, but none for private recreational.

Some additional topics came up of suggest additional clarity on how violations and penalties will be handled during an exempted fishing period. I wasn't there for the discussion, but, in talking to Myra some in the break here, you know, any kind of changes, whether it be an exempted period or -- You know, whatever change may come, I can speak for South Carolina and how we handle it.

You know, there's always a grace period, and then we work, obviously, with Amy and her staff to get the word out, and let everybody know, and then, as the whatever period is going along, you know, there is a grace period where we may do warnings and educational knowledge, and then then the enforcement would start, but can't speak for other states on how they would do it, but that's usually how we would handle any kind of changes or major regulation changes.

The enforcement capacity in North Carolina is a concern. They do not have a JEA, and so they have limited offshore resources. The AP also spoke about their JEAs. The summary reports are -
- The details are in the summary reports for each state's JEA, and I know, in South Carolina right now, we're currently, you know, wrapping up and getting toward most of our MMPA enforcement. Our trawling was pretty good this year, and we had a good many trawlers, and we were able to get a good many boardings in, and so ours is moving right along.

Descending device compliance was discussed. Georgia and Florida were 60 to 70 percent, and South Carolina is right in that range too, 70 to 75 percent of having some type of descending device onboard.

Other business concerns were king mackerel tournament sale exemption, and participating recreation anglers donate the catch to tournaments, which then sell the catch to dealers, and proceeds go to charity. This allows fish to enter the commercial market without commercial permits, commercial reporting, or required commercial vessel safety equipment. Panel members noted this is a management regulatory policy issue, as tournament sale exemptions are defined under federal regulations with state-level oversight. Changing this would require a regulatory action. Any questions?

MS. MURPHEY: Anybody have any questions for the Major? All right. Well, thank you very much, Major.

MAJOR THOMAS: Thank you, ma'am.

MS. MURPHEY: All right. We'll just go ahead and move into the Resilient Fisheries Project, and I think we've got Lara online, and Lara is going to give us an update on all those projects.

MS. KLIBANSKY: I'm just getting my presentation loaded up.

MR. HADLEY: Lara, we can see the presentation and hear you.

MS. KLIBANSKY: Fantastic. Thank you so much. All right, and so good morning, and thank you so much for being here this morning. I was initially supposed to be in-person today, but, unfortunately, I had a family emergency that I had to be home for, and so I am very glad to still be able to give the presentation, even if I'm not able to be in-person.

I'm going to give you some updates on the resilient fisheries projects. Before I get into those, I did want to remind you that, on the website, we have the Resilient Fisheries tab, which you can see on the left side here, and so, if you ever want to go in and look for information on these projects, we do provide quarterly updates, and so, for each council meeting, we do provide a one-pager update that you can look at on here, and we have those also archived from this website as well.

We have four resilient fisheries projects, that I am happy to say are all in progress now, and so we have the South Atlantic governance projects, which are the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council Fishery Management Process Review and Ecosystem Information Review and Strategy Development, and we have the Stakeholder-Driven Adaptable Implementable Management for the Wreckfish Fishery, we have Updating Distributions and Essential Fish Habitat for Snapper Groupers, Coastal Migratory Pelagics, and Dolphin Wahoo FMUs, and then we have the Multi-Phase Communities Project, which includes community identification, communication plan development, and ecosystem change impacts on fishing communities.

Then, also, I've listed here a couple of workshops, or workshop series, that are also part of the resilient fisheries initiatives, and those are the South Atlantic Ecosystem Data Workshop and the ECCG Governance Workshop, and so I'm going to give you an update on all of these.

Before I get into those, I do want to just mention, again, cross-regional coordination. This has been really important. As we've worked on these projects, all of the east coast, or all of the regional management councils, received funding through the IRA for these resilient fisheries projects. They're called different things with the different councils, but we are -- On the east coast, we're working with New England, the Mid-Atlantic, Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission, and NOAA, through the East Coast Coordination Group, and that's the group that kind of came out of the east coast scenario planning effort, and we are also coordinating with our Southeast partners, through the Southeast Coordination Group, and so that's the Caribbean and the Gulf councils and NOAA.

Then, all of these groups, we are collaborating on specific projects through our project oversight teams, and so all four of our projects, which actually now -- Even though it's four overarching projects, we have some of those broken out, but we have project oversight teams for each of those, and they are populated with primarily South Atlantic staff. With NOAA, members of NOAA staff, and also members from the councils, as deemed appropriate.

I do have a dotted line here for the Caribbean Fishery Management Council. They do not sit on any of our project oversight teams, but, through our Southeast Coordination Group, we are aware of their projects, and working with them. Specifically, we have -- Through one of our projects, we're looking at spatial distribution of dolphin wahoo, and they also have a fisheries project looking at dolphinfish distribution, and changes, and what the drivers may be, and so we're coordinating, even though they're not on our project oversight teams.

All right, and so, Project 1, when I gave my last update, and I believe is March of last year, this project was still, I believe, in the RFP stage, and so we -- When we developed the RFP for this project, which is -- I will refer to as our governance project, because it's related to the governance workshop, but we decided to split it into two RFPs.

It was a lot to cover, and we felt like it would be better served in this way, and so we separated it into Project 1a and Project 1b. Project 1a focuses on the management objectives that are listed here on the left, and so we have five objectives: the evaluate climate information use and availability; review how other regions and councils use NEPA tools; identify opportunities to further use study fleets, cooperative research, and citizen science; evaluate committee structure and use; and evaluate opportunities for considering the climate impact through South Atlantic risk policies.

We felt like those would be better served through two projects, and also given our timeline, and so they have been separated into the two projects, and they do share an oversight team, since it will be put into -- It's kind of under this single project.

For Project 1a, our contractors are Aaron Kornbluth, Stephen Poland, and Purcie Bennett-Nickerson. Most of you should have heard from them. They have been reaching out for interviews for their project, and so hopefully most of you have heard from them or have worked with them already. They are working on the objectives to review and analyze current South Atlantic Fishery Management Council management processes, and that includes NEPA processes and things like that, assess the structure and functioning of South Atlantic committees, and also to explore ways for the South Atlantic to incorporate risk policies.

I've included the timeline, just to have a general sense of how these projects look, and when they will be wrapping up, and so they'll be wrapping up in March of 2027, and they're on track. The project oversight team continues to meet, and we receive progress reports. This project oversight team does include Mid-Atlantic, New England, and Gulf representatives, and so we are working on coordinating those projects through that oversight team.

The project interviews are going on, as I said, and, also, there are draft project products under review by the oversight team, and those include process mapping, case studies, bottleneck analysis, a NEPA efficiency report, and also an FMP tracking tool, which they are working on for us.

Here we have the ecosystem information review, and this is the second project in our governance projects. It's being undertaken by Sarah Gaichas of Hydra Scientific, and she is reviewing the available ecosystem data and information. She's identifying ways to incorporate relevant ecosystem information into the management processes, and also exploring opportunities to expand the cooperative and stakeholder-engaged data collection and research.

She presented at the South Atlantic's ecosystem data workshop, which I'll touch on after the projects, and she also has revised her all-councils ecosystem data report, and this is a review basically of how all of the regional management councils -- What the tools are that they use for ecosystem data transfer, and also how they use them in their management processes, and she is now starting data acquisition for the development of prototype indicators, which is the second part of her project, and the draft indicators and integration report are going to be presented to the SSC in April.

For Project 2, we have the management strategies for the data-limited wreckfish fishery. This is being undertaken by contractors Josh Nowlis, Thomas Remington, Jeremy Collie, Meteja Nenadovic, and Brian Snouffer, working through Lynker, and they are -- The two objectives that were listed in the project are wreckfish selected -- Were selection of a data-limited species, and that was completed, and wreckfish were selected as the data-limited and climate-vulnerable species to pursue.

They are in the process of developing and applying a stakeholder-driven process to inform catch levels and management recommendations, and so the first of two presentations were given to the SSC in October. They are undertaking a stock assessment on the wreckfish fishery, and the SSC is going to review that completed assessment at their April meeting.

The AIM Stakeholder Workshop was held in November, and it introduced stakeholders to the AIM process, and some of the tools that they use in that process, and they're continuing development and customization of those tools, the harvest control rule design tool, and that will be presented to stakeholders in the workshops in the summer.

For Project 3, updating spatial distribution and essential fish habitat, this is being done for dolphin and wahoo, for the snapper grouper, and the coastal migratory species, and this is being undertaken by Jie Cao, Janet Nye, and Seungyeon Jade Hong of -- She's a PhD student at UNC, in Janet's lab, and they are updating species and fishery spatial distributions for the species that I mentioned.

They're doing comparisons between existing EFH designations, to update those species distribution and that information, and they're going to make recommendations for potential future EFH changes, and they're going to be improving the display of EFH information on the council website, or we'll be working with them to do that.

Progress updates, the project team are continuing the development of the single-species and joint-species models, and the project oversight team received an update on the multi-species modeling efforts, which includes dolphin and wahoo, and the initial results from the snapper grouper single-species modeling efforts, and those models are going to -- They're going to continue to work on those, and they are going to be reviewed by the SSC in October of this year.

Here we have Project 4, and this is very exciting. This took a while to get underway, but we now are in progress, and this is another one where this communities project was a pretty ambitious effort, and so we have split it into three RFPs, and so the objectives are to gather and analyze data to characterize South Atlantic fishing communities, their economic dependencies, and vulnerabilities to environmental change; to develop a strategic outreach and communication plan that promotes incorporation of community perspectives into council management decisions; and then ecosystem model development to improve understanding of the impacts of environmental change on these communities. Phase 1 and Phase 2, we put the RFPs out in December, and, for Phase 3, the RFP will be coming soon, and so we are hoping to get that out ASAP.

For Phase 1 and Phase 2, I have the anticipated project timeline. These are compressed from the original intention. Like I said, they are -- It's an ambitious project, but I am happy to report that we have selected proposals, and we selected a proposal for both Phase 1 and Phase 2 from the University of Florida. Dr. Edward Camp is going to be leading a research team that includes

Jennifer Sweeney-Tookes, Bryan Fluech, Tracy Yandle, Michael Jepson, Kai Lorenzen, Chelsey Crandall, Angela Collins, Andrew Ropicki, and Joy Hazell, and they will be undertaking both of these projects. We are in the contracting phase, and so we will hopefully have that in place, and that will be underway soon.

I want to switch now to the workshops that I mentioned earlier. The first one I want to talk about is the Ecosystem Data Workshop, and so this is a NOAA-funded and South-Atlantic-led regional workshop to address ecosystem data and collaboration recommendations, which were developed through the Atlantic Coast Science Coordination Workshop, which happened in 2021, and also recommendations that came out of the East Coast Climate Scenario Planning effort, and that concluded in 2023.

This workshop is going to produce guidance that will address many of our IRA projects, because they all have ecosystem components, and that includes the ecosystem information review that's being undertaken by Sarah Gaichas specifically, and also hopefully will provide guidance to you, the council, as you begin to consider implementation of the outcomes of these various projects.

This slide is not in your deck that was provided, and that was an oversight, and so I will correct that with staff and repost this, once I finish, but this is the objectives, which were to develop strategies to use ecosystem data to support management decisions; to identify existing ecosystem data sources across the South Atlantic, Gulf, and Mid-Atlantic regions; to identify decision-relevant ecosystem data gaps; and to improve collaboration and consistency across regions.

Again, collaboration is very important to these efforts, and so we did take a collaborative approach when we put together the workshop. We had a steering committee, which was populated by the South Atlantic staff that you see on the left in this column, and then also representatives from the Southeast Science Center, both Mandy Karnauskas and Roldan Munoz, and Verena Wang from the Gulf Council, and Brandon Muffley from the Mid-Atlantic Council.

Then we had a facilitation team from SWCA who helped us work through online workshops. This workshop was originally set to be in person. However, because of the changes to federal travel capabilities, we switched. We pivoted to an online meeting, and we ended up holding five working sessions.

We selected participants from across kind of many different areas of expertise, and these are the -
- We selected approximately thirty participants, and so that included people who had expertise in regional ecosystem data, federal fishery assessment, social and economic sciences, and all these other areas that you can see here, including non-traditional data sources, which is something that was important to our task.

Here you can see the five sessions. We began with a discussion of management decisions, and followed up with ecosystem information tools and indicators and data, and so we covered these three large groups. These were essentially brainstorming opportunities for the group, and then, after these, we then began, in Session 4, to develop the guidance that we wanted to put together, and then we reviewed the guidance, and also reviewed the initial report that was put together by the facilitation team. We are working -- Staff are working with the facilitation team to finalize that guidance, and that document, the workshop summary, and that will be available hopefully soon.

The second workshops that I mentioned are joint governance workshops. This is being organized through the East Coast Coordination Group. This is just a name simplification of the E3CG, if you'll remember that, and that group is, again, a leadership group that just works together to coordinate efforts on the east coast, especially things that came out of the East Coast Scenario Planning effort.

This workshop supports continuing governance project collaboration, and so, again, I referred to our Project 1 as our governance projects, and it's collaboration between the New England, the Mid-Atlantic and the South Atlantic Fishery Management Councils, along with support from the Atlantic States Commission and NOAA Fisheries.

These workshops were organized to address potential action items from the East Coast Scenario Planning, and those are -- It's meant to address those things that came out of the scenario planning effort that are now being worked on through these IRA projects, or these resilient fisheries projects, and the workshop will foster implementation of joint and cooperative management changes by each council, and so the expectation is that, through these resilient fisheries projects, each council may consider implementing governance changes, or improvements, and the idea is that, in cooperating, or working together in these workshops, and through the ECCG, we can, you know, have that as a consideration as the councils begin to implement those changes.

All three councils have relevant IRA projects, which are listed here. New England has the Operationalizing the East Coast Climate Scenario Planning Initiative and their holistic strategic plan for climate-resilient management. The Mid-Atlantic has their operationalizing outcomes of their program review, and also developing a process and indicators to evaluate stock distribution changes and governance issues. Then, for the South Atlantic, we have Fishery Process Review: Enhancing Responsibility to Dynamic Ecosystems, and also Ecosystem Information Review and Strategy Development.

The ECCG developed the timeline for these efforts, which began in 2025 and early 2026, where basically all the councils are working on their individual projects, and, for example, our Project 1, Aaron, Steve, and Purcie have been interviewing doing their interviews, and developing kind of their initial takes on South Atlantic processes.

Then, in February, we held the staff-to-staff workshop, and this was to discuss staff perspectives on current structures and processes and to begin to brainstorm improvements and the things that we are looking at with the recommendations that are going to be coming out of our projects. In the fall of 2026, we are planning for a broader governance workshop, and so this was something that we began to discuss and plan for at the staff-to-staff workshop, but this larger governance workshop will include council members, commission members, NOAA participants, and the idea is to develop recommendations for each council to consider.

Then, late 2026 to 2027, there's some discussive implementation, which is that the bodies consider these recommendations, and there's an idea for a leadership planning exercise, and also discussion of a regional operating agreements workshop.

Implementation is our next step, and we are starting to think about that. I am working with the council staff to begin to think about what -- You know, the expectation that we're going to be

getting a lot of recommendations out of these projects, and how are we going to begin to implement those, and so the first thing that we're going to start doing at the staff level is just put together a planning team to start discussing the potential pathways, to also monitor those recommendations as they work, so that we can bring those up to the council as they are needed and things like that.

Some of the potential pathways, that we've already started to look at, are implementation through potentially fishery management plans, operating procedures, and one of the really clear pathways that we've discussed, and I think you'll hear about this at the Habitat and Ecosystem AP, is the inclusion of the Project 3, the species spatial distribution updates and EFH updates, and those will be directly valuable to the essential fish habitat five-year review, and the timing is great so far, and so we also are looking at cross-regional management agreements, regional operating agreements, and then other things. Okay, and, with that, I'm happy to take any questions that you might have.

MS. MURPHEY: Thank you, Lara. Does anybody have questions for Lara? Lots of projects going on. Go ahead, John.

MR. CARMICHAEL: Just one, and I wanted to just highlight this for the council, Lara, and if you can hop back to the slide where you show the various coordination groups, and where the South Atlantic sits, and this is just for, you know, reminding the council that we sit in kind of a challenging spot as we deal with all this stuff, because we work strongly with the Gulf Council, and have for years, and we are increasingly working with the Mid-Atlantic Council, and that entails working with an entire different region, a different science center, a different regional office, and, by virtue of dolphin, we work all the way with the New England Council.

I think this figure really captures what we deal with, what our staff deals with as a council, and what we deal with in working with these management plans, and why these coordination groups are so important to us, and we put a lot of effort into them, and so I think this is a great slide, Lara, and thanks.

MS. KLIBANSKY: Thank you, John.

MS. MURPHEY: Thanks, John. I've got Kerry.

MS. MARHEFKA: Thanks. I have a question for Lara, and then I think my next question is more to you, John. Lara, you said someone, and did you say it was the Caribbean Council that's working on the dolphinfish project?

MS. KLIBANSKY: Yes, they are.

MS. MARHEFKA: Thanks. I'm interested to learn more about that.

MS. KLIBANSKY: Actually, if you -- They have a -- They have a website that is really fantastic, and they have their information listed, and so, if you would like, I can provide that to the staff, and they can send it along to the council.

MS. MARHEFKA: Thank you so much. I would appreciate that. The presentation was amazing, and there's so much information, and a lot of ambition. I mean, to some level, you know, I've been involved in the council member version of the three councils getting together and figuring out sort

of what this all looks like in the future, and I think my question, and you may not have the answer for this now, is I know we're going to hear soon from NMFS about all the ways in which we're supposed to be doing these risk assessments, and cutting back on sort of the demands and asks, and the scope of what we can do, and I'm trying to figure out -- Like this is the Cadillac of how we would manage fisheries, but how does that fit into then we're being told that we need to pull species out of FMUs, that we're going to get less assessments, but then we're going to do this high-level ecosystem management, and I'm having a hard time rectifying those things in my head.

MS. KLIBANSKY: Yes, and one thing that is really nice about this cross-regional coordination is that we are all looking at this. You know, I'm working at the staff level, and we are all aware of those things that are coming, and so one of the considerations that we have is that, in these, because we have these projects, they're ongoing now in the moment, and we have time to potentially pivot to look -- You know, I think, when we initially thought about the ecosystem, the idea was to look at what new data streams would we want to cultivate, what -- You know, what are the additional things we would want to do, and we have absolutely already pivoted from that to what resources are now available, and how do we best use them.

Are there efficiencies that we can find, and so, in working with our regional partners, and our NOAA partners, and, you know, we're already starting to look in that direction, and I think the same thing with the management. We are considering those changes as these projects are being developed, and so, in, you know, making sure that we're coordinating between these different agencies, and working with our project teams, we're already saying, hey, the landscape has changed, and we need to figure out how to change with it, but also to be more efficient, to be clear on what we're doing, and to identify ways -- You know, paths forward, basically, within that new landscape.

MR. CARMICHAEL: You know, Kerry, I think we are all struggling with doing all of that within the context of what we'll hear this afternoon, you know, and you know, from your time here, that this council -- It's not the first time this council has talked about ecosystem management, and it's been a struggle for many, many years, and it's not something that is easy to do with less information.

It has imposed much greater informational demands, and we've chased single-species management, in a lot of folks' opinion here, for many years, in response to guidance from the Magnuson, and the need to have hard catch levels, which we didn't really try to do here at this council twenty years ago, and that has really made it hard then to find the resources to figure out what ecosystem management looks like for our region. As we see with this, it's probably even harder for us maybe than in some areas, because our ecosystem is not just stopping at, you know, Monroe County and the Virginia line.

MS. MURPHEY: Thank you, John. Does anybody have any other questions or comments for Lara or John, or even Chip? All right. Well, thanks so much, Lara. That was a great presentation, and I'm really looking forward to seeing this all play out. There's a lot of good work here, and so thanks, Lara. Next up, Stacie, do we have you online to go over the Habitat and Ecosystem AP?

MS. CROWE: Yes, I'm here.

MS. MURPHEY: Okay. Hi, Stacie.

MS. CROWE: Hi. Good morning.

MS. MURPHEY: Good morning, and so, okay, and we'll just hand it over to you. I think we're getting her talk up.

MR. HADLEY: All right. Stacie, we have your presentation on the screen, and we're ready when you are.

MS. CROWE: Great. Thank you, and thank you, Madam Chair. Good morning, everyone. I'm glad to be here to give an update on the activities of the Habitat and Ecosystem Advisory Panel. We usually meet in-person, but, because we're switching up our meeting schedule this year, it made more sense for us to meet virtually this winter, and so we met for two half-day virtual seminars at the end of January.

We started off day-one on January 28th, and we heard an update from the working group that was tasked with integrating the revised food webs and connectivity policy information into the EFH designations. This is something that I have mentioned several times before. The workgroup has been working on how to integrate that information into the EFH definition of the user's guide for a while, and specifically how to separate prey data that are utilized in the Ecopath and Ecosim models.

Because these groupings are super broad, this has been kind of an issue, and it's been something that the workgroup has struggled with. Lauren Gentry, from the Florida Fish and Wildlife Commission, and her staff are helping to work on this, and they're going to provide an update to the panel once they complete their analysis.

Another issue that this group ran into was that it was discovered that the most recent food web policy and climate policy did not integrate updates included in the FEP II document, and so this is kind of a confusing issue, but, during the last five-year EFH review, the food web working group updated a 2016 version of the food web policy, not realizing that there was already a 2018 version that this panel updated, approved, and got council approval for, which was overlooked.

Somehow, the 2016 and 2018 versions were out there simultaneously when the website was updated, and the 2018 version wasn't moved to that new website, and so the working group proceeded with updating the 2016 version. I know that was kind of confusing. I'm going to direct you to Kathleen if you need that clarified, or if there are any questions about how that happened.

Anyway, while Lauren and her staff move forward with their analysis, members of the workgroup are going to meet and integrate that 2018 food web document that was discovered into the 2025 version, so that we then have the information from both of those versions in the current document, and then, in the meantime, there's going to be another subgroup that's going to work on a plan for the prey habitat information, and, once that is gathered, the whole group is going to reconvene and work through those test species that were approved by the council in September of 2025.

Next, we heard an update from the workgroup that has been working on updating this flow policy. This workgroup met six times last year, and the policy is currently about 99 percent complete. Workgroup members updated and reorganized the policy, added in some state-specific rules and

water quality data details, and then it was determined that the next step is going to be to send the draft policy out to state water quality representatives, to get their feedback.

Members of the AP took some time to recommend subject matter experts in each state who might be good candidates to review the document. and staff intend to send that document out this spring, and so we are hopeful that we can get some good edits back and finish this policy during our summer meeting this year.

The panel has also been talking, for the past several meetings, about how space activities may impact habitat and fisheries in those in those areas. We are still very much in the data-gathering phase of this exercise. Council staff have reviewed information that was previously gathered from space regulations, EIS and EA documents, some peer-reviewed literature, and a lot of other sources that were recommended by AP members.

During this discussion, it was noted that the AP wants to clarify that we are not in any way opposed to space exploration or the Kennedy Space Center or space activities in general. These are just discussions to make sure that unintentional negative impacts to EFH from space activities are appropriately mitigated.

The AP did determine that everyone agrees that current space activity regulations are inadequate, and so panel members recommended some additional sources of information to be investigated, and, finally, the AP will decide, at the summer meeting, what to bring forward to the council after all the data has been gathered, whether that might be a new policy or integration of this information into an existing policy, and, like I said, that will be -- We'll make that determination during our summer 2026 meeting.

Next, we heard an update from Julia Byrd on the Citizen Science Program. The panel really appreciated hearing this update from Julia, and everyone just thinks this program is fantastic. The AP recommends some additional funding sources for the program, and, also, a potential photo source was suggested for staff to look into. Julia requested volunteers to serve on the Citizen Science Advisory Panel, and Kevin Spanik, from South Carolina DNR, volunteered to fill that role.

We started day-two of our meeting hearing from Anne Deaton with National Marine Fisheries Habitat Conservation Division. Anne gave us an update on projects that required EFH consultations in the region during the fiscal year 2025 and compared to some recent years. You can see the table on the right of the slide shows the number of consultations in the South Atlantic region for the last four years. Overall, those consultations were fairly consistent from 2022 to 2024, and then you see a pretty substantial jump in 2025. Then, if you look at the pie chart on the left, it shows us that almost half of the consultations in the region in fiscal year 2025 are in Florida.

This graph shows the types of projects that that they received consultations for in fiscal year 2025, and you can see that most of those were docks. They're smaller in size typically, but larger in scale, because of the amount of projects, and then that was followed by development projects, shoreline stabilization, and then dredging, and those all tend to consistently be in the top types of projects that HCD reviews, and you can see that they make up over half of the total consultations.

Prior to the AP meeting, panel members received the special management zones working group report, and you're going to hear a presentation about this later in the meeting, and so I'm not going to go into a lot of detail, but, in a nutshell, the council established five spawning special management zones in 2017. Three of those have a sunset provision. To evaluate the SSMZs, council staff formed a workgroup and asked the HE AP to respond to a questionnaire that was developed.

The panel had a pretty lengthy discussion about the questionnaire and the working group report, and the panel recommended that the council retain all SSMZ management actions, which would extend those current closures beyond the sunset date of 2027, and then the AP also recommended improved monitoring, enforcement, and outreach commitments.

You just heard from Lara on her resilient fisheries projects. The panel also had a presentation from Lara. Panel members were really excited about the updates that Lara presented, and this is already in the workplan, to integrate the information into either a policy or an integrated ecosystem assessment request, which we would then bring to the council.

The annual habitat report was in your briefing book. The AP had a lot of good conversations, and this report would include information that I'm not summarizing for you today. Again, if you have any questions about anything in that report you can reach out to me or follow-up with Kathleen.

The HE AP was also asked to develop an outreach and communication plan for habitat information, and we have been working on this also for a few meetings. Members reviewed the draft FAQ list acronyms and graphics that were developed and discussed some issues that came up regarding what was on that list and how to present the information. The panel recommended some additional acronyms that should be included, and questions to be added to the list, and then the panel members approved the list, and so now this list will go back to the council outreach and communications staff, and, once it is fully developed, the Outreach and Communications AP will have an opportunity to review the suggested information.

As I mentioned when I started, our AP is now on a winter and summer meeting schedule, and so our next meeting is going to be an in-person meeting held in Charleston in June. Since these slides were made, we were able to summarize our when-to-meet poll and decided that the next meeting will be two full days June 29th and 30th.

Staff are still planning on having a habitat informational webinar series. This was approved by the council last fall, and the first seminar subject is planned to be the Port Everglades deepening. That's been pushed back a little bit, and will be held once the BiOp for that project is released, and more information about that webinar will be shared once it's available.

Then the last big item that we discussed was the habitat and ecosystem workplan. This is through the winter of 2028, and the AP would appreciate council's approval of this workplan. There are fifteen items on the planned agenda for the upcoming summer meeting. Panel members pretty much unanimously felt that this could be accomplished during that meeting, and I think that's it. It was just, like I said, a short two-half-day webinar meeting. We covered a lot of ground, but we will be covering a lot more in June, but, if you have any questions on any of that information, I would be happy to answer them.

MS. MURPHEY: All right. Thank you very much, Stacie. Jimmy.

MR. HULL: Thank you. Thanks for the presentation, and my question is on EFH consultations, and the question is how does a fisherman find out what projects have been submitted for EFH consultations, you know, and the rationale for that question is so beach nourishment projects, where they go offshore and dredge, or bore, for sand, and then bring it back to the beach, and we've had some experience with them getting into what we consider essential fish habitat, and so is there a link, or some way that just an average fisherman can find out about these EFH consultations, so that they can provide input onto like local knowledge of live bottom habitat potentially being harmed in these projects?

MS. CROWE: That's a great question. Actually, there are ways that members of the public can get that information. On the Army Corps website, they publish public notices for upcoming projects, or projects that are open for public comment. If you go on an Army Corps website, you may have to go by each district, and you can put your email information in to receive notifications when there are projects in your area. I do think you have to go by each region.

MR. HULL: Okay. Thank you.

MS. CROWE: I don't know if there's anyone else from National Marine Fisheries that might have more information about other ways to be notified.

MS. MURPHEY: Andy, have you got anything to add?

MR. STRELCHECK: I mean, I'll talk to my habitat team, Jimmy, and see if there's any additional ways, but what she shared was kind of the main way, and so, when we get a consultation from an action agency, like the U.S. Army Corps, it's, you know, internal, you know, correspondence with federal agencies, and there isn't a comment period that we're allowing you to, obviously, provide input on at that point, and then, obviously, when we complete an EFH consultation, that can be publicly available as part of the permitting process the Corps goes through.

MR. HULL: Okay. Thank you. That may possibly work, but, you know, just in real life, when we find out, usually we see the dredge offshore, and we go, what's this all about, you know, and so then you try to get it back -- Claw back into whoever is in charge, and they go, well, where were you at when we were, you know, planning all this, and, well, I didn't know that you were planning all this until I saw you doing it, and so that's why. It seems like there's more and more of these beach nourishment projects that are -- They're going offshore, and getting the sand from way offshore, and bringing it in, and not just close to the beach. Thanks.

MS. MURPHEY: Thank you, Jimmy. Amy.

MS. DUKES: Thank you, Madam Chair, and thank you for the presentation, Stacie. You and your AP have done a tremendous amount of work, and we really appreciate it. Just a comment and two questions, and so I loved the segue between the space industry impacts on habitat and then, wham, going to Julia Byrd and citizen science, and the fact that it's also on your workplan to continue it, and I think it could be a nice little marriage of the two, potentially, and so I continue to implore you guys to consider ways that those two programs can be maybe linked through a future citizen science project.

I did have a question, more so, about the Indian River Lagoon and how much coordination there's been between the working group and the existing Florida state-run water management district, and how that information has sort of been compiled, I guess, and then I have a follow-up once you --

MS. CROWE: So thank you for your comment on space activities. I'm just going to throw a little plug in there, and one of the issues with space industry impacts is that it has been problematic to gather information, and so I do think citizen science might be a way to kind of bridge that gap, and, also, if anyone else has any information on documented impacts, or anything along those lines, the HE AP would love to hear that. Let me go back to the Indian River Lagoon, and so you're wanting to know what our coordination was with Florida Fish and Wildlife, and was that what you were asking?

MS. DUKES: Kind of, and so was there any coordination with -- So Florida has a state-run water quality management district, and I imagine that water district, management district, has a lot to do with the Indian River Lagoon, and I was just curious if there was any coordination with those, and Kathleen is at the table, just so you know.

MS. HOWINGTON: Stacie, can I tag in?

MS. CROWE: Sure. Go ahead.

MS. HOWINGTON: All right, and so the Indian River Lagoon is actually the one of the precipices for starting this water policy update, is because we got those presentations from them, and from Lauralee, and so they were at the very beginning of starting, hey, this is what the issues are, and this is what we're seeing, and this is what -- You know, could you update the policy to integrate some of these problems.

The AP also has Florida representatives, that have been seeing it throughout the process, and then we now have -- That's one of the reasons why we have this, and we're going to send it out to the group, is I think -- I actually am compiling this email list right now, and so I think I have like five Florida emails that I'm going to potentially send it to, and I need to double-check with the working group, but they were there at the beginning, and they're going to be here at the end, and, in between, we had Florida representatives checking it out, but not specifically from the storm water management people.

MS. MURPHEY: I've got -- Jessica, did you want to add --

MS. MCCAWLEY: Yes, and a couple of things, and so FWC has a rep on the Habitat AP, but, as you're hearing from Amy, there's the water management districts that are over this, and so, of course, I would like for them to be involved in reviewing the policy, but, also, it's just a little strange to me, every time I see something like us working on the Indian River Lagoon, or beach renourishment, or something like that, that there's a lot of other entities involved, you know, at the state level, and they're not necessarily at the table at our AP, nor do I think that they should be, and so it's just kind of a strange scenario, and setup, for us to develop a policy, like for the Indian River Lagoon, when there's so many other entities that really have direct authority over that type of management, and the council doesn't.

MS. HOWINGTON: Yes, and that's the reason why I think the AP is prioritizing making certain that we are sending out to the external sources and making certain that we are getting -- Like St. Johns Water Management District is on the list, and I think there's one other water management district that we thought would be really important, and I might, you know, pull you into a corner and get a conversation going of which other water management districts you think should be included, but that's the reason why we want to do this last send-out. It's not a normal thing we do with policies, but, since this is so varied by states, and since this is such a, you know, big deal, we want to make certain that the people who use our policy find it helpful.

MS. CROWE: I also want to just clarify that the revisions to this policy started as a result of a presentation that we heard about threats to the Indian River Lagoon from flows being impaired, but it's not just a policy covering that. Do you want to tag-in on anything with that, Kathleen, because I feel like the title can be a little bit misleading on the slide.

MS. HOWINGTON: Right, and so it doesn't just cover water quality. It covers flow regimes, and it covers dams, and it covers development, and it covers a lot of stuff. A lot of stuff is in this policy.

MS. CROWE: Correct.

MS. MURPHEY: Yes, and that's what I was going to add. This really was the impetus to work on overall flow policy, and so if that makes more sense now. Amy.

MS. DUKES: Thanks, and I appreciate the strange comment. I'm just trying to -- I'm trying to feel -- I guess complete that communication leap, as far as how this group creating a policy that ultimately is going to a group that really has authority over it, and I was just trying to figure that out, and so maybe, as this continues, it will help me better understand both circles.

MS. MURPHEY: Jessica.

MS. MCCAWLEY: I share Amy's concerns. I mean, we've heard -- We've had former council members bring up things about the Indian River Lagoon, and other things, and making statements about that, and Lake O, and how it affects things offshore, but I just feel like this is kind of pushing the envelope for a policy even to include those other things coming from the council, because those other -- They have direct authority, you know, over these things, and we're over here at the council that's managing federal waters, right, and writing a policy for how these state entities should conduct their business, and so that's it's very strange to me, and it always has been.

MS. MURPHEY: Let me go to Kathleen, and then Robert.

MS. HOWINGTON: So remember that -- I recognize that it is in state waters, but part of the EFH definition that we're required to do does allow us to identify essential fish habitat, and that includes estuaries, and that includes inshore waters, and that includes -- It depends on the FMP, and it changes, but I will say, in the policy, we are not saying, all right, this is exactly how you should do it. It is recommendations, and it's best practices, and so, if somebody wants to write an EFH letter, and they don't know where to start, they can come to the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council policy, read through, and say, okay, these are some of the standards that the council has

set, and this is, you know, a letter that I can write, and so that is how the policies are supposed to be used and help, of give somebody a good start, but I understand.

Like I'm not stepping on the state's toes, and the Habitat AP is not telling any individual state what to do at all, and sorry if it sounds like that's something we are doing. We are trying to put together a best management, you know, write-up of what we think is the best recommendations.

MS. MURPHEY: I'll go to Robert, and then I want to say something, and then Amy.

MR. SPOTTSWOOD: I mean, I will -- I have a little experience with the South Florida Water Management District, and the issues related to the management of water quality in the Indian River Lagoon tie back to not just water quality, but water supply, flood control, and, I mean, this is like an extremely complex issue, and the quality of the Indian River Lagoon, and looking at, you know, oysters and everything else, is certainly um a high priority, but I would just imagine it would take an inordinate amount of time for this group to even fully understand all the complexities to be able to give any reasonable feedback there, and I just caution that I think it's going to be an extreme -- I don't want to say waste of time, because I don't want to, you know, minimize the importance of this, but I'm not sure that it's going to be a big return on investment in our time if we engage in that.

MS. MURPHEY: Thank you, guys, and thanks for all your concern. I was just going to add that these policies do get used by state folks when they're doing their own -- In North Carolina, it's called CAMA, you know, their reviews, and it just -- It also provides documentation for any concerns that -- You know, as far as when states comment, and so it is valuable to the states, and it's not telling the states you have to do this, but it comes -- It is a valuable source for when states do comment on their state things, and so just to add that, and I get it that it's complex, but it is helpful at the state level, and then I'll go to Amy, and then John.

MS. DUKES: Thank you, Madam Chair, and maybe we're all getting hung up on this policy. To me, maybe a word change could come into play that would maybe soften this, because you said it's more like a recommendation, and I don't and -- I guess I'm just trying to -- I'm thinking about this, and then potentially other habitat areas where a policy might come into play, where we can better coordinate with those partners, and be able to build it positively, and not that we're building it negative, but it's just it's a weird one for me, and I do have one follow-up question, but I will look to --

MR. CARMICHAEL: Yes, and I think that has certainly come up before when it comes to these policies, and folks aren't always clear what they do, and they are intended to be out there to help folks who are commenting on various projects. You know, the council approved looking at this policy.

I think, given what we've heard here today, when this policy does get passed up through the Habitat AP, but I think the Habitat Committee needs to take a close look at that, and review it, and, in particular, make sure that you don't feel it is overstepping its bounds and getting out -- You know, getting into a much more specific type of recommendation than you feel is appropriate for the council's role as, you know, overarching of all of these different things, and not try to get down into the weeds of any particular ecosystems entities issues or, you know, as noted, those groups that are really involved in do this and have the direct authority over this. We should be doing

something that helps them, and not something that potentially stands in their way, and so I think, when we review this, that's going to be really important to keep in mind.

MS. MURPHEY: Thank you, John. Amy, did you --

MS. DUKES: Thank you for that, John. It's really helpful to hear that, and have that little bit of background, and so I apologize if that's been talked about before, and it didn't resonate with me, but one other thing that, Stacie, you guys talked about was your workplan, and you're right that that's a pretty damn ambitious summer meeting, but I love the enthusiasm that you all will get through it.

The one thing that really stood out to me is this offshore energy and development updates, and, man, I mean, I could see some really cool habitat coming out of wind turbines, and how that might be our little link to, I don't know, offshore reefs, and kind of like we don't want rigs, but I can deal with a couple of wind turbines all day long.

MS. CROWE: Yes, and we've had some really great presentations, over the last several meetings, from some of the offshore energy projects and such, and, yes, we didn't really touch much on that this most recent meeting, but we're hoping to pick back up.

MS. MURPHEY: There's been a fair amount of time on that, updating that particular part of the policy, and so anything else? Okay. All right. Well, thank you very much, Stacie. We appreciate it. It's 11:26. I would like to, if we can, just go ahead and get through the update on Lines of Communication, which is pretty short, and then the shrimp workgroup. I don't know if it will be possible to get to the National Marine Fisheries Service update or not, but, at this point, let's see where we end.

MS. WIEGAND: Thank you, and so, like Trish said, the Lines update will be pretty quick. We had planned to be in North Carolina for our first North Carolina series the week of February 2nd. Unfortunately, there was some unprecedented snow in the area, resulting in us canceling, but we've luckily been able to quickly reschedule, and we will be in North Carolina the week of March 23rd, and I just wanted to sort of briefly note a huge thank you to North Carolina Division of Marine Fisheries staff and to Ashley and Nick, who run communications and outreach for Lines.

Having to last minute postpone a meeting series, and then quickly reschedule, requires a lot of communication and coordination, and I think, luckily, that process went really well, and I'm happy to report that we already have double the registrants for our upcoming week than we did the previous week, and so I'm hopeful that, in June, we will be able to provide you guys with a lot of great information from Lines of Communication North Carolina, and then, believe it or not, after that, we will start talking to South Carolina and Florida about the ones that we will be holding the end of this year and the beginning of next year, but that's the only update I have for Lines right now.

MS. MURPHEY: Thank you, Christina. Any questions? No. All right. Allie, the shrimp workgroup.

MS. IBERLE: All right. This is going to be a pretty quick update on kind of where we are in the process of holding the shrimp workgroup, and so just a quick reminder. Up top, we have the

motion from your September meeting which established the workgroup and kind of outlined who you guys wanted on the group. From there, we put together some goals and objectives, and so, essentially, the two main goals are to bring together the people that you identified in that motion, and so, you know, biologists, managers, fishery stakeholders, bring those people together to explore ways to reduce and minimize bycatch for giant manta rays and smalltooth sawfish, and then the other goal would be to develop an action plan that will be brought to you after this group discusses and -- To formally make those recommendations.

To achieve those goals, we have some objectives, and I'm not going to read through all of these, but these are how the group plans to achieve those goals. The group will be looking at these goals and objectives at their first meeting, and that brings me -- It segues me nicely to the milestones, and so we will be holding our first workgroup meeting March 24, where we'll have the group look at these goals and objectives and kind of start to really brainstorm what information is needed to make these recommendations to you guys.

Then we plan to bring back updates at your June meeting, and I anticipate that we'll need a second meeting of this workgroup, to really develop that action plan, and then, after that action plan is developed, then we will present that to you, and so those last two items are kind of just TBD right now, but that's pretty much all I've got for you until we have our first meeting, and so more in the summer.

MS. MURPHEY: Thank you, Allie. Jessica.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Just a question, and did we have a deadline with which we're supposed to be all the way through this process before Protected Resources steps in, and so I can't remember. I thought we had a deadline, but I can't remember what that is.

MS. IBERLE: I cannot remember as well, but I will check in on that and let you know.

MS. MURPHEY: Andy, did you want to say something or --

MR. STRELCHECK: Well, if we're going to get to the Protected Resources report, Jenny Lee can talk more through the process and the next steps.

MS. MURPHEY: All right. Thanks. Anything else for Allie? All right. Andy and Clay, can you take us to lunch? Would you be able to squeeze your stuff in?

MR. STRELCHECK: Well, I can't take everyone to lunch. That would be really expensive, but I'll take you up to lunch, in terms of some topics. Why don't we go ahead and have Jenny Lee talk about some of the primary Protected Resources updates, and then Clay and I can give our short updates?

MS. MURPHEY: All right. Thank you. Is Jenny online? Jenny, are you there? Do you want to go through the Protected Resources?

MR. STRELCHECK: She's saying she's muted still. You're self-muted, Jenny.

DR. COLLIER: Jenny, you might need to hit the audio -- On your audio options, just click off, and then back to your computer.

MR. STRELCHECK: Okay. She's having some troubles unmuting, and so, while we're waiting on her, I'll go ahead and give a short update from the Regional Office. There's really not a lot to report out on. I guess a couple of good things to note, and one is we were able to advertise for our Assistant Regional Administrator position, and so that was formally held by Dr. Jack McGovern, and we're in the process of making a selection, and so I'm hopeful, between now and the next council meeting, we can announce the selection of our new Assistant Regional Administrator.

We have not been authorized to hire any other positions. However, the Headquarters Office of Sustainable Fisheries was authorized to hire an economist position, and I've talked some with Kelly Denit about sharing the role to assist with our economics backlog in the Southeast, and so we are advancing toward hiring an economist that can help to assist the region.

The only other really major thing I wanted to note is we have a lot of actions and amendments that have been submitted to the agency for review and approval. A lot are making their way into the rulemaking stage, or at various stages of the rulemaking stage, and I just urge patience, because the process is certainly taking longer than it normally does.

There's more eyes in review, and just more extensive with regard to the approval process, and this has certainly been on, I know, the executive directors' radar for the councils, and something that's been a topic for the CCC, and we're well aware of the issue and challenge. I continue to work very closely, obviously, with Headquarters on rulemakings, and trying to prioritize those, and continuing to have the conversations with John and his team, and the chair and vice chair, about priorities as we work through council meetings.

Things are not moving as quickly as I would like, especially for some priority rulemakings, and we'll continue to try to prioritize those going forward, and so I just wanted to share that, and Rick will be able to talk more specifically about where things stand for many of your rulemakings as we get into discussions throughout this week, and so I'll stop there.

MS. MURPHEY: Thank you, Andy. I have Kerry.

MS. MARHEFKA: I'm not sure if this is the right time to ask, but I didn't see it somewhere else on the agenda. Can you give us any update, now that the electronic reporting amendment has been approved, on sort of any outreach plan, or how that's going to be rolled out?

MR. STRELCHECK: I mean, I don't have specifics at this point, and so we still have to do the full rulemaking, right, and complete that, and so there's still some process ahead of us, but we can get back to you with a more detailed plan with regard to that outreach and education.

MS. MURPHEY: All right. Thank you, Andy? Any other questions for Andy? Dewey.

MR. HEMILRIGHT: Yes, and I just wondered about a progress report on the SERO quota monitoring page, if it possibly could be updated to give better timely information, and a clearer snapshot, and I'm just wondering if there's been any movement on that since our December meeting, which I was advised that you heard it hopefully loud and clear.

MR. STRELCHECK: Yes, and I've heard you loud and clear, Dewey, and I do appreciate the recommendations, and so it requires, obviously, staff time, resources, programmers, and people to actually make those changes, evaluating the need for those changes, the ability to coordinate between the Science Center and Regional Office, and so there's a lot of steps in that process, and it's something that hasn't been lost on us, and certainly we are -- We had discussed, for example at the January annual planning meeting between the Science Center and Regional Office, ways that we could have an automated page, so that it's more in real-time, and not we get the data from the Science Center and update it on a weekly basis, right, and so we are trying to make some improvements, but they're going to be incremental and slow.

MS. MURPHEY: Go ahead, Dewey.

MR. HEMILRIGHT: Also, the futility of that, when it's able to be done, is -- You know, as we sit around here listening to a presentation yesterday on the commercial subcommittee there, and there's a lot of things that would be answered -- That have been asked at the table that would be answered if that's available, when it's available be done, and so I look forward to that, and will continue to ask about it. Thank you.

MS. MURPHEY: Thank you, Dewey. Any other questions? Is Jenny up? Is she --

MS. LEE: Yes, I am all set now. Thank you very much. Give me just one second. All right, and so we don't have a lot of updates, but we certainly have some. There's been a few questions here and there about some ESA rulemaking, and so I wanted to note that we do have a proposed rule to revise ESA Section 4 regulations.

It actually came out back in November, but it kind of went in between the briefing documents and availability, and so I wanted to let you know about that, but the public comment period on that did close already, and so a final rule will be out sometime this fall, but you can -- I have links there if you want to look at the comments or check that out.

Then we also have -- There's a proposed rule to rescind the regulatory definition of "harm" under the ESA, and, again, we just had a couple of questions on that, and so I went ahead and put that back into the brief. That comment period also has closed, but, again, if you're trying to look at that, that's available to you.

For something new, we have a petition to downlist the Carolina distinct population segment of Atlantic sturgeon from endangered to threatened under the ESA, and so you may be familiar with our petition process, but we did, on January 25th, receive a petition. It was from -- It was on behalf of a group of North Carolina licensed commercial fishermen, and so we're evaluating that under, again, that petition process, with the first step being a ninety-day notice on whether or not we believe it's warranted, and so, again, a link there in the briefing document if you want to look at that.

Other than that, we don't really have any other ESA updates, and just some um old news there, and that will take us down to ESA Section 7 related actions and other ESA species news, and so another rule, proposed rule, to revise ESA Section 7 regulations. That came out, again, back in November, and the comment period closed, but you can check out comments for the rule.

Then, for the Snapper Grouper FMP reinitiation, I did want to point that out, because I previously told you that we were just working on an amendment that was going to address giant manta rays and oceanic white tip sharks, as two recently-listed species that may be affected and that triggered reinitiation. In looking at that, and the drafted amendment, really, that biological opinion is now a solid ten years old, and so we're going ahead and expanding the scope of that to update the data on all listed species affected, and so that the new opinion that's based on the best available data for all listed species.

We are prioritizing working to get that done, and so I anticipate that I will at least have a good update on the consultation at the next meeting. In the meantime, I am working with Sustainable Fisheries staff, and we're making sure that the proposed action that we're consulting on is up-to-date, and so I just wanted to tag -- Or make a point to note that, under your ESA-MSA integration policy, the council staff is welcome to, you know, work with our fisheries staff in making sure that that proposed rule is up-to-date on the actual actions, and so, you know, we are following that policy, and trying to have as much coordination as possible, which is why I wanted to bring that up.

Other than that, the other ones that are here, we don't really have any updates worth mentioning here, and just kind of status quo, as we are moving forward though in general and trying to get all of our fishery consultations caught up.

For Marine Mammal Protection Act actions and other MMPA news, I have one update that is new, that is not on your brief, but I will submit an updated one, but, today, an advanced notice of proposed rulemaking to consider possible deregulatory actions to modify and modernize the North Atlantic right whale vessel speed rule, as part of the administration's ongoing efforts to evaluate and improve regulations, and so this is an advanced notice of proposed rulemaking regarding the North Atlantic right whale, the speed rule.

This is going to have an open public comment period through June 2nd, and we're requesting information on ways to reduce unnecessary regulation and economic burdens, while maintaining or enhancing conservation efficacy for the North Atlantic right whale, and so we have some specific information we're looking for comment on, the effectiveness of technologies to reduce to reduce vessel strikes with whales, vessel-size-specific risk assessment, alternative management areas, safety deviation provision improvements, efficacy of existing speed rule, and economic impacts on industry, and so be sure to check that out.

The North Atlantic right whale unusual mortality event is updated in the brief, just in terms of the number of animals, but those numbers are regularly updated, and so there's not -- I guess that's all I'll say there, and then, the North Atlantic right whale Southeast field season, there's been over 500 sightings as of February 2nd, when the this part of the brief was completed, and nearly 120 individual right whales calves sighted from North Carolina to Florida this season so far, and so that's good news, with twenty-two mom-calf pairs, eighteen adult females, thirty-four adult males, and twenty-one yearlings and juveniles.

The last thing to note is just the Marine Mammal Authorization Program, and the mailer is delayed, and so you can access and print out your 2026, or fishermen can, of their MMAP authorization certificates, and there's a link there to help out, and that concludes the report.

MS. MURPHEY: All right. Thanks, Jenny. I've got a couple of hands. I'll go with Kerry, and then Jessica.

MS. MARHEFKA: Thanks, Jenny. That was helpful. Can you explain -- It sounded like the snapper grouper BiOp was moved into a higher priority than the dolphin wahoo BiOp, and can you explain the reasoning behind that?

MS. LEE: Sure. Well, we are -- It started off really just because we have new listed species, and so that's a priority, in the sense that we wanted to, you know, get those consultations on the books, and so we don't have any record, other than informal, but no completed formal consultation for giant manta ray in snapper grouper, and so that is why we viewed that as an initial priority.

Then I think, you know, again, as we looked at it, it makes sense to update the opinion as a whole, but we haven't forgotten about dolphin wahoo, and, you know, like I mentioned, right now, I'm actually really strategically looking at across all the consultations, South Atlantic and Gulf, and finding ways to push them all forward, and so I suspect in June I'll have a good update for you, and that will include also the dolphin wahoo, but we are having to be strategic in looking across our workload right now, and I think you've heard, you know, before about Protected Resources in particular losing a lot of staff.

MS. MURPHEY: Thank you, Jenny. Jessica.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thank you for your report, Jenny. Two questions, and so, just to kind of ask what I think Kerry is asking over again, so in this looking at the previous 2016 opinion on the Snapper Grouper FMP, it looks like it's now being expanded to look at all listed species, and so I'm assuming that that BiOp would cover all snapper grouper species in the fishery management unit, compared to all listed species, and is that what that second bullet under that section means? Just making sure I understand.

MS. LEE: Yes, and, obviously, you conduct a lot of snapper grouper amendments, right, and regulatory amendments, and so, again, that's why, with all of your work, it makes sense to go ahead and prioritize getting that one completed, and, yes, it just means that -- The opinion always looks at the entire authorized fishery under the FMP, including all the regulations to-date, and so what we're doing there is we are just covering all of the listed species that may be affected, and so, rather than say keeping the 2016 opinion and then saying, you know, your FMP is covered by that old consultation, plus this supplement, or this additional amendment, we're just going to have one consultation that is going to cover the fishery.

MS. MURPHEY: I think Jessica has one more question.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Yes, and so I asked this question a minute ago, when we were talking about the shrimp workgroup, and so we were looking at the timeline for that workgroup to meet, and I believe that they're focused on sawfish interactions, and so I just wanted to make sure -- I thought there was a deadline on when that workgroup had to complete their work, and if the councils, Gulf and South Atlantic, had not taken an action, then Protected Resources would step in, and I could not remember what that deadline was.

MS. LEE: Sure. Yes, and thanks for reminding me of that question, and so it's not quite as cut-and-dried as that. I mean, we have a required need to reinitiate, and we're balancing the priority of working to complete that along with making sure we have the best available information to do a good job on that consultation, and so the working groups are one aspect of looking into whether there will be any either additional action or consideration for the proposed action part of that consultation, and so, you know, what we're actually analyzing.

Sustainable Fisheries and the Science Center have been working on collating and getting some analyses of the existing information to complete that consultation, and so we're trying to go as quickly as we can with the best available information, and it's really a bit of a balancing act. You know, in order to officially start the clock on a consultation, you do have to have the necessary information to complete it, and that's that reinitiation package we've talked about before, and so, you know, we've been working on getting that information necessary to kind of officially start the clock, so to speak, on that consultation, but we've been really working, you know, for a long time at just building that information and moving forward in that consultation process.

MS. MURPHEY: All right. Thank you, Jenny, and I think Kerry has another question for you.

MS. MARHEFKA: Yes, and I hesitate to ask only, because this is -- It gets dangerous, because I know just enough, but not enough that this couldn't -- This could still be a stupid question, but, Jenny, in regards to the changes that are expected to ESA, that are out I think for, what, proposed rule, or the comment period is closed, but the final rule has not been published, the overall changes, and like the definition of "harm", and then the other portion that's getting changed, which I understand, from my tiny bit of research, is sort of reverting back to wording that was used previously with this administration, versus the last administration, and how do you expect that to impact the consultation that's moving forward with shrimp, as far as timing, and will it have an impact on -- Sort of what rule are you going to go by, if that's the right question, and, again, I realize I may not be asking an intelligent question, but I'm trying.

MS. LEE: No, and I totally understand, and you were actually someone in mind when I popped those in the briefing document, and the answer is a lot of this is really clarifying things, and so, in reality, there's really not going to be a lot of substantial change, regardless of the outcome of these rulemaking, specific to fishery interactions and our conducting of that consultation, and so not to -- I can't think of the right word, but, you know, not to devalue these various proposed rulemakings, and it's just the nature of the specific changes, and clarity, are really not going to impact the consultation. We'll move forward, and, depending on where we are in rulemaking, we'll make sure that our language, you know, is representative of the regulations we have.

MS. MURPHEY: All right. Thank you, Jenny. Anything else? All right. Thanks -- Wait a minute. Dewey.

MR. HEMILRIGHT: Yes, and I was curious. Under the MMAP, what is the process to -- You've got the three categories, 1, 2, and 3, and what's the process to move a gear to another category, say taking from 2 to 3, and what's the information needed to do that? Thank you.

MS. LEE: You're referring to the list of fisheries, and we do an annual review of the information, and come out with a proposed rule, and final rule, and so any proposed change to a category would be proposed, and then finalized through the rulemaking process, and, you know, there's a lot of

things that feed that decision that our marine mammal staff work through, based on, you know, the latest stock assessment report, and fishery information, and, you know, working with the ASRG, things like that, and, you know, basically, it's, again, stock-assessment-related, and so does that answer your question?

MR. HEMILRIGHT: Yes, and my reason for asking was I recently learned that black sea bass pots in the South Atlantic, through my council training, which is very helpful, was listed as Category 2, and, in doing some research with fishermen and others, there's never been an interaction with a right whale for a black sea bass pot in the South Atlantic, and I was wondering -- Maybe we better take this offline, but I was wondering kind of why has a gear been labeled something when there's been no interaction, no documentation of it, and, you know, the financial implication to the fishermen, when this gear clearly isn't the same as lobster pots in the Mid-Atlantic, or in New England, or other gear that could possibly interact with that, and so that was particularly concerning for me, but I was happy to learn that, at my council training, and so I'm just curious if you have any thoughts on that.

MS. LEE: Well, one, I'm glad that you enjoyed the new council member training, and I'm familiar with those documents that new council members did receive, and I just want to acknowledge that I am happy to speak to anyone who received that, and provide some additional information, and, yes, I do believe that this probably would be best that I share some information with you offline, and I would be happy to kind of walk you through what we've done before, and the rationale, and then, if you have further concerns, perhaps you can bring them up a little later in the meeting. Does that sound good?

MR. HEMILRIGHT: It sounds excellent, but I didn't say I enjoyed my council training. I said I got through it, and so thank you.

MS. LEE: All right. Well, come on now.

MS. MURPHEY: All right. Thank you so much, Jenny. I appreciate your time, and so we'll get Clay to take us to lunch.

DR. PORCH: All right. Well, I don't have too much to add here, but I'll start out with, you know, the fact that, as I've reported before, we have lost about one-third of our staff during the last year, including several stock assessment scientists and about ten port agents, and so nothing that is a surprise to you, and I reported on that last time.

The good news is that we did get permission to hire two stock assessment scientists and about three survey personnel. One of those stock assessment scientists will be for serving the South Atlantic region, and so that will help fill in some of the gaps there. The survey personnel are badly needed as well, because we're looking like we're going to have a busy survey season. All of our surveys are a go right now, and so that's good news, and we will certainly need those personnel to make sure all our core surveys are completed on schedule.

What else can I say? Just a reminder, for those of you who haven't seen it, the CIE review of the South Atlantic Red Snapper Research Program has been completed and is available from the Sea Grant website, and I encourage you to take a look at it. It's a very interesting review, generally a positive review of the close-kin mark-recapture estimates of abundance, and not so supportive of

the habitat-based expansion of the video estimates, because there's so much uncertainty in the fraction of the habitat that's suitable for red snapper, and so they reported they had little confidence in those estimates, but, by and large, the close-kin mark-recapture estimates are a go for the stock assessment, and we're working on how we're going to incorporate that, and so give that a look.

Then I'll close with the Beaufort facility. You have inquired about it in the past, and we're moving forward, finally, with destroying and the building, and removing it, the old building that had been condemned, and we're working with the National Ocean Service to look at what the rebuild, the rebuild for the facility, would look like, and so we intend to maintain a presence there in Beaufort, and hopefully, in a couple of years, we'll have a new building, and that's all I have.

MS. MURPHEY: All right. Thank you, Clay. Anybody have any questions for Clay? Okay. Seeing none, we'll go ahead and break for lunch, and come back for 1:30, and we'll start discussion of the value risk matrix for managed stocks, and so see you all at 1:30.

(Whereupon, a recess was taken.)

MS. MURPHEY: Okay, everybody. I guess we'll go ahead and get started. I apologize for getting started late. We just got caught at a restaurant that was full, with no waitressing staff, and so I think we're waiting on a couple others because of that, but, in the meantime, I think Amy wanted to answer a question that Dewey had for her earlier, and so I'll just go ahead and -- You all go ahead and discuss that.

MS. DUKES: Thank you, Madam Chair. Dewey, through the state agency updates, you had specifically asked if SERFS, the Southeast Regional Fisheries Survey that South Carolina does, the MARMAP survey, for lack better words, has ever had any interactions with whales due to our vertical lines, and the answer is no. That survey started in 1990, and the coastal trawl survey kind of the year before, which is the trawl survey, and they typically do anywhere from 1,500 to 1,800 gear sets a summer, and there has been zero interactions with whales.

MS. MURPHEY: All right. Thank you, Amy, and, Dewey, did you want to respond, or are you just good? You good?

MR. HEMILRIGHT: Thank you for getting such a timely response back, Amy. Thank you.

MS. MURPHEY: All right. I think it is now time that we'll turn it over to both John and Clay to discuss the risk management and prioritization, and I'll just go ahead and turn that over to you guys, the value risk matrix for managed stocks, and so they're getting ready.

MR. CARMICHAEL: All right, and so I just wanted to give you guys an update. If you'll recall, and we talked about this after the CCC meeting in May, and then the executive directors got an update in January, and this was a way of dealing with the fact that we couldn't have a CCC meeting in October, because of the government shutdown, and what we were presented was called a framework for narrowing the scope of NMFS management and science.

One of the things I'll point out is that's a little different than what we were told in May. In May, the title of the presentation, which covered similar territory, was about aligning priorities, and so

certainly, between May and January, things shifted a little bit, and we're really talking about narrowing the scope at this point.

The goal that we were told was provide an overview of a risk-value matrix. If you recall, we showed a square with quadrants, and it was the risk-value matrix to be used, and, as I said, at that time, it was about priorities and now we're really focusing in on, from the agency, narrowing the scope of fisheries management and highlighting co-development, which, of course, is one of our concerns, because we weren't really told anything.

None of the councils were told anything about this from May until the meeting in January, and one of your attachments is a letter that the CCC wrote to the agency following this January presentation, and that's one of the important points highlighted, that, while co-development is talked about, none of the councils have really been involved in it to this point, and, as you'll see, we're still somewhat early, but there are concerns that the councils have not been involved up to this point, because a lot of time has passed.

The baseline assumptions behind this is certainly something the council supports, you know, and the first one is a fact, as well as an assumption, and the agency just cannot manage the 500 stocks that are currently in FMP, and certainly couldn't before, and not going to be able to in the future, and, you know, I would say this council, probably as much as any, recognizes that the agency hasn't been provided the resources that are necessary to manage 500 stocks to the satisfaction and expectation of the Magnuson act.

We deal with that in this region, and we've been dealing with it since day-one under SFA and other changes that required setting hard quotas, and we don't have the science. We know we don't have the science to do that for but a fraction of our stocks. The challenge though, what it causes, is that, when you don't have the science, you've got to deal with uncertainty. You have to deal with the precautionary principle, and we know that many of our catch recommendations are heavily influenced by that, and they're possibly lower than what they could be.

You know, the precautionary principle tells you that you err on the side of conservation, and so we are probably -- The fishermen, in many cases, are the ones who end up paying the costs, and so I feel like this council strongly supports the point in that first bullet, that we cannot manage these 500 stocks like that, and we've got to have a better way. The important thing is, you know, how do we get there, and that's going to be the challenge.

This was the prioritization matrix that was presented in May, and, following that, they did a pilot, and this is the actual presentation that the EDs were given, and so I'm not going to give all the detail, and I'll also note that Clay is going to follow me, and go into this, and, in particular, application to us in the Southeast.

They did a pilot lesson though, and tried to figure out how to go about populating that matrix, essentially, and that's what was going on after May. They made some progress and most of the regions are now working on doing what Clay is going to describe has been going on for us, and then what came out of the pilot was a revised matrix. The biggest difference you'll see here is not at all in the value or the layout of the matrix, and it's in the risk categories that are listed there, in like changes in what the stock status would be.

There's a little bit of a different treatment on ecosystem role and that sort of thing, but, you know, one of the things we've noted is you look at the value, and the values are commercial, recreational, and social, and so the commercial and recreational are dollars. They're going to be, as Clay will show you, distilled down into dollars, and certainly a concern for us, I would say, when you consider that we have a Sargassum FMP, is that, you know, there's nothing about say ecosystem value that assigns any value to something like our Sargassum FMP or our coral efforts that we recently were talking about.

The agency has come up with, through the work that they were doing and that pilot, a nine-step plan for where they're going to apply this matrix, and where we are now is somewhere within Step 2, somewhere between Step 2, and then the next one, of course, would be Step 3, which is putting the species into that matrix, and, when I say matrix, I'm saying we decide which stocks are high risk and low value, high risk and high value, low risk and low value, and low risk and high value.

Each stock ideally will be assigned to one of these four, and then there will be different expected management, and probably science things associated with that, and so that's a really important step that has to happen to get this done, and one of the things that is important in that, and there's been a lot of discussion of the co-development with science and managers there in Step 1, and that's another issue that's been raised by the eight councils through the CCC letter, is that the councils have not really been heavily engaged in this process, and so that's certainly been a growing concern, particularly as the next slide, when I'll show the timeline, because it's ticking off pretty quick.

Anyway, there's all these steps that are supposed to be included and completed before this fall, essentially, and there's a decision tree, and that's not something really we're going to worry about now, and it will maybe come later. The important thing though is the timeline, and what next steps are going to occur, and there's a couple of important points here.

The results, we were told in January that they wanted the results, like basically all the stocks in the matrices nationwide, by April 3rd. The councils immediately said you got to be kidding me, and there's no way that we can do this by April 3rd, and we've been given nothing, and we've not been involved in this, and we need more time. We need to talk about this kind of thing with our councils, and, ideally, we would like to talk with our councils, our SSCs, our advisors, and get this kind of information.

The agency did, in response to the letter, revised the deadline to June 30th, which helps us a little bit, because we were able to get it in this meeting, unlike some councils, and it gives us a chance to talk about it at our June meeting, and maybe get some input from our SSC, but, you know, this is wanting the final results by that time, and it's going to be pretty tight.

The other thing is, and I think this is extremely important, and this was not really part of the process that we were given in May, is the final goal of summer 2026 is the matrix is used to assess resource priorities and alignment, and that caught a lot of attention of the eight executive directors, because we're wondering, well, what does that alignment mean, and does that mean that the resources that the agency has are going to be shuffled around in different ways, and what does that mean to the funding of the councils.

At this point, we just really don't know, but it does certainly make it critically important that, when we talk about the value of fisheries, that we're extremely accurate in that, because it's one thing to have something relative, that's pretty good, if you're talking about well where our priorities align, but, if we're talking about where the money is going, and how the money is going to be divided, then it's really important that, you know, we as a council are properly accounted for in that, and so that's certainly something that is, you know, at the fore when we think about it, you know, and so we really feel like it's very important how, you know, in comparing what we were given in May and what we were given in January, that the tone of this does seem to have changed.

It's a bit of a different mission, and, in my mind, it certainly carries a higher burden to make sure we, for instance, assess the value accurately, and that, you know, by an extension, the value of our fisheries could be construed as representing the value of us as a council, and that could affect the amount of resources that come to us as a council, and so this is going to be extremely important.

You know, like I said, if there's -- If we're just talking about kind of relative stuff, what's important or not, then, you know, uncertainties and omissions we can kind of deal with, but, when there's going to be potentially severe consequences, then I think the importance of the information is elevated significantly, and so I just wanted to set a little bit of tone, and let you guys know where we as the executive directors were, the councils overall, and then some background to understand why the executive directors and the CCC the letter as they did, and then I'll hand it off to Clay, because he will go then into more detail on the actual where we are in the step process and what we're doing within our region to populate this important matrix. So, Clay, or I guess I'll see if there's any questions, Trish for me. If not, we can roll right into Clay.

MS. MURPHEY: Is there any clarifying questions for John at this point? I'm not seeing any, and so -- Andy.

MR. STRELCHECK: Yes, and I think Clay will maybe emphasize this as well in his presentation, and so, John, I appreciate your comments. I, obviously, have seen the CCC letter, and I have heard the concerns, and I've seen, obviously, some of the skepticism, and so I think it's valid, obviously, for the council to want to fully engage in this.

I just want to lean into this and say, you know, Clay and I, obviously, have been heavily involved in the risk-value matrix development. We have a huge stake in, obviously, the outcome of this, and so our intent I hope is clear that we're here to support this effort, and ultimately come away with whatever is in the best interest of, obviously, the region, as well as nationally.

Change management is hard, and I think that's one of the big scary things right now for the councils, is what does this actually mean for national distribution of resources, but, as we've tried to set it up well amongst the Fisheries Service in all the internal conversations that we've been having, right, we are just strapped for resources, and we have to, obviously, figure out how to best prioritize our resources, both regionally and nationally, right, and so that's where this effort comes in, and we're grateful, obviously, to the questions we've gotten so far.

What I wanted to emphasize going forward from here, and Clay will get into much more detail, is, right, this can be a collaborative effort, right, and that is our goal, and that is clear, that we need to, obviously, hear from you, and others, on the contributions of this, and that it's not just we're

giving this presentation and moving on our merry way, and so I just wanted to lean into that a little bit, and certainly have Clay give more details. Thanks.

MS. MURPHEY: All right. Thank you, Andy, and I'll go ahead and turn it over to Clay.

DR. PORCH: All right. Well, thank you, John, and I appreciate that those opening remarks, and I think you accurately described the struggles that we all have gone through putting this together, including, you know, we federal employees, and, as Andy mentioned, he and I were both on the working group that put this together, and certainly we didn't get the things in there that we wanted, and so, you know, there was -- As you can imagine, each region is very, very different, each region in the country.

In the Southeast, we have the three sub-regions, three councils, and HMS, and so almost essentially four councils. The priorities are different, and the way we go about things are different, and so it was really hard to come to any real common ground on how you're going to do this, but we did the best we can, and that's what I'll describe.

I think it's been actually a little less than a year that the National Marine Fisheries Service Leadership Council, which are all the science center directors, the regional office administrators, and the headquarters offices, and that whole team is the NMFS leadership council, along with the leadership, with Genio at the top.

We all came together, and we agreed that we needed to create some kind of prioritization framework that was nationally consistent, and for two reasons. One, for a regional implementation that would help guide decisions on the scope of science and management, and that includes revisiting species and complexes in need of federal management, but also revisiting the appropriate levels of assessment and management, which, of course, we, and the other regions, were already doing, but, ideally, this would help that process, but then a national implementation to help guide resourcing.

This I think is actually hugely important, because the National Marine Fisheries Service has never actually gone through a process like this, where they looked at the needs in each region and then thought about how to allocate resources. It's a complex mix of things, from what perceived regional needs were, what congressionals were appropriating money for, and many other, you know, historical legacy things that led to the budgets that we have in each region, and so no one could actually say this is the reason this region gets this much money, versus this other region, and I don't know if we'll actually get to that point, but this is a good starting point, where we actually apply a consistent methodology across the country.

Even if we don't all agree it's the best way, at least we're consistent, and then it will inform the decision makers to say, okay, you know, these resources in this area are this valuable, and this complicated, the management, and are we resourcing appropriately, and that's the discussion I'm hoping to drive on the national implementation part.

John already went through this, and we all agree, with the resources we have, we can't manage the 500-plus stocks and stock complexes that we do across the country, about half of them here in the Southeast, with the resources we have, and we're not even close to having the resources to do that,

and certainly not with, you know, Cadillac assessments and spatial management, which, yes, it would be ideal if we had the resources, but it's just not going to happen.

Obviously, whatever we do here, there's going to be impacts on National Marine Fisheries Service staff, the councils, and the fisheries and the fishing communities, and so we want to do it in a very thoughtful way. Again, I want to emphasize that we want to balance the national consistency, and we can't all do it different ways, if we're really going to talk about resourcing, and the interoperability with the regional flexibility.

Then, finally, as John mentioned, ideally, we're going to develop the application of these regional risk-value matrices that I'm about to talk about collaboratively with council, the Science Center, and the Regional Office, and so we want the scientists involved in the discussions regarding management changes, and managers are involved in the discussions regarding the science changes. That's the whole driving principles behind this.

In order to evaluate how we should prioritize each region, we need to understand two things really, the collective economic and social value of the federally-managed fisheries in each region, and we actually have a metric for that, for the economics, the value added to the GDP, trying to commercial and recreational on more or less the same scale, and then something we're developing is some measure of the societal value beyond economics.

Then we need to understand the ability of management to implement effective regulations, which is a function of, one, the ability to prevent overfishing, which reflects the data quality and enforcement, right, and also the ability to predict how the stocks will react if we change -- Put into effect various management measures, and so that's going to include their susceptibility to changes in the fishery and in the environment, and so is there a way that we can characterize that?

The general approach that we came up is this risk-value matrix, and, conceptually, it's fairly simple. Obviously, the details of implementation can get quite complicated, but we're hoping to kind of create this convenient fiction, where we say, look, these are the stocks that seem to have very high value, and also high risk, and we're going to manage them one way. Stocks that have high risk, but lower value, maybe we manage another, and all the way down to low risk and low value, and maybe we don't manage them at all.

Value categories, we came up with a metric that's common for commercial and recreational economic value, and I'll go into in a minute. Social, over and above the economics, and then, risk categories, we could not agree on measures that would really reflect what I brought up before and, you know, what's the what's our ability to prevent overfishing, and then can we predict very well what's going to happen.

What we boiled it down to is something that everybody could more or less contribute to across all the regions, and that's some measure of the susceptibility to environmental changes. Those were the climate vulnerability assessments that we all did across the country a couple years ago, and then the productivity-susceptibility analyses that many of us have done, and so most of the regions have those already, and not that they couldn't be refined, but we do have those scores already, and then there's a method of ecosystem impact, where we're trying to look at how important each taxa is to the ecosystem, and what happens if you remove it, and that's one that's an evolving measure.

As far as the actions we would take for a high risk and high value fishery, we just put some examples here. For the Southeast Region, remember that the Southeast Center also deals with highly migratory species like bluefin tuna. Two examples of high risk and high value might be red snapper and bluefin, and so we would consider continuing to manage those as single stock species. They rise to that level.

The status determination criteria would be based on an estimate of MSY, if we can do it, or a proxy that's deemed most likely to achieve MSY, which is the way we've been operating. Accountability measures could consider a multi-year approach, but they might continue to be annual, and you would consider the need for spatial and temporal management.

Low risk and high value, we're still concerned about them, because they're high value, but we're not concerned that they're going to -- Not likely to be overfished, and so something like white grunt, or king mackerel, would might fall in that category, and, you know, you could say coastal pelagics collectively, grunts collectively, and you would consider managing them as part of a stock complex.

Status determination criteria, again, based on an estimate of MSY, because they are high value, and we would want to put the resources there, or a proxy that's deemed most likely to achieve MSY, and, accountability measures, we might be more likely to use averages, or multi-year approaches, and any spatial and temporal management might be at a lower level of granularity than we would use for the high risk and high value stocks.

Low risk and low value, an obvious step is consider removing them from the FMP, and why are we putting a lot of effort in managing these if they're really not at any risk of substantial overfishing, and they're not worth that much to begin with, or you might put them as an ecosystem component. Status determination criteria would then be based on really simple proxies, if you're keeping them in the FMP, and, accountability measures, you would use averages, multi-year approaches, and no spatial or temporal management. The idea, again, is let's scale down the management, and either take them out of the FMP and call them an ecosystem component or do something that's much less rigorous and requires less data and less management effort.

Then, finally, there's the high risk and low value, and that might be something like goliath grouper, where, yes, they're really easy to overfish, but they're not ultimately that valuable to the overall fishery, and they might be valuable in other contexts, but it's not going to make or break the fishery as a whole, and so management would depend on the specific circumstances, and what's the source of the high risk. If they do have a risk of fisheries, which, you know, we know goliath grouper was at one point heavily fished, and easily fished out, and so it ended up being the subject of a prohibited harvest, and that might be what we want to do with this.

If it's high risk, but not worth that much, and it's not worth putting in the management effort, you just prohibit the harvest of it, but there's other approaches, and, again, that's why it says it depends on specific circumstances, but you probably would not take them out of the FMP, because, if they're under high risk, that implies that the fishery can overexploit them pretty easily, and so you wouldn't necessarily take them out of the FMP.

That's just conceptually what we were looking for the council to kind of think along those lines, and this is another way to look at it, and I'm not going to walk through all the steps in here, and

it's just a draft decision tree that Sustainable Fisheries and Headquarters put together, but it goes through the same kind of thing. You know, is the species mainly exclusively caught in state waters? Yes. Okay. Then give it to the states, that kind of thing, and, you know, it's another way to look at, you know, how can we scale down our management activities for things that either we don't really have much control of or they're just not that important to the fishery as a whole.

So John went through this a little bit, but the first steps that we expected to get done in April were really to articulate the objectives, as I've kind of done, and then to start acquiring data to help quantify the risk and value, and so we actually got a head start in the Southeast, because, you know, Andy and I being on the working group, we knew that we needed to do it, and so we were right on the heels of the West Coast Region that did the pilot study.

We applied the standard approaches that NMFS came up with, that I'll talk through in a little bit here, and that takes us to the next step, which is beginning now, or a little bit ahead of the game, and that's where we bring all the councils in, and NMFS Highly Migratory Species, and that's to groundtruth all the -- Well in this case, yes, semi-quantitative measures, but not just that, and I think I ended up changing this, and this must be -- Is this the PDF version?

Anyway, it really is to groundtruth all of it, the risk, the economic measures, and the social values with the councils, and then we want to place the stocks into this risk-value matrix into the high, risk and low risk categories, et cetera, identify any potential changes to management, and then, once those stocks are distributed on the matrix, kind of go through these questions.

Does subsistence or cultural value indicate the stock should be in a different quadrant, and maybe, economically, it's not that valuable, but it's so valuable to some particular group that it still makes it on the radar as a high risk and high value stock. Does international management -- Is that involved, and there's a whole other set of laws for international management, and so then maybe that pushes in a different quadrant, and then talk about management effectiveness.

You know, for instance, I brought up, in the Caribbean, a big challenge there is the fisheries are not economically that valuable, and socially they're very valuable to the people there, but enforcement is really low, and data collection is -- It was almost non-existent for many years, and so we don't have really good data.

I mean, we think we have struggles here with recreational catches and discards, and there now we don't even have a recreational data collection program. We're just trying to start it up again, and so we don't even legitimately really know the catches for many species, and, in some cases, the ACLs are like forty-nine pounds for things. You know, it just doesn't make sense to manage them the same way that we do some of the other council jurisdictions, and so these are the kind of conversations we're really trying to spark with this.

Then, sometime in the summer and fall, the working groups are expected to run stock assessment prioritizations on the results of the single species stocks that we think need individual annual catch limits, and those processes are already going in on in a lot of regions, including here, and then we want to calculate the data requirements for the proposed analytical approaches, and so let's say we're deciding to continue to do the Cadillac assessments and management for some species, and what does it really cost to do that right, and come up with some numbers there, and then determine whether we're going to actually get the resources to do that, and, if not, then we need to rethink the

way we're going to do management, and so we're anticipating some kind of back-and-forth with these discussions.

Ideally, we're going to run a data collection prioritization process to determine how best to meet all the objectives across the agency, and then we'll submit those results to Headquarters, and so there will be two concurrent actions then. We'll combine all the regional matrices into some natural national-level matrix, and this will help, you know, the heads of the agency to make decisions in terms of whether it's feasible to reallocate resources to some particular jurisdiction, or some fraction of the jurisdiction, or whether we say, okay, we're going to hold that that jurisdiction for this species complex to maybe a different standard, because we're not going to be able to give them the resources they need.

That includes considering changes to simplify management, discussing plans for calculating, monitoring, and implementing ecosystem caps, which I haven't gone into much here, and we haven't talked about a lot, but there is a suggestion that, if we don't have the data to manage complexes, or whole groups of species, very well, maybe we do that through an ecosystem cap, and what's the total number of pounds that you can take out of the fishery under -- That the ecosystem can support.

In that sense, it kind of gets to one of the questions that that I think Kerry raised earlier of how would we use ecosystem science to simplify things, and that's one way, is you have an ecosystem cap that captures many, many species. There's, obviously, issues with that, right, because if I have an ecosystem cap with twenty species in the fishery, and it's just one cap, then conceivably the fishery could focus on the ones that are most valuable, and apply the whole cap to that, and so there's a lot of subtleties there that the council would have to address, but that's some of the thinking that's going on.

This gets to where we are for the Southeast, and one of the things that Andy and I pushed is it doesn't make sense to do this at the individual species level when we've got something like 250 species and complexes in the whole Southeast region, and that's where -- This is the PDF version, I think, because it didn't copy over the right -- All the list of species, but that little box on the right is just full of species, and it just doesn't make sense to do all of those individually, and we don't collect data that way.

You know, our data is by groups of species that the fishery targets, or our FMPs, and usually we don't have individual species. We also can't calculate the recreational economic value of individual species, because the fishery doesn't operate that way. For instance, if you just -- If you want to compute the recreational value of the red snapper fishery in the Atlantic, they're only allowed to land them for a couple of days, and so do you just calculate the value during that open season? No, because they fish for them year-round. They catch them, and discard them, and there's value in, and so it didn't make a lot of sense to do individual species-specific accountings, and so we grouped them by these groups, which more or less line up with the FMPs.

For instance, Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council's shallow-water reef fish, deepwater bottom fish, coastal pelagics, and shrimp, all the way down, and you can read them for yourself, but we wanted to make it simpler, because, ultimately, you know, I need to look at this and say, okay, with the resources I have, am I appropriately resourcing all these different groups in the way we fund data collection and activities, all the way through providing the science advice.

That gets me into some of the details, and how do we compute economic value, and I do have a couple of economists that are on the line if, at the end of this, we have some detailed questions on how things were computed. I believe the council staff have also been apprised of the methods, and so, at some point, they could come up and give an explanation, if any of the economists are here, but the bottom line is we were trying to put commercial and recreational on as equal footing as we could possibly do with known approaches.

We had a working group of economists from across the country work together and agree on what they thought was the most appropriate approach for putting commercial and recreational on the same value scales that could actually be implemented in a reasonable amount of time.

Obviously, all of this can be very controversial, and there's many ways you can calculate value of the commercial fishery and recreational. What they chose was the added value to the gross domestic product, and I won't go into the details of how that's calculated. If that's desired, we could have a formal presentation from the economists to go through it, but the bottom line is you're trying to track the money all the way through to its final use, and so, from commercial fishing, it's not just the ex-vessel values, which is typically used, but it's what they catch, the value there, and then it goes to the processing plant, then a wholesaler and distributor, and then to the restaurant, and then to the final consumer, and how do you create a value for all those transfers of money that equates to the value added to the gross domestic product?

The same thing for recreational. The multiplier ends up being lower than for commercial, because you go from the recreational angler to the tackle shop, marina, guide, lodging services, et cetera, to the final recreational experience, and they come up with multipliers for each of those, but the end result is that at least we have a fairly common metric to compare commercial and recreational, which we've never had before, and the agency as a whole --

Remember we started as the Bureau of Commercial Fishing, and so we've never really explicitly considered the value of recreational fisheries relative to the commercial fisheries when we do our fiscal allocations, and so this is going to be the first time we actually have a tool to kind of look at that.

Risk, and I mentioned earlier we looked at it in terms of susceptibility to environmental change, climate vulnerability, and those are the CVA analyses. Susceptibility to fishing, the productivity-susceptibility analyses, and then a metric for ecosystem importance, and the latter, ecosystem importance, I think is evolving. We ourselves had concerns with the formulas that were put together, and, rather than go explain the gory details, I think you can look at this column on the right, the one that says "Eco", and, when you look at the scores, higher means higher ecosystem importance.

I see things like red drum outranking menhaden, which is kind of --- You know doesn't quite, it jibe with my expectation, when menhaden is a primary forage species, and the same thing with -- You know, shrimp ends up not being very high, because there's other things in the same taxonomic status that have a higher biomass, but, obviously, shrimp is really important as an ecosystem component for lots of things that prey on it, and so I understand how the calculation got there. We think that needs some revision, and that's starting to get into this where I think we have to have the

back-and-forth, you know, with councils, and even our own scientists say is this really the best way we want to measure ecosystem importance, and so we're not there yet.

CVA and PSA is pretty standard analyses. It was mentioned, during the SEDAR Steering Committee, that maybe the SSCs could look at it, if they wanted to consider rescoring CVAs and PSAs, which I think they could. It's a fairly standard methodology, and I'm not sure whether it would be worth it, and whether they could do it in a timely way, but that is something that could be done, is revisit those scores, and probably not the CVA, but the PSA. Some of them are fifteen years old.

The big thing here I think is the ecosystem importance one, but, again, there's not a formula for what actions you have to take with any of these scores. It's really meant just to inform as you determine where in the matrix you want to put each individual stock complex.

This is where we are with the results. I put all the values, the economic value, that we have combined commercial and recreational. Interestingly, it turns out that the recreational value is comparable to the commercial value, if not slightly more, and this is going to be really important when we start looking at this at the national level, because, typically, the focus is always on commercial, in which case, you know, the Southeast is up there, but nowhere near say Alaska, but, when you start adding in the recreational value, all of a sudden, you know, with the largest recreational fisheries in the world, then our economic value rises considerably.

We're nearing the end, and, obviously, all the councils have been working along these lines for quite some time. I don't expect that this risk-value matrix is going to completely change your decision processes, but it might add some information along those lines. In this case with the South Atlantic, as you know, you've been talking about either removing or designating as ecosystem components seventeen snapper grouper species. The Gulf, some time ago, removed a bunch of species. I think they're down to forty in their FMU, or something like that, and then the Caribbean Council is conducting a comprehensive review and looking at revising the list of stocks that they're including in their island-based FMPs, and so there's already been a lot of activity there.

The one that I think is actually going to be more influential for us here in the Southeast is the process we've already been undergoing of trying to figure out ways that we can streamline the assessment process, which will be a mix of changing the level of review that we do with some stock assessments, to actually using simpler assessments, and using things like update lites, where, instead of waiting for every little piece of data that could be updated, we say, every two years we're going to update the assessment, or every three years, with whatever data is available, and we just do it. There's not, you know, a whole big, complicated review, because it's the same assessment approach, and we're just adding a couple years of data to it, and, that way, we can give the councils more timely advice.

You know, if you look at where we are now, it is often five years from the last year of data that's collected to when you actually see the regulations on the water. That's a combination of SEDAR, which is -- That review process is very thorough and transparent, but also very slow, in fact arguably the slowest in the nation, and then, on top of that, a lot of the council processes are very slow, and take almost as much time as the assessment process has taken, and so you end up, again, that it could be five years from the terminal year of data to the rule in the water, and, for some

species, that means most of the fish that were alive when we collected the data are dead by the time the rules go into effect.

What we would like to do is kind of move along this continuum that we've shown here, and there's many ways we've talked about doing it, to where we're using a combination of things that probably look more like the SEDAR key stocks, and that's an abbreviated process over what we're doing now, to things all the way like simple ACL updates, where we're just updating by an index of abundance that we can process really quickly.

With some of the advances we're making with automated image analysis and other things, I think we're getting close to being able to provide survey data in near real-time, and so we should be able to speed up the process considerably.

Finally, this is sort of a preview of what I'm hoping that we'll do at a national level, and that's look at how our resourcing is actually matching up with our priorities, and, in this case, I only showed the economic value as we've calculated for the Southeast region, and, for us, because we deal with -- The Southeast Center deals with highly migratory story species, and also, to an extent, menhaden, I put the values of them.

The green is the economic value, relative economic value, and in dark blue is the proportion of Southeast Center resources that go to each of the jurisdictions. The light blue is the proportion of SERO's resources that goes to all the jurisdictions. The horizontal axis gives the jurisdictions, the Caribbean, Gulf, South Atlantic, HMS, and menhaden.

Now, I will say, as a qualifier, there's still some work that needs to be done with the economic value. For instance, the way they initially calculated the recreational value for the Gulf and South Atlantic, they used Monroe County, and, because MRIP assigns it to the Gulf, they just put it in the Gulf, and so we're going to have to take the extra step of splitting that out between east and west at US 1, and match the council jurisdictions.

It's not going to make a huge difference to the bars, but it might make a discernible difference, and the same thing with menhaden. That's actually mostly Gulf menhaden, because the numbers that our economists initially put in was just the catch of menhaden in the South Atlantic states, and, in fact, since we work with the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission, and we assist with those assessments, we would need the numbers there for the entire menhaden fishery, because their jurisdiction extends all the way up the coast, and so that number will go up considerably, but I think the bottom line is you can see our investments are not -- Not completely out of whack with the economic value of each region.

The Gulf has the most resources, but there's the highest economic value, and as you would expect. The Caribbean has fewer resources, and their economic value is lower. The South Atlantic is somewhere in between, and HMS and menhaden. In menhaden, our investment is much less, because we're not the primary lead there, and it's not a Magnuson species, and so the Southeast just invests in helping to age the animals and do the assessments, but we're not in charge of the major data collection activities.

Here, I just narrowed it down to the species that both the Regional Office -- Or the jurisdictions that both the Regional Office and the Southeast Center are involved in, and, when you look at

those proportions on that basis, it's actually amazing how well aligned the Regional Office and the Southeast Center are in terms of the proportional resources that we devote. We didn't do it on purpose, but just the way all the forces aligned, and the resourcing ended up being very similar in a proportional approach.

One might look at this and say, okay, the Gulf is proportionately under-resourced to the others, but you do have to keep in mind that there is a baseline cost just to put the data monitoring and science machinery into place, and so you wouldn't expect it to line up exactly in the same proportions, and so that's my presentation for today. I'm happy to entertain any questions.

MS. MURPHEY: Jessica.

MS. MCCAWLEY: So I guess and, maybe we need to go, you know, back a few slides, and I appreciate you guys putting this together, but I guess I don't understand the timeline for the next steps, because it -- Will we have time at the June meeting, you know, to work on this, and get everything that's needed, and stay on track for what all the councils are doing?

I guess I'm just making sure I understand what all these next steps are, because I guess we're the blue there is April, and then, by June 30, which would be after the June council meeting, we need to, I guess at the June meeting, allot time to do all those things that are listed in green, and is that -- I just want to make sure I'm understanding kind of the ask. Like this presentation was just kind of set it up, and then at the next meeting -- But, also, if we're going to bring in the SSC, or the APs, they would have to do some work, you know, before we get to the June meeting, so that we could do all of this, and so can you talk a little bit more about that timeline, and you were thinking that the SSCs would get involved between now and the June council meeting, so we would have that that information?

DR. PORCH: I agree that the timelines are ambitious, and so, I mean, ultimately, there's not something that's going to force the councils to implement this at this timeframe. You know, ideally, we would at least get (b) done, right, groundtruth semi-quantitative -- Well, all the measures, which I think we can work with council staff on that.

We may be able to do some preliminary work to place the stocks in the risk-value matrix in in that timeframe, but, yes, given when you -- If the councils want their SSCs to take a look at this, then they have to schedule with their SSCs, and, yes, I can imagine there will be some of these things we can't get through in in that timeframe.

MS. MCCAWLEY: So, yes, because it seems like, kind of like what you're saying, that the council would need to complete at least a couple of these steps, and then it would go to the SSC, and, unless a special SSC meeting is scheduled, then they wouldn't meet again until the fall, and so then we would be doing some of this in June, and then the SSCs would see it in the fall. Just I guess the timeline is part of my concern, and then, also, I just wanted to note -- I acknowledge why Monroe County was placed in the Gulf, but I'm hoping that we can fix that and, you know, get Monroe County split, you know, for each council jurisdiction.

DR. PORCH: Yes, and I'll answer that last one. It's just because of the way it comes out in MRIP. They dump it into Monroe, and so, for assessments, we actually have to take an extra step to split

it out, and, you know, the economists just didn't realize that, and so we just -- They're working on it now, and so they're aware of it now.

MS. MURPHEY: Go ahead, John.

MR. CARMICHAEL: Jessica, I just wanted to follow up on, you know, mentioning the SSC. I feel like, and, Clay, this is where, you know, can it be possible, that the SSC would be best say, when Step 3 is done, in saying what do they think of how the stocks are placed in the matrix, and I'm assuming that the agency is going to take the first stab at that, but, to me, that's where we really need to get SSC input, and, given the role of the societal values possibly, I would really love to get AP input, but I don't know if both of those are possible, given this ambitious timeline, but I think, at the very least, we should probably try to get Step 3 completed and to the SSC for their next meeting.

DR. PORCH: If I could follow-up on that, and I could see, you know, National Marine Fisheries Service and council staff maybe taking a stab at that, and then, if you wanted to, then the council wants to run it by the SSC, and that's what I think I heard you say, and I would just add to let the council staff participate in that first step.

MS. MURPHEY: Gary, and then Robert, and then I'll get to Andy.

MR. BORLAND: Clay, just real quick, and I, obviously, need some time to chew on this, but how does this tie back into Magnuson? How do we take this approach -- Are we just trying to pare down the number of species that we're going to try to manage, and is that the end result here, but, I mean, we're so -- Since I've been here, we're so fixated on all of the metrics, and the data points that drive our management decisions, and this is, obviously, outside the box, which I applaud the approach, and it's just how does it tie back with Magnuson the way it is today?

DR. PORCH: I mean, ultimately, you want to comply with Magnuson, right, but recognize that we can't manage every stock with the ideal approaches that are, you know, elucidated in the National Standard 1 Guidelines. It's just not going to happen, and we've been saying that, in our part of the world, for a long time, because we have so many data-poor stocks, but now there's just generally national recognition that that's the case, and particularly because, you know, we've lost human resources, but I think it was -- It took time, but I think that the rest of the country is catching up with what we already know, and that is that it's really hard to do this for some of these stocks. We're just not investing, and we don't have the resources to do it the way that ideally we would, and so we need to think about it in a different way.

MS. MURPHEY: Thank you. Robert.

MR. SPOTTSWOOD: Thank you, Madam Chair. Clay, and Chip, if you could go to the slide that has the status, and I guess it's the value-added chain, commercial versus recreational, and so two slides below that. Clay, the \$3.4 billion and \$3.7 billion that we're looking at respectively, those numbers are derived from the direct value of the fish themselves or the ecosystem around them?

DR. PORCH: It's value added to the gross domestic product, and so the exact details of how they calculate all those multipliers from the value of the fish, say ex-vessel and all, I couldn't articulate

to you, and I would have to get the economist on there, but there's multipliers for each step of the processing chain, and, ultimately, it gets to what's the added value to the gross domestic product.

MR. SPOTTSWOOD: I guess you can find all kinds of stuff on the internet, but every source that I've looked at, just generally speaking, and just recreational fishing alone, saltwater recreational fishing in the State of Florida is estimated at well above \$9 billion, every source that I could find, from FWC to NOAA's websites, and, for NOAA's, I'm having a hard time getting drilled all the way down, but the order of magnitude seems to support that.

What I'm looking at here for the entire Southeast Region is, you know, \$7 billion in value, and so I think there's a there's a big disconnect somewhere, and then, Chip, if you go up two more slides, you know, the -- This image that we're looking at, you know, I think it -- There's probably a few pieces missing on the commercial side, but certainly, you know, on the recreational side, just in Florida, between Contender Boats, Invincible, CV, Yellowfin, and, I mean, the list goes on and on, and, I mean, all of that industry is missing from this, the marine manufacturers, electronic manufacturers, and, I mean, I could -- So it just seems, to me, that we're off several orders of magnitude in the volume of what we're looking at, and I'm trying to figure out how to line that up.

DR. PORCH: It is challenging to address, and, of course, you know, you would have to find out how much of that is going to recreational fishing, versus recreational boating and all those sorts of things, but I think the intent of this is to account for those to the extent possible, but, again, it's value added to the gross domestic product, and I think what we could do --

This could deserve a whole session, and we get the economists involved in this, instead of having me try and parrot what they're saying, but have the experts actually talk us through it, but the key point is that we do need to be -- We want something that's equally applicable across the country, and at least gets commercial and recreational on the same playing field, more or less. This is what the economists, the team that met, agreed is right now the best approach we can implement now. There's lots of other things you can do that are very data intensive, and it's not clear that we could come up with a metric that everyone would agree on.

MR. SPOTTSWOOD: I mean, I will agree with Clay. I think we could spend a lot of time talking about this, you know, and get into the respective contributions of commercial versus recreational, and, you know, you look at Alaska versus Florida, and, I mean, the distinguishments are significant, and so Alaska doesn't have an industry that supports the recreational fishing. They're not building boats there, and they're not building, you know, the type of stuff that we have in Florida, and so they're just so different that it does concern me a little bit in trying to create a one-size-fits-all kind of approach here. You know, and so I can talk in circles on this one.

DR. PORCH: One thing I would like to add though is a lot of those numbers that you see, say for, you know, the state as a whole, the high numbers, is including state-managed fisheries, which we're not including here. We're only including the federally-managed species, and some of the state fisheries are worth, you know, an awful lot. You know, you have some pretty large fisheries for seatrout, and, you know, all these other species.

MR. SPOTTSWOOD: That was a really good point in the decision tree, when I looked at that initially, for, you know, is it caught primarily in state waters, and assigned to the state, and there's

another element here of, you know, where is the greatest economic value, and not necessarily where is it caught, and I'm not sure how you how you square those up. I yield my time to John.

MS. MURPHEY: I'm going to go ahead and let John jump in, because he just had a clarifying point.

MR. CARMICHAEL: Yes, and Clay, I am curious, and it's one of the things I was curious about, is the handling of the state waters. You know, we've already heard that they pulled data for Monroe County and didn't realize, I guess, how Monroe treats the South Atlantic, but what about when it comes to the state waters within MRIP, because one thing that I noticed is it says red drum in the Gulf of Mexico is worth something like \$600 million, and I can't help but think that that has to include state waters landings. I'm wondering, and so are we including then state waters landings for things managed in the South Atlantic and others?

DR. PORCH: Yes, and, if it's federally-managed, we're going to include all the landings, regardless whether they were caught in state waters or federal waters, and so it would include state waters. It's just a matter of whether it's a federally-managed species.

MR. CARMICHAEL: Then a follow-up. Along those same lines, dolphin, they're managed by the South Atlantic through New England, and did they stop in the South Atlantic using the MRIP query for the South Atlantic, or does it include dolphin all the way to New England?

DR. PORCH: Yes, and I appreciate that point. This is why I would say this is a great conversation to have, because I believe we only included dolphin for the South Atlantic states, but, in that case, since the fishery management plan has us managing the entire population, including the catches off Virginia and north, then, yes, we should have included that, and so that would --

MR. CARMICHAEL: The same would apply for CMP that we manage through I think New York.

DR. PORCH: So in that case, and Chip and I talked offline about this, it would be good to get a list of all the stocks where we're managing outside our jurisdiction, and we'll make sure that those are updated accordingly. For highly migratory species, as I mentioned, we did do the entire, you know, Atlantic that we catch, but we didn't think of the council jurisdictions that extend beyond the borders of the council.

MS. MURPHEY: I think I had Andy, and then I'll go to Tom.

MR. STRELCHECK: This is a really good discussion around the table, and I'm just wanting to kind of touch upon several points that have been made, and so, obviously, this has been good, in terms of refinements that we can take back and work with our teams to make adjustments on. Clay, I think you touched upon the social indicators, but, when we talked with John and team last week, there is an intent to do a survey, including some of the staff that are on the South Atlantic Council, to get some social indicators that we can use for that value assessment.

What I guess I'm thinking here is that we don't want to, obviously, just come back to the council in June and drop this on you, right, and we want to work with council staff and technical teams, and, obviously, the SSC will be challenging, and as you're pointing the APs, but there will be,

obviously, I think a lot of interaction that's going to need to take place between Clay and my teams and John and the council staff between now and June.

We also have the CCC meeting in May, that I'm sure a lot of the councils will want to weigh-in, in terms of the schedule and timeline, and so there could be further adjustments made based on the conversations, and kind of updates on where things stand and how things are going, and then, to Gary's comment, you know, one of the things I'll point out, and it's kind of a great example of what's on the screen, is you look at the species groups, and we're not, you know, looking at, you know, the value of white grunt and taking that out of this, right?

You know, we're looking at the value of the shallow-water reef fish in the South Atlantic, and so the decisions about removing species still can be made at a very specific species level, even though we're looking at the value of kind of the fishery as a whole, and how it's being harvested.

With that said, we're also going to then be able to drill down and start looking at, okay, well, if it falls in certain quadrants of this risk-value matrix, right, is the South Atlantic Council agreeable that, well, maybe we don't manage this fishery in the same way anymore, and maybe we need to take this species, or species group, and now do a complex of species, or look at different, you know, ways of setting annual catch limits and accountability measures. That is really the major intent is the shift in management that would occur beyond, obviously, this national prioritization of resources, and where you're going to come in in terms of critical importance with regard to how this is going to work.

MS. MURPHEY: Thank you, Andy. I have Tom.

MR. ROLLER: Thank you, Madam Chair. A lot of my questions have been answered here, but I'll touch on it briefly. I mean, going to back to what Robert brought up originally, it was, when I see these numbers, I need to understand what goes into them, because, even using the same metrics put forth by NMFS in their annual reports, and what the value is to each state, commercial versus recreational, we have so many numbers out there, and, I mean, I've argued in the past, when the State of North Carolina has put out overall value for their recreational saltwater fishing is different from the federal value.

We have to figure out what inputs go in, and what go out, and John got to a lot of these questions, and I think, if we're going to use these for these big questions of funding, we have to really understand what goes into them, and I was sitting there trying to understand, and then Clay brought up the point of, well, we took out the really valuable, you know, accessible state fisheries. Well, that made a lot more sense to me, right, but, going forward, I think we have to have a much better understanding of the inputs that go into this, and what's done from an economic basis, and we can't answer that today, but I certainly need to hear more.

MS. MURPHEY: Thank you, Tom. I have Jessica, and then Charlie.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Can you go back to the -- Towards the end, those bar graphs? Right there, and so can you back up one? That's perfect, and so I guess, Clay and Andy, and maybe I've just missed this, but, in looking at this, I guess I just have some concerns, in thinking about trying to get it right, and how we look at the economics, and is this suggesting that, when this gets turned into Headquarters, that say, Clay or Andy, you might lose people that are working on South

Atlantic fisheries, or they might get reallocated over to Gulf fisheries, or to another region of the nation, because of how this comes out, you know, looking at economic value versus, you know, kind of the amount of resources that you're you are partitioning to all of these different activities.

What could be the result of this, because I guess I'm concerned at how we work on this, and what the results are, and if you guys are in danger of losing more staff, or that there would be fewer resources for this council to complete their business, and can you speak to what you think might happen in the next steps after this?

DR. PORCH: It's a great question. First off, I would say this is a discussion I actually would want to have though, because, if you put the bars for all the other council jurisdictions up there, we're going to be pretty much in the same ballpark, or even maybe ahead of the game in many cases.

Remember that we have the largest recreational fishery, by far, and that's never really been accounted for in any of the allocation process. We have 66 percent of the recreational fishing in the nation, and that's -- A distant second is the Northeast, at twenty-something percent, and then, for the west coast, you're talking about like 1 percent and things like that, and so I think, once you compare both the commercial and recreational together combined, we would have a case that we actually need a higher proportion of resourcing across the board.

Like I said, these are preliminary numbers. I expect the South Atlantic will go up a little bit, and the Gulf will go down a little bit, and I don't know if it would be discernible or not, but, once we've split the Monroe, but then the dolphin fishery is worth a lot, and, as was pointed out, we didn't account for, you know, the dolphin fishery that's caught off, you know, north of the North Carolina-Virginia border, and so that number will probably go up some too, and so that was a good point. I think this is actually -- If anything, it would work to our advantage, because we're combining commercial and recreational, and we have so much recreational fishing.

I did want to, while I have the mic, to Robert's question, and my economist just chatted me and said combine the species that are not in the list, that I showed here, and so it's mostly state-managed species, and they contribute to \$10.3 billion more, and so that gets closer to the numbers that you were talking about, and, again, this is, you know, value added to the gross domestic product, and so there are different measures, as Tom mentioned, depending on what how you're trying to value something, but, yes, the state-managed fisheries actually end up being worth even more than the federally-managed ones.

MS. MURPHEY: Thank you, Clay. I have Charlie.

MR. PHILLIPS: Thank you, Madam Chair, and I can kind of get my arms wrapped around the economics of the commercial and the recreational, and you're trying to match your resources accordingly, but what is going to happen to protected resources, and what's their resources going to be? How are we going to manage our corals and essential fish habitat and things like that that you have -- You will be sore pressed to put an economic value on, even though we know they're super important, and so how is the financing, and the revenues, and your resources going to fit in there?

MR. STRELCHECK: I'll take a stab at that, Charlie, and so the way Congress allocates our budget is in discrete budget categories, right, and so we have line items for fisheries, and fisheries science

and management, and we have line items for protected resources, and we have line items for habitat restoration, and habitat enterprise, and so, as those shrink or grow, like we're talking about with fisheries, we're making similar decisions with regard to prioritization.

As an example, with our Section 7 consultation process, and that's our Endangered Species Act consultations, we have a prioritization scheme that we have been developing, and, if certain regions can't complete, you know, some of those highest-level consultations, it may result in redistribution of staffing resources from other areas of the country in order to support the work, because other regions may be over-resourced, right, and so we are looking at this strategically across-the-board, but, obviously, focusing on fisheries here, because that's what the council's main business is.

MS. MURPHEY: Thank you, Andy, and John wanted to follow-up with that.

MR. CARMICHAEL: Yes, and, Andy, I understand, rightly, that you guys have separate pots, and I wondered where -- You know, where does something like sargassum come in, that's a fishery for us, or coral, that's a fishery for us, within that, and then I think the concern, that certainly I have, and I know seven other executive directors have a similar concern, is that the councils don't have a separate pot.

You know, we're all one, and, if something happened where things that we spend effort on, like coral and sargassum, are not somehow factored into the value of us as a council, then our relative worth to the agency as a council could be distorted, and it might say, well, it's lessened, because we're getting no credit for the effort that we're putting into that.

Another area is there's going to be some discussions about the role of the council in things like in ICCAT, and supporting people going to ICCAT, and we don't get separate designated funds for ICCAT, but if we don't get any credit within this type of calculation across councils for ICCAT, for HMS, then there's a concern that, again, as councils we could come up going, well, you know, we're being judged on the value of our fishery resources, and potentially figures like this nationwide across each council, and it could impact the funding that goes to councils, and that's what's really the concern, and I think that's why probably all of the councils are going to be paying close attention to this and asking a lot of a lot of hard questions, you know.

MS. MURPHEY: Okay. Thank you, John. Go ahead.

DR. PORCH: Yes, and I think that's a fair point, but, again, I would rather have that discussion than just not have it, which is the way it has been, and I think this would be information that's considered, but it's not going to be, again, that there's a formula that's like, okay, the value is this much, and we'll invest that much. I mean, we recognize there's lots of nuances here, and there's the societal value, and that's a tough one, because there's no real way to quantitative -- You could come up with some, you know, semi-quantitative score, but what's the value of salmon to Native American communities in Alaska compared to the value of coastal pelagics to, you know, Puerto Rico, you know, that kind of thing.

You know, how do you how do you measure the relative worth of something, and we'll come up with a scale, and that's something that I didn't mention here, but our team is working on a national metric for coming up with some consistent metric for societal value, but there is no perfect way to do it, and so I won't call it a fudge factor, but it would be another factor they consider, that, okay,

the economic value is not that high, but there's this other factor that's really important, and so it will never be as clean as just looking at a graph like this and then making allocation decisions.

It's going to be much more complicated, but at least they have the information now that they never had before, and, yes, it won't be perfect how you -- We're not all going to agree on the best way to do it, but, as long as we're consistent, I think we're going to be ahead of where we were before.

MS. MURPHEY: Thank you. I have Kerry, then Tom, and then Andy.

MS. MARHEFKA: Thanks, Madam Chair. To whoever is driving, can you go to the slide that had those economic values, the one we were on right before this? Thanks. I'm curious about the decision, and I saw it somewhere else in the presentation too, to separate out the two -- Sort of separate out the snapper grouper fishery into those two categories of deepwater bottom fish and shallow-water reef fish for our council.

It seems like a biological decision more than an economic decision, as, for the most part, the vast majority of the fishery is the same fleet. I mean, obviously, with deepwater bottom fish, there is a component that bottom longlines, but there's also -- Most of the hook-and-line guys fish from deep water through the shallow, and I'm curious about that, and will that have any implications as we go through this process?

DR. PORCH: Yes, and this is a first pass, and so these can -- We have this all in a species-specific level, except for, you know, recreational, and it doesn't -- Like I said, it doesn't make sense doing a species-specific, but we can change the categories here, and we're open to input on that. The key point is not to do it by each individual species, because we don't collect data that way, and so, for me, that's what I'm most concerned about, is how do I invest in terms of data collection, and so these are more categories by data collection, with some alignment with the FMPs, but we would be open to, you know, doing it a somewhat different way. Again, I just don't want to do it for 250 species and complexes.

MS. MARHEFKA: To that, and I realize I should have clarified in my comment, and I'm so used to thinking like commercially thinking, and, obviously, there -- It's probably more separation in the recreational fishery, to make it even more confusing to how we approach that with those two categories, but I would love to give it some more thought later.

MS. MURPHEY: Okay, Tom. Now it's your turn.

MR. ROLLER: Thank you, Madam Chair. No, and it's good. This is great discussion, and I just have a question. I mean, this council has long discussed the fact that we're very different than the other regions, being that we have the majority of the recreational effort, and we haven't been given credit for it over the years in how resources are allocated, and so the general question that I ask, and you can take this as rhetorical, is, if we're not getting credit for the recreational value in the region, aren't we also underserving our commercial fisheries as well, by having less resources, and I don't need an answer, but that's just --

MS. MURPHEY: Any response? Any response, Clay?

DR. PORCH: Well, I mean, that's why we're bringing this up here, and there's already been a couple of suggestions that we need to take account of. One, again, splitting Monroe County properly, and we figured that our early on, and so, yes, these are all preliminary numbers, and we'll make that change. Adding dolphin wahoo, you know, for the entire east coast, since -- Anything else where we, you know, essentially as the South Atlantic Council manages the jurisdiction, even when they're caught outside of the South Atlantic waters, and so we'll account for that, and we'll add those back into it, but yes.

MS. MURPHEY: Thanks, and I've got Andy, then Dewey, and then Jessica, and I know we're running -- We started late, and we're running a little late, but we probably want to finish this up here, and so go ahead, Andy.

MR. STRELCHECK: Yes, and two things, and so, really, like, John, what you had asked about corals and sargassum, and I guess what I'm thinking is let's turn this around from the defensive posture, and more of like an opportunistic like can you propose this with your other executive directors, and what are the things that we're not thinking about that may impact all the councils, right, and corals might be your issue, or sargassum, and the Pacific Islands, but there might be other things that affect other regions that haven't been thought of, so that we have kind of that broader list, and can think about, well, is there ways to address that or not, and have that conversation that Clay is, you know, continuing to emphasize.

The other thing I'll mention, and you may know this better than I do, and so the council budget is a separate line item as well, right, and so there is funding that comes out of the Regional Office budget, and Headquarters, that is allocated to the councils separate from the congressional line item, but I don't think that allocation amongst the councils has been visited in ten or fifteen years, right, and should it have been? I would argue that, yes, we should have had conversations throughout this time period.

The Fisheries Service has been going through an ebb and flow of increases and decreases in funding, and I know, you know, the councils have been struggling with inflationary costs, right, but at what point do we also need to look at that again, and have a conversation, and here's at least a data-driven, you know, approach that possibly can help with that conversation going forward.

MS. MURPHEY: Thank you, Andy. I have Dewey.

MR. HEMILRIGHT: When you're looking at the value here in the green, what's on the screen, is that in millions of dollars for each one?

DR. PORCH: Yes.

MR. HEMILRIGHT: My second question would be, like for HMS sharks, that \$92.44 million, is that what the commercial and the recreational used -- I'm trying to figure out where the \$92.44 million is in HMS sharks. What makes that number?

DR. PORCH: I would have to go look and see what fraction is commercial and what fraction is recreational, but it's calculated with the same formula, the contribution to the national GDP.

MR. HEMILRIGHT: So that means the catching other fish, tackle, boats, what kind of boat, and, I mean, all that kind of things, and is that what makes up that number, maybe?

DR. PORCH: Yes, and they account for all of that, but it's not simply adding all those things together, right, because there's a cost to the trip and all that, and so it's smarter than that, but, if we wanted to go through the exact details of how they calculate each step, it's pretty involved, and I couldn't articulate it here. We would just get the economists to make a presentation.

MR. HEMILRIGHT: Some things I worry about when I look at this, and it's above my paygrade, and I'll admit that. It's like yesterday, when we were listening to Dominique present about the difference in areas of the data, and trying to figure out a fisherman's thoughts, and, when I look at these things here, there's different things that we think about, and I'll leave it at that. Thanks.

MS. MURPHEY: All right. I've got Jessica, and then Tom.

MS. MCCAWLEY: So I was going to try to talk about some next steps, and so I want to get this right, and so I guess one of my thoughts is, maybe at the CCC meeting, we need to talk about the timing of this, and maybe, based on the timing of our council meetings, maybe we need a little bit more time, and then I think, when we get to the gigantic workplan document, we need to, you know, allocate a significant amount of time to this discussion in June, and those types of things, and I was just trying to kind of figure out what all the different next steps were.

I don't know that we have any decision points today, but it looks like we would need to work on this in June, and then, if the CCC makes a case to go a little bit longer, maybe we have more time to this, and maybe we can do this over two meetings, and that would allow us to bring in SSC thoughts, AP thoughts, et cetera.

MS. MURPHEY: Thank you, Jessica, and I've got Tom, and then Amy, and then we'll probably try to wrap this up, if that's okay.

MR. ROLLER: This is just a lingering question I have that I would like to see -- As we value the whole region going forward, I see the value for ASMFC menhaden seems very, very low, and I guess my question is, is that only because it's the federal waters component of menhaden? I guess I would just like to understand why it's so low, given that's such a large fishery.

DR. PORCH: That's why I mentioned, during the presentation, they had only put menhaden caught in the South Atlantic jurisdiction, but it should have been the entire coast for Atlantic menhaden, because the jurisdiction is the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission, and so we will fix that as well, and that's why the bar will be higher for menhaden.

MR. ROLLER: Thank you for that, Clay. There was so much information, and I was having trouble absorbing all of it, but thank you.

DR. PORCH: Understandable.

MS. MURPHEY: Amy.

MS. DUKES: Thank you, Madam Chair, and thank you, Clay. Yes, a lot of information, and I'm still ultimately digesting it all, and I appreciated the next step conversations that Jessica started, in making sure that we're working collaboratively through this. I think my question is what's different about this particular plan of action than some of the other concepts that have happened in the past with this respect to national levels of effort, or assessment prioritization, that have been previously discussed that weren't necessarily as picked up by the councils, because mostly we just have our practices that we like to move forward with our regional fisheries management, and is there something different about this one that's going to, in your opinion, going to gain more traction, lead us in the direction we need to be going, and not for a short-term, but in a long-term picture as well, please?

DR. PORCH: I think, and Andy can chime-in, but I think the big difference between this is we're not just focused on things like stock assessment prioritization, but we're looking at, okay, what are we going to manage fundamentally differently, which includes taking things out of the FMP, designating things as ecosystem components, or just simplifying the kind of management and assessment advice we're going to get beyond just, okay, we're going to give this species this many stock assessments in this frame, and this level of complexity, and we're talking about the entire range of activities from science to management.

MS. MURPHEY: All right. Thank you, and I just had a couple of things. I had a lot of questions, but, in the interest of time, I'll skip most of them, but one thing I wanted to ask is you've got ecosystem -- Under risk, you've got ecosystem impact as a risk, but it seems to me, in getting at the discussion of habitat value and everything, ecosystem value -- Shouldn't that be habitat value, or ecosystem value, or something should be under that value category, because --

Well, no habitat, no fish, right, and so, you know, somewhere, that's got to get picked up, and that's me wearing my habitat hat, but, you know, that's a big -- I mean, we just went through, you know, the shrimp and the coral amendment, and that was a big deal, because that's valuable habitat, and so that's one concern of mine that I wonder if adding habitat and ecosystem or something under value, and there is data. There are data out there on some value, and I know we have some value data on SAV in North Carolina, and so I think there's stuff out there to pull from.

My other big thought, concern, and I kind of heard it around the table, is, once this is done, and nationalized, my fear is we're going to be undervalued compared to other councils, and like, you know, the North Pacific, Alaska, you know, their fisheries are totally different, you know, very valuable, but, at the same time, here in the South Atlantic, to South Atlantic people, our fisheries are just as valuable as it is to Alaska, you know, and so that's -- I'm worried about, when you starting adding this -- Trying to get it consistent, we're going to lose that flexibility in the individual -- The individual value of each of these councils.

I mean, you know, right now, it almost looks like, well, the Gulf is more valuable than us, and they're more important than us, and that's -- I know that's not the case, and we're all important, but, as you go through this exercise, that's just something that keeps coming back to me, that, you know, we're going to end up in a, you know, who is number-one, and who is number-eight, and I don't -- That worries me, and I'll stop with that, but just to -- That's just something that concerns me.

DR. PORCH: Whereas I would love to have that conversation. You know, for instance, the North Pacific Council gets way more resources than all three of our councils combined, and so are they really that much more valuable than everyone else combined? That's the discussion that we would be having, and, you know, a lot of that feeds into, you know, congressional representatives, and senators. You know, in Alaska, they care very much about fisheries, and so they're very, very active, and less so in the Southeast.

There's a lot that's going to go into it, and, again, it's not going to be that simple of a formula, where they just look at these relative economic values, although, if they did, I think we would actually come out ahead of where we are now, because, combined, we have a lot of economic power here in the Southeast, and so I'm not as worried about that, and I'm sorry, but what was the second -- The ecosystem impacts, and Andy and I are kind of, you know, laughing under our breath, because we had the exact same conversation, and should this be called value and, you know, risk, and it was just sort of the way of the group that elected to say that, well, we'll consider a risk, in the sense that what happens if that fishery disappears, and how does it impact the rest of the ecosystem, and so you could look at it both ways.

MS. MURPHEY: Yes, and I just -- That habitat has got to -- You're going to have to capture something under value for that somehow, I think, but, anyway, Andy, and then we'll wrap up.

MR. STRELCHECK: Yes, and I just wanted to comment, Trish, that I appreciate you being candid about your fears, and so let's just set aside the national prioritization, right, and let's just talk about this from a regional prioritization standpoint.

Let's talk about it from the standpoint that we didn't get a good budget this year, like we were expecting it, right, and then Clay and I, having done this exercise, worked with all our councils, and can look very carefully and strategically, and go, okay, well, where do we need to spend our resources, and where do we maximize use of those resources, and do we need to cut a survey, and what fishery are going to have to cut a survey on, and what, you know, management are we going to need to dial back, because we just don't have the resources anymore, right, and that's a more of a worst-case scenario.

The reality that we're kind of facing, and why this whole exercise came about, and I know that can be scary, but the reality is we're being faced with those decisions, and we are looking those, you know, straight right now, in terms of how do we ensure that we have the tools and decisions available to us to actually go about making those decisions, and so, as Clay and I are maybe trying to express, we are looking at this I think a little bit in reverse.

We're not looking at from a fear standpoint. We're looking at as an opportunity standpoint, and maybe it's from an opportunity standpoint because we want to have the conversation, because we feel like maybe we have been undervalued, and under-resourced, for quite some time, and we're finally feeling like maybe the playing field is being leveled. I hope that we're right about that, and we'll see, but that's, obviously, kind of where we hope this is going to ultimately head.

There's, obviously, a lot that is outside the control of this process, including the influence of the council, politics, everything else that's going to play into this, and so I think my best comment to leave you with is I hope we can kind of let this play out a little bit more, and have these tough

conversations, and see what comes about, and I don't think anything's going to be locked in simply from a quantitative approach, or even the qualitative approaches.

There's going to have to be some negotiations, and decisions, and, as Clay implied, there's just a base level of resources that all the regions need that's going to be a starting point, regardless of how much your fisheries are valued or not, and so thank you for the conversation. It has been excellent.

MS. MURPHEY: Thank you, and I think we have Bob Beal. I'm sorry, Bob, that I missed your hand.

MR. BEAL: It's all right, Trish. Can you hear me?

MS. MURPHEY: Sure can.

MR. BEAL: All right. Great. Well, thank you, and I apologize for not being there. I'm double or triple booked this week, but, just real quick, you know, my concern, a little bit, is that, sitting through New England and Mid-Atlantic Council discussions on this, is that they've decided to form a working group with staff from each of the two councils, ASMFC, Science Center, Regional Office, and they're going to work on populating this matrix, and it sounds like, in the Southeast, there may be a different strategy, and so that that gives me a little bit of concern, that, once all these different, you know, regional and council populations of this matrix are put together, there may be different criteria, and different approaches that were used, and, you know, some level of consistency, maybe through the CCC meeting later this year, or something to make sure everybody is using the same approach to populate this.

Then the other is kind of, you know, reflecting on the comments that this -- The output of this may be used to reflect, or determine, national priorities, sort of what councils need more resources, what need councils can survive with less, and when I look at it that way, it concerns me that there may be incentive for every -- For the councils to put, you know, a lot of their species in high risk and high value, because there may be the thought that that equates to resources down the road, and, you know, that part makes me nervous as well, and so who is going to kind of referee all the different approaches to populating this nationwide, and make sure that the output is consistent and usable across the entire country, and that's what -- Just seemed just listening in on different councils, it sounds like there's a different strategy that's being applied.

You know, I know there's a long way to go, and a lot of discussions to go down, you know, before this will be complete, but it's -- Any way to standardize this I think will be beneficial, and so thanks, and I know you're trying to wrap it up.

MS. MURPHEY: Thank you, Bob. Clay, and then we'll finish with John.

DR. PORCH: Yes, and, Bob, that's a great point, and that's exactly why we want to have nationally-consistent approaches. It's not supposed to happen that we all develop completely independent processes. The economic value, I'm fairly confident we will apply exactly the same approach, because it's being calculated in coordination with Headquarters.

We had a working group with representatives from all the regions, and they agreed on a method, and then it's being coordinated, and so I expect that the economic value will be computed the same way. The CVA, PSA, and all that should be fairly standard. We're working on a standard approach for ecosystem impact, and I just think it needs to be changed, and the same thing for social, and so the core inputs should be the same, and let's hope that it works out that way, but that's -- Again, the details matter, like we just discussed, you know, how we split Monroe County and all those sorts of things, and so your point is well taken, and hopefully that's the way it plays out.

The other thing I wanted to make a point is it's not just about potential reallocation, and it's -- That that may not happen, for a variety of reasons, and, you know, a lot of our budgets are dictated by Congress, and, you know, no matter what we show, it could be that the congressionals say, no, and this is what we want how we want the resources divided, and who knows how it's going to play out, but what it will also do is, you know, say -- We can find out, on the record, where maybe this group is under-resourced, and therefore, we're not going to hold you the same standard as we're holding this other group, and so you'll do different things.

You can -- You know, maybe you don't have to have, you know, annual catch limits for everything, and we use multi-year catch limits, or we do other things, and, you know, we have more things in complexes, and less single species things, and that's -- So it's not just about potentially reallocating resources, and that could happen, but there's going to be a lot of forces outside this exercise that will influence that, but it will also be, okay, we recognize we aren't -- You know, we don't have the resources to serve everybody, and maybe this region is not going to get, whatever region it is, is not going to get the resources to implement the Cadillac management procedure, and so what are you going to do instead, and that's where I think the real value of this is. It's forcing these conversations.

MS. MURPHEY: Thank you, Clay, and I'll let John go ahead and close it up.

MR. CARMICHAEL: I will certainly try, and I appreciate Trish, and I appreciate the conversation here, and, you know, I definitely agree with Andy, and this is an opportunity. This is a conversation that's been needed, and I would be an incredible hypocrite if I didn't say that, and say that this is drastically needed, because it's certainly something I've talked about for years.

You know, we can't be expected, in the South Atlantic, to manage to the same standards as the North Pacific when we're not given equivalent resources to the North Pacific, and it was the model of the North Pacific that drove the SFA and the reauthorization act, and people that were around this table looked at that and were like, wow, that's going to upend the approach that we have taken, which is much more consistent with where you've sort of showed this going, but we weren't given that option, you know, and one of the things that I feel is missing is the next step, and so what are these alternative managements, because we've talked about them, but I think we all know, and certainly any of us who were involved in that -- Remember the workgroup with us and the Gulf following the Modernizing Recreational Fisheries Act, and we pretty well had the door shut on a lot of what was perceived flexibility that that act allowed, because of the strict language of the Magnuson and the National Standards, where it said that that Modern Act did not address any of that, and did not alleviate any of that situation.

I think it's one thing for us to say, you know, we shouldn't be held to the same standard, and I absolutely 100 percent have believed that for twenty years, and it's been virtually impossible to

impose any sort of other standards, and so what I'm really waiting for from Headquarters is some kind of written language, and direction, and hopefully we get it at the CCC, that kind of says, well, where do we get some relaxation for these species that we know the juice ain't worth the squeeze when it comes to the money that it takes to manage some of these species.

We know this, and this is desperately needed, but somebody has got to come in and say yes, and this is what you can do, and you can do some of these things. I think that the approach you lay out in looking at fisheries, as opposed to species, is where we need to be. We had a presentation, some time ago through our Seminar Series with Jason Link, and he mentioned that OY is described on the basis of a fishery, and not a species. Chip and I have been talking about that on and off since that time, and like how does that affect our fisheries.

Mel Bell, we have a snapper grouper fishery problem, and not a red snapper problem, but then Bonnie Ponwith said the Magnuson reauthorization is the big equalizer, and all stocks are being treated the same, and so we're butting up against these things.

You know, I think that, with our innovation plan, we could take that and totally revamp the snapper grouper fishery in a whole other way around those distinct fisheries, and ascribe OY to those fisheries, but the concern is we don't have time. I think, you know, you mentioned the timeline being aggressive, and it is and I'm just concerned that, you know, we don't have time to do that.

I think that would revolutionize our approach, and make many fishermen way more happy, but that's going to be a multi-year thing, and so I sort of have some concerns that, you know, with this timeline, and this race to get this in, we're going to kind of be pushed into something that may set an effort like that farther back, and people will be hesitant, and that's -- You know, that's really what I think we have to guard against, and this is just going so quick.

We want a collaborative process, but where do we find the time to fit it in, and where do we find the time to really do this collaboration that's needed, and it is needed, and I'm a little less optimistic that, you know, the end product, as we saw about resource allocation, will necessarily be nuanced, because of the race to get it done, and so I think anything you guys can do to try and say, hey, there's a great idea here, but we need to make sure that we do it right, and not just do it by now, because we've had too many things that I've felt like we've done by now, and so, with that, I think, you know, you guys came up with a lot of the things we had on our list of concerns, and so that's wonderful.

I think that, as a council, we should write a letter to Andy and Clay that just captures the discussion here, to elevate it a bit from the minutes and the committee report, and we can express these various concerns, you know, the number of very specific data concerns, and staff have a few more minor ones to bring up as well, and then, also, I think get in some of your concerns with the next steps, and the timing, and that sort of thing, and so we can do that, and really, you know, continue this as a collaborative conversation.

I think a letter would really help get the council's thoughts down on this, and give you guys, council members, a chance to, you know, sort of ponder this, and talk about it some more during the week, and get more thoughts back to us, and so, if you guys support that, I think that would be good, and then, also, you know, make this a topic for the SSC coming up.

MS. MURPHEY: All right. I'm kind of seeing heads shaking in agreement of a letter, and so we'll work on that. I think we had a lot of good conversation, and I actually have some notes that I took, and the questions I didn't get to ask, and so, anyway, okay. We'll go to Dewey, and then we're going to move on to the shark letter.

MR. HEMILRIGHT: I've just got a question about the timeliness of the letter. Hopefully it can be done -- I mean, do we need to set a time for when the letter needs to be done by, and I'm referencing the council letter on the EFPs in January after, and so I think maybe we need to put a time certain, or something like that, based on my consultation.

MR. CARMICHAEL: I would say something like maybe a draft to you guys no later than the 20th, and give you until the 27th to get your comments back, and then we send it out by April 1st, would be workable. It gives us about two weeks to get stuff -- You know, to get it drafted, which gives you some time to get your thoughts, and then a week for council members to look at it, and then, in a couple of days, we'll get it out.

MS. MURPHEY: Is that good with everybody? All right. We're going to move on, and, John, you're going to go over the comments for Atlantic blacknose shark?

MR. CARMICHAEL: John Hadley.

MS. MURPHEY: We're going to default to a break, because everyone is taking a break anyway, and so just -- Ignore me, and that's all right. Take a break for ten minutes.

(Whereupon, a recess was taken.)

MS. MURPHEY: All right, everybody. Let's get started. All right, everybody. We're going to try to get started. We've got one last thing for Full Council, and then we're going to probably move back into the Commercial Subcommittee, and so I've got John Hadley is going to go over the comment on the shark fishery management measures.

MR. HADLEY: Thank you, and so I'm going to just briefly introduce the shark comment letter that's being written on behalf of the council. I will mention that we do have HMS staff online, if there are any very, you know, in-depth questions on what's being considered by Highly Migratory Species, and so they're there as well to answer any questions, but, generally speaking, HMS is considering changes to both commercial and recreational changes for the shark fisheries.

On the commercial side, I'm just going to briefly, again, introduce this. They're looking at increasing the blacknose shark commercial trip limit, and there are several alternatives -- There are a couple of alternatives there, both of which would increase the commercial trip limit for blacknose sharks, and also removing the management boundary that essentially, I guess, disallows harvest of blacknose sharks north of the 34 degree north latitude mark. Essentially, what this boils down to is it allows additional -- A better utilization of the blacknose shark annual catch limits, and also reduces regulatory discards in the fishery.

Moving over to the recreational side, and, again, this is a very high-level overview, Highly Migratory Species is looking at allowing flexibility and recreational size limits based on group species female size at maturity, and so what that's doing is really setting a default size limit, and

allowing a range, and so kind of looking at a species -- A more species-appropriate approach to setting size limits on the recreational side, and the same thing for retention limits of sharks, and so they're looking at a default retention limit, with a potential range around that default.

I'll note here, and I'm going to turn it over to some of our council members as well to provide input on this draft letter, but one thing I will note is the deadline for the comment, for the comment period for this letter, has been extended to May 29th, and so we have a little bit more time to work with. It's not necessarily due this Friday, and so we can follow-up with council members after this meeting, to make sure that your comments are accurately captured, but, you know, just -- I'll go over the highlighted portions there.

It was noted that the council would likely support removal of the management boundary in the Atlantic for blacknose sharks, and there's support for alternatives that would increase the commercial retention limit.

Then, moving on to the recreational side, it was noted that the council may be interested in supporting a more species-appropriate approach in the alternatives that are considered by HMS, and generally allowing for an increase in recreational harvest of sharks, where that seems like a likely option, and so, with that, I'll turn it over to council members, and really just looking for feedback on this draft letter. You know, if you've had a chance to look over it, is this what you're thinking? Are there any additions that you would like to add to the letter, anything you would like to take out, and that sort of feedback.

MS. MURPHEY: All right. Thank you, John. I've got Tom, and then Carolyn.

MR. ROLLER: So a couple of comments. I'm kind of excited that we're kind of undertaking management in these parameters. I think the content of the letter is really good, and I certainly support the removal of the management boundary for blacknose sharks. They are a very, very common shark. I also think they're one that's very commonly misidentified, and I know sharks in general are really hard to identify, but, obviously, one that doesn't get very big.

I guess my question was, when we look at -- I have two questions then. When we look at flexibility in management of recreational fisheries, I think -- I don't know how we're going to look at this, but a big detriment to harvesting sharks -- Now, I understand the biological need for having a certain size, and they're just too big, and like I'm never going to -- I just cannot deal with a fifty-four-inch fork length blacktip. That is a massive, dangerous animal that I don't want near customers, right, though -- It's also too much meat for most people.

I mean, that is a huge animal, and I wish that we could find a way that, if we really do want to increase harvest on these, we need to allow harvest in some of these younger species, particularly recreationally. I guess a clarifying question I need to ask is what are we looking at with Atlantic sharpnose, or, as we refer to them, as white daughters, and then I'll follow-up on that, because I'm kind of confused as to what is happening.

MR. HADLEY: Sure, and I see that Karyl is on the line. Karyl, I'm going to turn it over to you, if you're available to answer that question, but I'll also note that I do have the presentation that HMS has put together for this, and so I'll bring that up to show -- Tom, you asked about the retention limit, right?

MR. ROLLER: I just want to know -- I just need to know what's going on, and I was really confused as to what exactly is happening with Atlantic sharpnose recreationally, and then I'll follow-up, depending on --

MS. BREWSTER-GEISZ: Hi, and this is Karyl. I guess I'm confused about what you mean by you're confused about what is happening with sharpnose, and what is confusing with sharpnose in particular?

MR. ROLLER: Well, currently, it's one per person, correct, with no size limit, and am I correct there?

MS. BREWSTER-GEISZ: Yes, you are correct, and so are you confused about the one shark per vessel per trip?

MR. ROLLER: Is that what we are advising for Atlantic sharpnose?

MS. BREWSTER-GEISZ: Yes, that is -- That is what we are preferring at the moment. We have heard from others that they want to go -- They want to keep the per person for sharpnose and bonnethead. I will note that, at the moment, it is one per vessel per trip, for like all the species, and then, in addition, one per person sharpnose and one per person bonnethead, and so, under the change, it's a lot.

You could land one, a default of one, up to three of all the sharks in that first box, plus the one sharpnose, plus the one bonnethead, plus the one blacktip, plus unlimited smooth-hounds, and so it's still potentially an increase, but it is slightly more limiting for sharpnose, particularly for headboats.

MR. ROLLER: I've read this many times, and this needs to be better explained to the public. I'm still having a lot of trouble digesting what you're explaining to me here. I mean, this should be pretty simple. We have -- What's clear to me is we're having a new kind of aggregate bag limit, but I'm still kind of confused as to what's being more restrictive about the possession of Atlantic sharpnose, which, to me, they are literally the more omnipresent species in the South Atlantic.

They're everywhere, right, and I catch them in brackish water, and I catch them offshore, and I catch them bottom fishing, and I catch them trolling, and, you know, we have huge amounts -- They're caught -- I don't think people realize that these little tiny sharks that people catch on the piers and on the beach, they're all juvenile Atlantic sharpnose, right, and they're like six or seven inches long, and they're very common, and so I'm worried about misidentifying there, and so it gets back to my original point before I was complaining about that, was I'm just trying to understand. I'm still trying to understand what this aggregate, or what it is, because it's not -- It's not meshing to me.

MS. KARYL BREWSTER-GEISZ: Okay. I'm going to go back then, and so the first row has all the sharks, or a lot of the sharks. For those species of sharks, it would be up to -- You know, we would have this range, and so the default is one shark per vessel per trip from that list, and we could increase it up to three, or we could say no limit, and so, if we are not having any concerns about the species, and they're not being -- The quotas that we'll establish are not being reached,

and we could say no limit for any of those, and so you could have an unlimited number of bull sharks per vessel per trip.

For sharpnose, it's the same thing, only it is specific to sharpnose, and it would be up to four sharks per vessel per trip, or no limit, and so, again, if we don't have any concerns about sharpnose, we could increase it to be no limit, and this is a change from the current sharpnose, which has one per person per trip, and so it is -- It has the potential to be more restrictive, but it also has the potential to be less restrictive.

MS. MURPHEY: Are you good?

MR. ROLLER: Thank you. That makes a lot more sense. I do think that we need to explain it a little better. I think, with sharpnose in particular, I would hate to see it more restrictive, because they are common, and I see the headboats go out and target them on shark fishing trips. I will say, when we look at these, regarding concerns of species, you know, if we can potentially increase it to have more, and I don't think we're going to get more harvest until we look at some of these high size limits. I understand why they're there, but, realistically speaking, we're not going to get more recreational harvest on these species with these high size limits.

MS. MURPHEY: All right. Thank you, Tom. I have Carolyn, Jessica, and then Jimmy.

DR. BELCHER: Hi, Karyl, and so the first question I had was relative to your species groupings between Alternative c and d, and why are the groupings defined differently, especially when it comes to the blacktip and the spinner?

MS. BREWSTER-GEISZ: Right, and so, when we were trying to group them together, we were looking at those species that are caught together, for the retention limit that are caught together, or, you know, could be easily identified together, whereas, when we were looking at the size limits, we were looking at both that and whether or not the size maturity matched, if you would, like the species that get closer together with those size maturities, if that makes sense, and I probably just mangled it, and I apologize.

DR. BELCHER: Well, I think the one reason I'm asking is because we've kind of dealt with this over the years, that blacktip and spinner are usually the most commonly-confused species, and so the fact that they were kind of grouped in the one, and then separated in the other, I think was kind of confusing, again just because of your reasoning for why they're together, and so that was the one question I had, because I think, for me, that was the biggest standby, is, as we're making these groupings, we tend to make them for reasons, right, and, like the hammerheads, and we've had those groups for a number of years, for obvious reasons, and they're pretty much -- Even, you know, scalloped and smooth hammerheads get confused quite often, and so I kind of get that, but I think that was one of the things. The consistency between that I think for me was problematic.

The other thing was I had some questions relative to the size limits, especially because we're dealing with aggregate species that have different sizes and ages at maturity, and so that size limit I think is going to have unintended biological consequences, depending on how that gets changed, plus I've not really ever seen size limits be something that you modify year to year to try to increase catch, and usually it's just the creel that's been modified.

MS. BREWSTER-GEISZ: Thank you for that.

MS. MURPHEY: Thanks, Carolyn. Jessica.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thanks. I had a lot of the same concerns that Carolyn did, but, also, so, at FWC, we've been looking at this, and I would say that we are fully supportive of all the commercial preferences, and we're fine with moving forward with all the commercial components at this time, but we have some concerns about the recreational component.

I know they talked about this some at ASMFC, but we have some concerns with how these measures, as they're changed from year to year, would be implemented through ASMFC, and so, for example, Florida has a conservation equivalency for some of that, and it's also kind of confusing for us to figure out how some of these vessel limits would work, if you think about Florida state management of sharks, because we have a lot of shore-based shark fishing, and we have a special permit for that, and so it's hard to figure out how that translates into the vessel limit, and so we just have some concerns.

Carolyn brought up some of our concerns as well, and I'm happy to share a more complete list of all this, and, you know, I don't need to go through every single concern at this time, but I'm happy to share these things for our letter, if it helps.

MS. MURPHEY: Thank you, Jessica. I think it would be very helpful. Jimmy.

MR. HULL: Thank you, Madam Chair. Yes, and so I agree with what Jessica said on the commercial side of this management change and action. We've done the right things. On the recreational side, it needs some massaging, and I can -- To Tom's point on puppy sharks, is what we call them, right, and so it's the most common shark that the recreational anglers are going to encounter when they're fishing for anything, and so, you know, I made -- When the comment period was -- I made comment that the default limit needs to be much higher than one, and so they leave this range in here to adjust it as they see fit, but you just need to increase the default to, you know, four per person even, and, I mean, it's -- They need to be able to catch these puppy sharks.

As far as the sizes of these other recreational large coastals, I agree with you those are big animals, and there's some people that will actually target them, but, in general, no, they're not going to harvest those animals, but the small coastals they will, and so the small coastals are really a much better food value than the large coastals, and so they need to concentrate on the ability for recreational anglers to harvest the small coastals, which means increase the defaults for those, so they'll target them, but, overall, this is a much needed change in shark management.

I mean, we have been wasting this resource with dead discards, when we're not anywhere near reaching -- Many of the other reasons why we're adjusting trip limits on snapper grouper species is we're just not catching the ACL, and our size limits are incorrect, and trip limits, and so this has taken a long time to get this far, and so I appreciate the council letter in support of it, because it's a -- It's a really good move forward, but, again, I agree with you. On the recreational side, it needs some work.

MS. MURPHEY: Go ahead, Tom. Thank you, Jimmy.

MR. ROLLER: Thank you for that, Jimmy. I think -- Did you say we should decrease the range for the default size limit?

MR. HULL: Not the size. For the bag limit, trip limit, for small coastals in general, but in particular sharpnose. I mean, it needs to have a default of one. I mean, that's ridiculous, and it needs -- I made that it needs to be start with four, and then go higher from there.

MR. ROLLER: I think -- Thank you for that, and I agree with you on that. I think one of the issues is we make it very hard for recreational anglers to harvest sharks. We make it really hard for people even to want to try to harvest sharks, whether it's the high size limit for a lot of these species, I mean, and, given the general size of the of blacknose, it's hard enough to find a blacknose that meets that size limit to harvest, right, and so I agree with you there, and we definitely need some massaging on there.

We should be asking the question of what can we do to increase some harvest, and increase a little interest in this resource, as opposed to where we are now, because it's just not where -- It just doesn't work for the recreational industry.

MS. MURPHEY: Thank you, Tom. Anybody else? Amy, and then Jimmy.

MS. DUKES: Thank you, Madam Chair, and I think this concept of establishing a flexible recreational minimum size limit, as well as a retention limit, is a great concept. It gets back to what Tom just said, and the idea would be flexibility in the fact that it's going to perhaps increase harvest, which is something that we're all, around this table, talking about.

We just don't want that giving the flexibility and then, for some reason, we have a minimum size limit that's massive, but yet then have a retention limit that's up to four, and those are going to be counterintuitive to one another, and so just ensuring that we're thinking about the idea of an increase of harvest, having that flexibility within the minimum size, as well as the bag limit that's going to lead to those. C and D are compounding of one another, and so, again, if you have a really big size limit, then getting your four Atlantic sharpnose is likely to be a really difficult task, versus, if you don't have a minimum size limit, having that four sharpnose is very applicable, and it's just how those are going to be combined through the flexibility of HMS that I think is giving me a little bit of heartburn. Thank you.

MS. MURPHEY: Thank you, Amy. Jimmy, and then Carolyn.

MR. HULL: That was awesome, Amy. That's a good -- I mean, when you look at it that way, it's interesting, and then, just to follow-through on Tom's comment, in my area of northeast Florida, six-pack charter boats, like you run, they are commonly running half-day trips targeting sharks. They don't have to hardly go offshore, common, and more and more, and private recreational boats, too. It's an increasing interest in sharks I see in our area, and we need to make it easier for them to understand the rules, and the bag limits, and, if they understand that, they may want to target them more.

MS. MURPHEY: Tom, to that point, and then we'll move to Carolyn.

MR. ROLLER: I just want to say absolutely, and it's the same in North Carolina, right, and we're seeing a lot more interest in this fishery. It's just an easy thing to do, and people enjoy it, and, as our tourism expands, it's a great thing to do half-day trips, but, as someone who does it, and does it a lot, I find it very, very difficult to, like I said, even want to harvest one of the species, other than sharpnose.

MS. MURPHEY: Thank you, Tom. Carolyn.

DR. BELCHER: The other thing I would be interested in hearing is how the commission weighs-in on the potential for annual changes, because I know South Carolina adopts by proxy, but not all states do, and the specs that change the annual quotas and all that generally don't cascade down to the state level, but these would require us to keep going in and having to modify our regulations to keep up with the changes as they come through, plus not all of us use the same groupings, and that's the other part of that.

MS. MURPHEY: Thank you, Carolyn. Judy.

MS. HELMEY: Well, I have to agree with Tom on the charter boat situation. We do have a lot more people requesting to catch sharks, and then some people want to keep them, but, as you say, they have to be so large to keep them, and they're scary for people. I ask the captains not to try to keep them, because somebody could get hurt in the process, and there have been -- If you look on the internet, you'll see tons and tons of videos of people, just recreational fishermen, getting hurt, because they don't know how to take the shark off, and so I'm just thinking, if we've lowered it, it might be a lot better for them to be able to handle it, and it would give us charter boats more, and we could keep some of them, and make people happy.

MS. MURPHEY: Thank you, Judy. Any other comments? Go ahead, Jimmy.

MR. HULL: So just following-up, and so this is about our letter, and maybe we want to adjust the letter and say we need to possibly reduce these recreational size limits, which is hampering the ability of recreational fishermen to harvest these sharks, and put in what Amy said, where things are -- It's concerning how contradicting that can be, how you're going to adjust these things, and what everybody has said, what has been said here about how are we going to line up in-season closures with our state management, and so there's some things maybe we should adjust in our letter.

MS. MURPHEY: All right. Thank you, Jimmy. Anybody else? So my take-home, and hopefully John caught all this better than I did, but everybody seems pretty happy with the commercial side of this. There's some concerns of the recreational side, some discussion about reducing the size limit for the recreational folks, so they're a little safer to catch, and I think that's what I caught, and I don't know -- Did I capture everything, or did you have stuff to add, to make sure it's all captured?

MR. HADLEY: I have a few other things that I added in my notes, and we'll put that into the Full Council report, but, on the recreational side, I also noted clarification on the retention limits, and it sounded like that could be useful once these go into place.

MS. MURPHEY: All right. Dewey.

MR. HEMILRIGHT: Karyl, this is Dewey Hemilright, and I was wondering about large coastal sharks commercially, and I think the trip limit is fifty-five, and I'm just curious if you could maybe send the South Atlantic Council staff last year's shark underharvest that's printed on the website, which I don't -- I'm not sure where that's at right now, and I probably could find it, but just to show all the folks the underharvest of what the resource is that we have here in the United States, and what our underharvest presently is, which will lead me to the question of why is our number --

Given the limited amount of harvest and underharvest, why wouldn't our trip limit be like more than fifty-five large coastal sharks, and I think that, if we look past 2025, and I'll just do last year, because I feel like the data is there for that, you'll see over -- I mean, everybody could see, over the last ten years probably, the massive amount of underharvest we performed here in the United States with this resource, and so that would be one question. Why are we stuck at fifty-five, given the amount of underharvest for the species, which I believe is the same as the -- Well, I'll leave that and just ask that question. Why aren't we at a hundred large coastal sharks trip limit?

MS. BREWSTER-GEISZ: Thanks, Dewey. Yes, and we are looking at the large coastal trip limits in a different regulatory action, and so that will be something we're looking at in Amendment 16, which we hope to have out later this year, and you are correct that the commercial quotas have been significantly underharvested in the last few years, and we are working very hard to correct that.

MR. HEMILRIGHT: Thank you, and could you send council staff the 2025 shark, and I guess it's accounting and underharvest, so they could share that with us, please? Thank you.

MS. BREWSTER-GEISZ: Yes, and we are working on getting that up soon, and, once it's up on our webpage, I'll be sure to share that.

MR. HEMILRIGHT: Okay. How about 2024 then? That's already up there, isn't it?

MS. BREWSTER-GEISZ: That is up there, and so I can send the link for 2024.

MR. HEMILRIGHT: Thank you.

MS. BREWSTER-GEISZ: Yes.

MS. MURPHEY: Thank you, Karyl. Any other questions or comments for this letter? Okay. Well, I guess that we will call it. If anything else comes up, send something to John before the end of the week, if you think of anything else, and we'll go from there. At this point, if there's not any Other Business, I'll go ahead and adjourn Council I, and then I'm turn it over to Jessica, and she's going to reconvene the subcommittee, the Snapper Grouper Commercial Subcommittee, and we'll go through Actions 3 and 4.

(Whereupon, the meeting adjourned on March 3, 2026.)

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Certified By: _____ Date: _____

Transcribed By
Amanda Thomas
April 17, 2026

FC 1 - Tue - 3/3/26

**SOUTH ATLANTIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL
COUNCIL STAFF**

✓ Julia Byrd
Citizen Science Program Manager
julia.byrd@safmc.net

✓ Dr. Julie Neer
SEDAR Program Manager
Julie.neer@safmc.net

✓ Myra Brouwer
Deputy Director - Management
myra.brouwer@safmc.net

✓ **Outreach Coordinator**
Ashley Oliver
Ashley.Oliver@safmc.net

✓ John Carmichael
Executive Director
john.carmichael@safmc.net

✓ Emily Ott
SEDAR Coordinator
Emily.Ott@safmc.net

✓ **Deputy Director - Science**
Dr. Chip Collier
chip.collier@safmc.net

✓ **Fishery Scientist**
Dr. Mike Schmidtke
mike.schmidtke@safmc.net

✓ Christina Curtis
Fishery Social Scientist
christina.wiegand@safmc.net

✓ Nicholas Smillie
Digital Media and Communication Specialist
Nick.Smillie@safmc.net

✓ **Quantitative Fishery Scientist**
Dr. Judd Curtis
Judd.curtis@safmc.net

✓ **Meeting Coordinator**
Rachael Silvas
rachael.silvas@safmc.net

✓ John Hadley
Fishery Economist & FMP Coordinator
john.hadley@safmc.net

✓ **Staff Accountant**
Suzanna Thomas
suzanna.thomas@safmc.net

✓ Kathleen Howington
Habitat and Ecosystem Scientist
kathleen.howington@safmc.net

✓ Meg Withers
Citizen Science Project Manager
Meg.withers@safmc.net

✓ Allie Iberle
Fishery Scientist
Allie.iberle@safmc.net

✓ Kelly Klasnick
Administrative Officer
kelly.klasnick@safmc.net

FC 7 Tue - 3/3/20

First	Last	Suffix	Affiliation
✓ Trish	Murphey		NC Division of Marine Fisheries
✓ Jessica	McCawley		Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission
✓ Robert	Beal		Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission
✓ Carolyn	Belcher		GA DNR Coastal Resources Division
✓ Gary	Borland		
✓ Amy	Dukes		SC DNR Marine Resources Division
✓ Judy	Helmey		
✓ Francis (Dewey)	Hemilright		
✓ James	Hull	Jr.	
✓ Kerry	Marhefka		
✓ Tom	Pease		Seventh Coast Guard District
✓ Charlie	Phillips		
✓ Tom	Roller		
✓ Robert	Spottswood	Jr.	
✓ Andy	Strelcheck		NOAA Fisheries Southeast Region
Deirdre	Warner-Kramer		Office of Marine Conservation OES / OMC
TBD	TBD		U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Representative

Shep Grimes

Dr. Clay Porch

Lara Klibansky

Kristina Foss

Kathy Knowlton

Bob Zales II

Sonny Gwinn

Johnny Marquez

Major Michael Paul Thomas

N.K. Mehta

Rick Deक्टर

Jennifer Lines

Karyl Brewster-Geisz

March 2026 Council

Attendee Report: Meeting

Report Generated:

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Webinar ID	Actual Start Date/Time	Duration	# Registered
535-165-571	03/03/2026 07:48 AM EST	9 hours 41 minutes	183

Staff Details

Attended	Interest Rating	Last Name	First Name
Yes	Not applicable for staff	Council	South Atlantic

Attendee Details

Last Name	First Name
Agar	J
Atkinson	Seth
Bailey	Adam
Bajema	Jordan
Barbieri	Luiz
Barger	Jeff
Barile	Peter
Barrows	Katline
Beal	Bob
Bernier	Quinn
Blough	Heather
Bogdan	Jennifer
Bonura	Vincent
Brantley	William
Brewster-Geisz	Karyl
Brogan (Oceana)	Gib
Brouwer	Myra
Bruger	Catherine
Bublely	Walter
Bunting	Matthew
Byrd	Julia
Califf	Julie
Carter	David
Cerny-Chipman	Elizabeth
Clawson	Jessica
Cox	Jack
Crosson	Scott
Crowe	Stacie
Cudney	Jennifer

Curtis	Judd
Dancy	Kiley
DeVictor	Rick
Degan	Jacqui
DiJohnson	Alex
Dingle	Julie
DuBeck	Guy
Dubniczki	Hayden
Dukes	Amy
Dunn	Russell
Dyar	Ben
Farnell	Paula
Feldman	Lindsey
Flowers	Henry
Floyd	Brad
Foor	Brandon
Foss	Kristin
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Gahm	Meghan
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Gibson	Daniel
Gooding	Elizabeth
Gore	Karla
Gray	Alisha
Griner	Robert
Guyas	Martha
HEMILRIGHT	DEWEY
Hadley	John
Hallas	Sara
Hartig	Ben
Helmey	Judy
Hildreth	Delaine
Howell	Scott
Hull	Jimmy
Hurff	Kieley
Iberle	Allie
Iverson	Kim
Kennedy	Todd
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Kersting	Anne
Klasnick	01Kelly
Klibansky	Lara
Klibansky	Lara
Knowlton	Kathy

Larkin	Michael
Lazarre	Dominique
Lee	Jennifer
Lee	Max
Leonard	Eddie
Levy	Mara
Locke	Charles
Lopez-Mercer	Maria
Mackesey	Brendan
Mackesey	Brendan
Malinowski	Richard
Marhefka	Kerry
McMullen	Ryan
Meehan	Sean
Mehta	Nikhil
Merck	Nicole
Merrifield	Jeanna
Miranda	David
Morrison	Wendy
Muffley	Brandon
Murphey	Trish
Murphy	Michael
Neer	Julie
Newman	Thomas
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Oliver	Ashley
Ott	Emily
Package-Ward	Christina
Palmrose	Kristin
Pease	LT Tom
Phillips	Charlie
Prada	Martha
Ramsay	Chloe
Records	David
Reed	Steven
Reichert	Marcel
Richard	Andrew
Robbins	Megan
Roller	Tom
S	Emma
SAWICKI	KIM
STARKS	CAITLIN
Schmidtke	Michael
Seward	McLean

Shervanick	Kara
Silvas	Rachael
Smart	Tracey
Smillie	Nick
Snyder	Dave
Spratt	Paige
Spurgin	Kali
Starling	Savannah
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Stephens	Haley
Stephenson	Sarah
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Thomas	Michael
Thomas	Suzanna
Turley	Brendan
Vara	Mary
Vecchio	Julie
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