

SOUTH ATLANTIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

COUNCIL SESSION I

**Town & Country Inn and Suites
Charleston, South Carolina**

September 16-17, 2024

Transcript

Council

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Rick DeVictor
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Lt. Marisa Kraiss
Lt. Tom Pease
Rachel O'Malley

Dr. Clay Porch
Kristin Foss
Kathy Knowlton
Billy Broussard
William Ladue
Tracy Smart
Lucas Barnard
LeAnn Hogan
Geoff White

Observers and Participants

Other observers and participants attached.

The Council Session I of the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council convened at The Town & Country Inn and Suites, Charleston, South Carolina, on Monday, September 16, 2024, and was called to order by Chairman Carolyn Belcher.

DR. BELCHER: Okay, everybody. We're going to get started. Welcome to the 2024 fall council meeting. I'm Carolyn Belcher, soon to be vacating chair, and this is my last meeting, but we're going to start off with some general housekeeping first. I would like to introduce our liaisons from both the Gulf and Mid-Atlantic Councils. We have Billy Broussard for the Gulf Management Council and Sonny Gwin for the Mid-Atlantic Council. Andy is going to do the oath for our new members, which we have two new members that are being sworn-in, or we have four, and so Andy. We will need Jimmy and Charlie and Judy and Tom.

(Whereupon, new and reappointed council members are sworn-in.)

MR. STRELCHECK: Please join with me in welcoming the newest council members. (*Applause*)

DR. BELCHER: Thanks, Andy. Next, we would like to recognize our Law Enforcement Officers of the Year for 2023, and so if you folks would come forward, and I am looking for Game Warden Lucas Barnard and Staff Sergeant William Ladue. A little background on the award. Since 2010, the council has been recognizing individuals who have exceeded the duty requirements of their position, exemplified the virtues of professionalism and dedication, and demonstrated a distinct pattern of service to enforcing fisheries regulations in the South Atlantic region.

The Law Enforcement Officer of the Year Award is presented annually at the council's September meeting. Nominees are submitted for consideration from agency representatives on the council's Law Enforcement Advisory Panel, and the council selects from, among the nominees, the officer, or officers, or team that are deserving of the award.

This year, we are presenting the 2023 Law Enforcement Officer of the Year Award to two deserving officers, Game Warden Lucas Barnard with the Georgia Department of Natural Resources and Staff Sergeant William Ladue of the South Carolina Department of Natural Resources.

Game Warden Barnard was nominated for this award by Captain Chris Hodge and Sergeant David Brady. Game Warden Barnard contributed significantly to the enforcement of marine fisheries. In 2023, he was tasked with assisting Georgia's National Marine Fisheries agreement. During 2023, he executed and participated in ten joint enforcement action patrols, which consisted of snapper grouper patrols, right whale patrols, Gray's Reef National Marine Sanctuary patrols, shrimp trawler patrols, and investigations in seafood dealer inspections, to include assisting NOAA federal officers at the Port of Savannah with inspection of containers that are coming into the port.

Of these patrols, he submitted and participated in five joint enforcement action case packages to NOAA. These referrals consisted of patrols to Gray's Reef National Marine Sanctuary, which yielded cases of undersized black sea bass, possession of red snapper during closed season, which was two separate cases, over the limit of vermilion snapper, undersized king mackerel, along with separate black sea bass violations, descending device violations, and illegal charter vessel violations.

Lucas is dedicated to protecting our offshore marine fisheries and enjoys his time on the water. Although he is young in his career, he strives to excel and be the best he can be, while challenging others to do the same. He is always willing to educate the public when he encounters violations that can be corrected onsite, and he takes the entire encounter into account. His work is a direct reflection of his dedication to protecting the resources of the South Atlantic, and it is my pleasure to present Game Warden Lucas Barnard with the 2023 Law Enforcement Officer of the Year Award.

Second is Staff Sergeant William Ladue. He was nominated by First Sergeant and Joint Enforcement Agreement Coordinator Garret Hering. William works the Lower Charleston Unit within South Carolina DNA Law Enforcement Region 4, which is the coastal units, and is responsible for enforcing recreational and commercial saltwater as well as freshwater fisheries. SSG Ladue is a certified field training officer for new hires assigned to his unit, and Staff Sergeant Ladue is the leader in his unit when it comes to knowledge of the waterways in his area of operation.

SSG Ladue is also known as the go-to officer for JEA, not just in his unit, but across the state, with over 100 hours of joint enforcement action patrol time this year. SSG Ladue always gives credit for the case to the other officers, never seeking any recognition for himself. He made multiple commercial saltwater fisheries cases, to include license violations, harvest shellfish in closed areas, commercial crabbing violations, and illegal trawling violations. Staff Sergeant Ladue is also responsible for numerous recreational saltwater cases, to include creel and size limit cases for saltwater gamefish and multiple illegal use of gillnet cases. Staff Sergeant Ladue was the lead officer in four trawling in closed state waters cases this past year, issuing five citations that totaled over \$31,000 in fines.

William is a hardworking officer, willing to go above and beyond to protect marine resources. He has a great work ethic, and he maintains a positive working relationship with outside agencies. He coordinates offshore and inshore joint enforcement action patrols, as well as state fishery enforcement patrols within his assigned unit. Staff Sergeant William Ladue is one of the most productive fisheries enforcement officers within the South Atlantic fishery law enforcement community and deserving of the 2023 Law Enforcement Officer of the Year. On behalf of the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council, thank you, and congratulations to you both. *(Applause)*

According to JEA Coordinator Hering, “Willie is always willing to help his coworkers with whatever they need and rarely seeks credit for himself. Moreover, he is always willing to be the officer who makes the case but gives citations to the younger officers who are with him at the time.”

Okay. Moving on, we are now at the point at which we will approve the agenda. Are there any suggested edits from anyone relative to the process agenda for our Council Session I? any objections to it as currently published? Seeing none, the agenda passes. Next up is approving the minutes from the June 2024 council meeting. Are there any corrections, or edits, that need to be made to the minutes? Okay. Any objection to passing the minutes as currently published? Okay. Seeing none, the minutes are approved.

Next up are our assignment reports, starting out with NOAA Office of Law Enforcement, which is David Carrodegus.

MR. CARRODEGUAS: All right, and so I'll go through a recap of what we did in D4, essentially, since the last council meeting, and so the snapshot is we've opened 148 incidents. Out of those, eight cases were referred to General Counsel. Those included right whale seasonal management area cases, sanctuary-related cases, which included an ATBA case, and then cases from the Bahamas, Lacey Act cases.

Twenty-four resulted in summary settlements, ranging from \$250 to \$2,500. There were a lot of gear issues, permit-related issues, whether HMS permits or non-permitted charters, retention during closure, red snapper, golden tile, grouper, things of that nature, and sanctuary-related cases. The 277 figure for patrols is overall SED. Our system, the way to pull it, it doesn't break it down individually, but, out of the 148 open cases, 31 percent either were no violations, and so a relatively high compliance rate, or low-level violations that were handled through compliance assistance.

Some of the highlights from this period include seafood imports, a lot of cargo container inspections with Caribbean red snapper, working with FDA, U.S. Fish and Wildlife, and CBP. We also did a lot of outreach and awareness, whether it was with, you know, shrimp vessels with TEDs, and the one picture to the upper-right is an outreach that Miles Dover, out of North Carolina, conducted at a tournament, and then we did a lot of domestic and international training.

Down on the far-left is actually myself at an FWC advanced conservation officer academy, going over Lacey Act Bahamas cases, how to put together the JEA case packages and things of that nature. In the middle is we've been doing a lot of sending either an EO or an agent to the Caribbean nations, to either help them with combatting IUU or port state measures, if they're part of the agreement, and then the far-right is going to be a patrol that was conducted out of Charleston, focused on North Atlantic right whales, and we found no violations, no buoy violations, and then they conducted underway fisheries boardings. The picture is from one of those recreational boardings, where they found a descending device violation as well as a commercial vessel that did not have sea turtle mitigation gear or a descending device onboard.

This is kind of a snapshot of our enforcement partnerships and referrals. Ninety-one overall enforcement referrals for the quarter, and that encompasses the entire of SED, and so you can see there's quite a bit on the Atlantic, and we had seventy-seven from FWC, which included bag limit retention, undersized, descending device, and some sanctuary cases as well. Georgia DNR contributed six descender device, no open charter permit, and j-hook cases, and South Carolina had a retention during closure and undersized possession referral.

This is kind of recap on our Operation Sanctuary Savior that we do down in the Keys. Six total OLE boat crews, including support staff, and there was a full presence through the Upper, Middle, and Lower Keys. It was a joint effort with FWC, the Coast Guard, CBP, and, of course, the unique nature of the Keys, where the county and local PDs also enforce fisheries laws. Seventy-two vessel stops, and we contacted 315 people. There was 171 patrol hours, and most of the cases that were made during this time period were taking lobster either undersized or with eggs, out of a SPA, spearfishing cases in no-spearfishing zones, and groundings. There was a high compliance rate, 74 percent, at the end of the operation.

This is some of the shots from the operation. One of the big cases that was made during the op was two EOs, an FWC investigator, and a special agent stopped a vessel that had speared a goliath grouper. Criminal charges on the state were filed for this case.

Right whales is our current spotlight. We're doing a lot of enforcement focused on pleasure craft compliance for the seasonal zones. We've got, you know, seasons coming up, and so we sent out 250 compliance assistance letters to pleasure crafts from all over the world. Everywhere there's a star there is where the ownership of the vessel originates at that was traveling through the seasonal zone. We identified them using radar, AIS, backtracked ownership of the vessel, and then we made contact, to make sure that they're following, you know, the regs on it. This is just a reminder of our law enforcement hotline. We include that in every round, and that should be it. Any questions?

DR. BELCHER: Thanks for your presentation. Are there questions? Amy.

MS. DUKES: Thank you for that report and your dedication to enforcing these rules and regulations. Just one quick question about the non-permitted charter cases that you referenced, and was that with fishing for or wanting to retain snapper grouper, or which fishery within federal waters, or was there anything different to that?

MR. CARRODEGUAS: It ranges. I mean, from my experience, it's a mixed bag of snapper grouper and coastal migratory. When you start pushing down into, you know, more southern Florida, you start seeing more of the dolphin wahoo, but it could be just one specific fishery, or it could be a mixed bag of all of them.

DR. BELCHER: Charlie.

MR. PHILLIPS: Thank you. You know, they're putting up, or looking at positions to put, AIS along the Georgia coast, so they can let guys know that they may be speeding a whale zone. Are you hearing, or do you have any feeling of whether some of these boats may just decide to turn their AIS off, which would make it more difficult for you, not to mention making it less safe for the boaters?

MR. CARRODEGUAS: No, I haven't heard anything about AIS being turned off, but the other tool we have is the radar, and it has a camera built into it, and you can actually like pull boat numbers, vessel numbers, off of the videos and photos that it pulls up, and we have used that in conjunction with patrols, with vessel-borne patrols, using the radar and AIS. It's kind of a joint package operation deal.

MR. PHILLIPS: I'm just concerned about people not -- Doing what they want to do and thinking they can turn AIS off and that takes care of it.

MR. CARRODEGUAS: Yes.

DR. BELCHER: Other questions? Tom.

MR. ROLLER: Thank you for the presentation. I have a quick question about illegal charters. If someone is not permitted, doesn't have the federal permits, but is in federal waters, but is catching federal species, but not retaining them, how do you handle that, from an enforcement perspective?

MR. CARRODEGUAS: They're still conducting a for-hire charter. They're targeting the species, and the for-hire activity, and so, if it was myself boarding that vessel, I would issue a summary settlement.

MR. ROLLER: Thank you for that.

DR. BELCHER: Other questions? Okay. Thank you again for your presentation. Next, we have a Coast Guard report, which is Lieutenant Marissa Kraiss that's going to give that to us.

LT. KRAISS: All right. Good afternoon, everyone, and so, for Coast Guard District 7, for our hours, and so total aircraft hours dedicated to the LMR mission, we have 0.7 hours. For our boat hours, we have 191 hours dedicated, and then our cutter hours are fifty-seven hours dedicated to the LMR mission.

We conducted roughly 110 boardings, fisheries boardings, and we've had no FFB incursions this quarter, but we've had one significant violation case and five MPR enforcement cases, as well as one MPR assistance request and one MPR response. We've had four operations. Sector Charleston had the Coast Guard Cutter Angela McShan conducting LMR ops from 19 to 23 August, targeting various MPRs off the coast of South Carolina. No significant violations were found during this op.

Additionally, we have a slide here for Sector Key West, Operation Carapace, and so that was an op that was conducted during the mini-season. It was a joint op with FWC and state partners, as well as NOAA, and so, during this op, there were roughly fifty-six boarding team members that conducted ninety-two boardings, which resulted in twenty-one safety violations, ten recreational vessel terminations, five FWC violations, and, in total, 836 lobsters inspected.

Then one of these cases -- It was a vessel that was issued a violation for illegal possession of spiny lobster within the Everglades National Park, and so they were issued a \$500 fine for that, and so that was a successful op. We have a few pictures there that you can see, and just, again, it shows some joint operations, and partnerships, with the local partners there in Key West.

The last thing I wanted to pass -- So I haven't been in this position for very long, but I will be handing over the reins to Lieutenant Tom Pease here. He's got some experience working up in New England Fisheries, and he will be maintaining this position for a lot longer than I was here for, and so hopefully he can be an asset, and a resource, to everyone here, and he has a lot of knowledge that he can also pass down and gain from you all, and so that's it for the Coast Guard's report, but I'm standing by for any questions. Thank you.

DR. BELCHER: Thanks, Marissa. Any questions for the Coast Guard? Okay. Again, thank you for your presentation. Next up, we have the council liaison reports, and we'll start out with the Gulf Fishery Management Council, and so Billy Broussard.

MR. BROUSSARD: Yes, Madam Chair. Thank you. The Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council met in Biloxi, Mississippi, August 19 through 22. There, we had three new council members sworn-in, John Sanchez, Troy Frady, and Jason Osborne, and two returning council members were sworn-in as well. We also elected J.D. Dugas and Dr. Kesley Banks as chair and vice chair, respectively.

One of things we worked on was a recreational initiative workgroup. The council's recreational initiative is an effort to engage the Gulf of Mexico recreational community to review and evaluate past and current reef fish management strategies and explore potential new approaches that could be applied in the future. The recreational initiative will focus on the following five species as examples: gag, gray triggerfish, greater amberjack, red grouper, and red snapper. The council populated the workgroup, which is the main working body of the recreational initiative plan, to hold the first working group meeting before the November council meeting. We also occupied the Shrimp SSC, which we appointed three members on it. Let's see.

NOAA Fisheries Draft Ecosystem-Based Fisheries Management Roadmap, the council reviewed a draft comment letter that was developed with recommendations from its Ecosystem Technical Committee on the updated 2024 NOAA Fisheries Draft Ecosystem-Based Fisheries Management Roadmap. The roadmap is being developed to guide NOAA Fisheries' efforts to implement EBFM policy over the next five years and to advance climate-ready decision-making.

ABC control rule, the council's acceptable biological catch control rule is a systematic way to determine sustainable harvest levels that considers the scientific uncertainty. The current ABC control rule does not adequately account for uncertainty in the scientific data, which could potentially result in overfishing. In response, the council's Scientific and Statistical Committee, SSC, is working with NOAA's Southeast Fisheries Science Center to develop a new ABC control rule that better addresses the limitations of the current approach.

We also discussed the for-hire data collection program. We continued work on the draft amendment that considers developing a new for-hire data collection program. The council decided to move forward with a non-technical approach to validate efforts that would not require the use of vessel monitoring systems. Instead, a combination of trip declarations, prelanding notifications, approved landing locations, logbooks submitted before offloading catch, dockside intercepts, and did-not-fish reports is expected to provide validation of trip effort.

The council also considered the collection of economic data and modified options in the document by reducing the proportion of trips that could be subjected to an economic survey. We expect to continue work on that document in November.

Going back to shrimp, the council heard a presentation on the Southeast shrimp strategy and planning meeting hosted by Sea Grant and the Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission. The meeting brought regional stakeholders from both the Gulf and South Atlantic regions together to address challenges facing the shrimp industry, and, jumping from shrimp to something a little more complicated, shallow and deepwater grouper.

The council worked on Reef Fish Amendment 58, which considers modifying management measures for the shallow-water and deepwater grouper complexes. The shallow-water grouper complex is comprised of scamp, yellowmouth grouper, black grouper, and yellowfin grouper, and

it's currently managed with a single annual catch limit. The complex can no longer be managed in this way, because the stock assessment, SEDAR 68, and catch recommendations were completed for scamp and yellowmouth grouper, but not the remaining species.

Catch limit recommendations for scamp and yellowmouth grouper represent a considerable decrease in allowable harvest, while catch limit recommendations for black and yellowfin grouper remain unchanged. Splitting the complex requires the council to establish criteria used to determine if the new subcomplexes are overfished or experiencing overfishing and set allowable harvest and accountability measures for each new subcomplex. Additionally, the council will consider a recreational season and establish new commercial individual quota, or IFQ, program share categories, allocation, and accountability measures for each subcomplex.

The deepwater grouper complex is comprised of warsaw grouper, snowy grouper, yellowedge grouper, and speckled hind. It is currently managed with a single annual catch limit. The council's SSC reviewed the most recent stock assessment on yellowedge grouper, which is SEDAR 85, which determined that, while yellowedge grouper were not overfished, it is experiencing overfishing.

The SSC updated catch limit recommendations for yellowedge grouper, based on the stock assessment, and updated the catch limits for the other three species in the deepwater grouper complex. New catch limit recommendations for the deepwater grouper complex represents a decrease in the allowable harvest. The deepwater grouper complex can continue to be managed as a single unit, because catch recommendations for each species are in the same data currency, or units. The council decided to split the document into two separate amendments and expand the management options being considered. We will be continuing work on both documents in the future.

Charter-for-hire red snapper fishing and the buffer, the council reviewed draft options for a framework action that considered adjusting the federal for-hire fishing season and the buffer between the federal for-hire component red snapper annual catch limits and annual catch target. After hearing public testimony, the council decided not to adjust the buffer between the red snapper annual catch limit and the annual catch target. The council also added an alternative that would consider opening the federal for-hire fishing season on May 15, rather than the June 1 opener, each year and remove an alternative that would determine the start date each year by forecasting the length of the season backwards.

Jumping to commercial IFQs, the council continued work on Reef Fish Amendment 59, which aims to improve opportunity for new participants by modifying requirements for participation. Actions in the document consider requiring a commercial reef fish permit to open or maintain a shareholder account, obtain or maintain shares, and obtain and maintain annual allocation. There's also an action that considers requiring shareholders to land a portion of their annual allocation to demonstrate fishing activity. The council plans to continue work on this for our November meeting.

Stock assessment process, the council heard a presentation on proposed changes to the stock assessment process. The changes aim to improve the flexibility, timeliness, and quality of stock assessments. NOAA's Southeast Fisheries Science Center also aims to prioritize key stocks, while

allowing remaining stocks to be assessed using less time-consuming approaches. Madam Chair, this concludes my report.

DR. BELCHER: Thank you, sir. Any questions for Billy at this time? Okay. Seeing none, again, we appreciate the presentation. Next, we will get the Mid-Atlantic Council report, and so Sonny Gwin.

MR. GWIN: Thank you, Madam Chair. The Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council met in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, August 12, and, during that meeting, we adopted the 2025 through 2027 specifications for golden tilefish. We adopted status quo 2025 specifications for the Mid-Atlantic blueline tile fishery, and that's the one north of the North Carolina/Virginia border. We adopted the 2025 specifications for black sea bass, and, also, we reviewed the 2025 specifications for summer flounder, and recommended no changes, and we reviewed the 2025 specifications for scup, and we recommended minor increases to the commercial quota and the recreational harvest limit.

We also received an update on improvements to the Marine Recreational Information Program's (MRIP) Fishing Survey. We developed comments on NOAA Fisheries' Draft Ecosystem-Based Fisheries Management Roadmap, and we received an update on the Northeast Trawl Advisory Panel (NTAP) activities. We received a presentation on the National Fish and Wildlife Federation electronic monitoring and reporting program, and, if there's any questions, please raise your hand.

DR. BELCHER: Thanks, Sonny. Questions for Sonny? Okay. Moving on, we'll be getting reports from the state agencies, and we'll start with Florida and Kristin.

MS. FOSS: So not a whole lot to report. The FWC Commission meeting is also occurring this week, and so it will be tomorrow and Wednesday, down in the Keys, and hence Jessica's absence from the table, but she will be here on Wednesday morning, and then our FWC exempted fishing permit project is underway, and we're excited to provide an update under the Snapper Grouper Committee.

DR. BELCHER: Thanks, Kristin. Any questions for Kristin? Okay. Moving on, I'll go to North Carolina next. Trish.

MS. MURPHEY: All right. We have a couple of things going on. As you all know, we -- North Carolina was mandated to do mandatory reporting requirements for recreational and commercial fisheries, but we did get a one-year delay, and so it will now be effective December 1, 2025, instead of 2024, and, just to remind you, that's anybody that is -- That's mandatory reporting for anybody that recreational harvests a red drum or flounder or spotted seatrout or striped bass, and weakfish, and, also, any commercial fishermen who land commercially, but do not sell their catch, will also be required to report, and we're doing a lot of outreach on that, and trying to get everybody informed on that.

Our annual fishery management plan review came out the first of August, and this summarizes the available information on our state fisheries, as well as federal, but it looks at long-term trends in catch, biological data, and management through 2023.

We sank a tugboat, the Thomas Dann, on August 1, off Cape Lookout, and she is about twenty-eight nautical miles south of Beaufort Inlet, in 105 feet of water, and we had our commission meeting in August, and the commission asked our director to get -- To seek permission from the Department of Environmental Quality Secretary to move up the schedule to review the southern flounder fishery management plan, and so beginning this year, and so we'll wait to hear from our secretary whether we'll be able to do that or not.

Also, the Marine Fisheries Commission supported a measure to provide clarity for recreational anglers and align the division enforcement with our Wildlife Resources Commission limits for flounder in joint fishing waters. We have coastal fishing waters, joint fishing waters, and inland fishing waters, and so this proclamation was issued that set a recreational bag limit of one fish per person per day, with a fifteen-inch minimum size limit, for flounder caught only by hook-and-line in the joint fishing waters of the state for September 1, 2, 7, and 8, and so this would be equivalent to the regulations that were established by our Wildlife Commission.

This did not open our flounder in coastal waters, and, with that, neither the commission nor the division endorsed these flounder limits that was established by the WRC, but this was to eliminate the conflicting regulations between the two water bodies, and also to fix an enforcement gap, and so that was kind of a big deal.

In other business, the commission voted to send the draft Spotted Seatrout Fishery Management Plan Amendment 1 to public and advisory committee review, and this draft amendment will include several options to look at -- To end overfishing. Then, last, but not least, the commission also approved a notice of text to begin with the rulemaking process to adopt a rule for false albacore management, and that's all I have, Madam Chair.

DR. BELCHER: Okay. Any questions for Trish? All right. Moving on, South Carolina. Amy.

MS. DUKES: Thanks, Madam Chair. For those of you that may have missed it, it was announced last month that our DNR Director, Robert Boyles, will be retiring at the first of next year. Robert Boyles has been a steadfast supporter and advocate for our natural resources during his tremendous thirty-two-year commitment to the agency, and so he will be sorely missed, and work is underway to have a new director at some point, and so that will be news to all of us.

In addition, we also had some legislative changes for our blue crab fishery. Starting on July 1, we now have a moratorium on the issuance of any new equipment licenses for blue crab traps, with the intent for this to become a limited entry in the commercial fishery. Through attrition, our hope is to get down to 100 licenses. However, if, over the last two-and-a-half years, you have possessed an equipment trap license for blue crab, and have verified documented landings of at least 500 pounds, you will be able to stay within the fishery, and we're also putting a cap on the maximum number of traps of 200, with some exceptions for those that have previously fished more than 200 traps and, again, have verified documentation of that.

We're also doing, in association with this, some blue crab tagging work, which has been really beneficial. We've actually been tagging blue crabs, primarily in the Charleston Harbor, just to figure out kind of what's going on with our blue crabs. We have recently finalized our state wildlife action plan updates for all of our species lists, which grew significantly from the last review.

We also are finishing up our last section of the 2018 shrimp disaster funds that we received. These funds are specific to shrimp disaster infrastructure projects. An RFP was allocated earlier this year, and we received about fifty-two applications, for a little over \$2 million of requested funds from that RFP, with only about \$1.2 million to allocate, and so there is a process to go through, and those are going to be notification letters sent out in the next couple of weeks.

Just an interesting food-for-thought, which I thought was really neat, we did some work, down in the Ace Basin National Estuarine Research Reserve, just here south of Charleston, and it was looking at dense plastics, HDPE, and that ended up being the highest source of microplastics during this study, which we had never really assumed that that would be there, and we always thought it was going to be more of a styrofoam, but, in fact, it was the dense plastics that was coming back in that study, and I just thought that was kind of neat, and I thought I would share it, and that will conclude my report.

DR. BELCHER: Thanks, Amy. Any questions for Amy? Okay. The Georgia report, similar to Amy, we're wrapping up 2013 disaster funds, and we actually had two pots of money for shrimp disaster, and 2013 is down to, I think, its last \$50,000, and it's basically folks who we can't seem to get a handle on, whether they've passed away or moved away, and we have just received word from NOAA that we could actually allocate that towards safety equipment.

The 2018 funds actually funded a two-part project, looking at infrastructure, and, initially, it was talking with fishermen and finding out what were ways that they thought we could use disaster money, moving forward in the future, and a lot of it came back to some of their basic supplies, whether it was life rafts, flares, turtle excluders, bycatch reduction devices or the like, and so we contacted NOAA about it, and, with the 2013, they said that we could put that allocation, and so we're in the process of figuring out what we can get to the majority of folks in a reasonable timeframe, and dollar amount, to cover basic needs that way.

The 2018 monies, the pilot was done, and we got some really good feedback from the fishermen, more support than we thought for monies going into things like supportive railways, as we've lost them, and building those docks up that are having problems, and, similar, how do we work best with -- Who in the fleet gets the money that was kind of -- Whether you bolster up the highliners or you try to get the boats that are marginally operating, and there was some support for both sides of that.

Then we're moving into the bigger part of it, which is Jennifer Sweeney-Tookes at Georgia Southern and her students. They're going out and actually documenting where our infrastructure is, what the state of it is, and then we're going to be moving from that into how do we get the remaining funds from 2018 out to the fleet and to the infrastructure component of the fleet.

We're continuing to work offshore artificial reefs, and they've done some check dives on subway cars that we've deployed, a few of the tugs that have gone down, and things are really starting to hold some fish and look good, and that's pretty much what we've had going on.

There's not much too big in the way of legislation or any regulations, and we upped our ability to catch bait minnows. There was a request to go from ten to twenty pots per person fishing at a time, which some people would be a little concerned about the effort increase, but they're still held to a

hundred quarts of bait minnows at any time, and so whether they catch it with ten or twenty, and we didn't feel that was going to be too onerous of an ask, and, so far, we've pretty much seen support for it, and so that's all I have for Georgia, and so any questions for me? All right. Seeing none, we'll move into staff reports then, starting out with John and some general information.

MR. CARMICHAEL: Thank you, Carolyn, and so you have this, and it's Attachment A2a. I will, obviously, not read all these pages to you, and I'll just hit on a few highlights. Update on the IRA funding, we have received initial funding, and so we've got the initial \$375,000, which was the first set of proposals, and we were expecting this, remember, back in certainly the first part of the year.

With that, we have hired Lara Klibansky as our Climate and -- IRA and Climate Response Projects Coordinator, and so she's hit the ground running. She's already attended a workshop that's mentioned there at the end, the Atlantic Science Workshop to Coordinate Climate Efforts, CEFI, and she's also begun working on an RFP for the EFP project, the EFH evaluation, which was also funded, preliminarily, and so those things are getting going, and I'm glad to have -- That we're finally making some progress here.

The remaining projects, we are close to submitting revised proposals, and that would be the third time, and hopefully that's the charm, to National Marine Fisheries Service on Project 1, which was looking at program review, essentially, and it has been significantly revamped to focus on implementing things from the scenario planning effort. There's a task list that came from that, a number of items to look at across the region, how we operate, how we operate with others, and so there's a number of projects in there that we're recasting that to look into those individual tasks.

Then there's the data-limited stocks project, which will be submitted to focus on either wreckfish or rock shrimp, to give the contractors an opportunity to look at either of those and decide what they think is the best fit, and then the final project was looking at communities and resiliency and working with underserved communities, and we are, I think, pretty close, to having that one finalized, and the issue there was just making sure that the things that we were doing led to implementation efforts of some sort, and we're really focused on the climate issues that are part of this funding, and so hopefully we've got those issues worked out, and, over the next few months or so, we'll be able to secure the remainder of that funding.

In the Citizen Science Program, as always, there's a lot going on, and I want to highlight some efforts here to expand Release. NOAA has put out a grant opportunity earlier for citizen-science-related projects, and, working with some partners, we submitted for expansion of Release, continuing those efforts, and then we've also had FISHstory, which has relaunched, which is exciting. There's a lot of photographs, and a lot of volunteers, taking part in that. It's always a good thing to see that, and we're building that database continually through that, and then SMILE is another project that's working with collaborators, and that continues on.

One thing I do want to highlight for folks is, at the December meeting, we're having the Citizen Science Committee, and we hope to have the results of the evaluation effort that's been underway, and we'll definitely spend some time on the Citizen Science Program in detail, which has been a while.

Best fishing practices outreach continues, with lots of great outreach being conducted there. We do have a new Reef Fish Communication and Extension Fellow who has been hired, Greyson Webb. She's out doing outreach today, of course, but she'll be here on Wednesday, and we'll get a chance to introduce you to her, and I hope you all get a chance to say hello to her. I think she's going to be a great addition to the team, and she really is hitting the ground running on that project.

Mackerel port meetings continue. There's been, as some of you know, some weather challenges this year recently, getting things going, but we're back on track. We've held a number of workshops, and there's more coming up. We appreciate the efforts of the states, and the partners, and the other councils, to spread the word on these and get people there. Sometimes the conversations in these things can be a little heated, but, overall, I think we're getting really good input, and it's been appreciated by the fishermen, as well as the staff, to have these opportunities.

I think the next ones we're looking at -- They're rescheduled, and so South Carolina -- Thank you, Debbie, and they're going to be October 7 and 8, and then we're looking at the Mid-Atlantic in mid-November, and then, this one, we're looking ahead to March of 2025, to give you the full report.

Staff attended ICAST. It's a great opportunity to reach a lot of people in the sportfishing industry, tackle shop owners, and it's good outreach opportunities there. It's an annual event. The CCC Communications Workgroup, this is the communication staffs from all the councils got together, and they had a really good meeting. Talking to our staff, they got a lot out of it, and it's good to share with the other councils, compare notes, figure out ways to deal with common challenges, and a lot of effort is already going into planning for the -- What is the anniversary, the fiftieth anniversary of the councils, that's coming up in, I guess, 2026, and so that group will be working on various ways to put the word out about council successes.

The Scientific Coordination Subcommittee, which many of us know and still call it by the name we should get past, which is the National SSC, and it's just a gathering of SSC representatives nationwide, and they met this summer and talked about applying acceptable biological catch control rules in a changing environment, and so basically how do you deal with ABC and specifications and climate change.

The next part of this is then -- They talk about the technical issues, and then there's how do we, as councils, implement those, and so the CCC has coordinated these national SSC meetings with the council member ongoing development, otherwise known as CMOD, and so, next year, that will occur, and we'll be looking for some council representatives to go and think about how do you take what the national SSC has recommended and turn it into action here at the council table, and so that will happen sometime next year, and I'll be looking for representatives, and so be thinking about it, if this is something you have an interest in, and would like to have some training and interaction with your fellow council members. We usually send a staff person and three or four council members out there to interact with your cohorts. It's a great opportunity.

MREP is having workshops October 21 through 25, for the next class, and that's off to another great year with MREP. There are lots of great people that are going to be there, and they're working now to get all the presenters, and presentations, ironed out and lined up and everything ready to go, and so, again, if you're a council member and haven't been through that, always keep that in mind. There's an opportunity to send a council member every year.

Then I will talk about this more when we get around to the climate change update, and the scenario planning, but there was a workshop held recently, in August, to integrate the council's IRA proposals, which I mentioned at the start of this, along with NMFS' CEFI, which is the Climate, Ecosystem, and Fisheries Initiative. The goal there was to try to make sure that what the Atlantic councils are doing, and what came out of scenario planning as needs, is aligned with what NMFS is doing with CEFI, and so we'll talk about more of that later in the week, when we give the update on scenario planning, and that wraps up the very quick look at the staff reports, and, again, as always, I will say it's here, and please take the few minutes to read it. It's good for you guys to know everything that's going on that's not always coming up right here before you for action, and so any questions?

DR. BELCHER: Thanks, John. Questions for John? Okay. Moving on, Christina and stakeholder engagement meetings.

MS. WIEGAND: All right. While I get the presentation version pulled up, I did just want to give a quick shoutout to the Best Fishing Practice MVP program. They just finished up their Florida leg, and they had incredible attendance at that, very much thanks to a lot of great outreach from our Florida council members, and so, on Ashley's behalf, I just wanted to say thank you for that. Those meetings were really productive.

With that, I will switch gears to stakeholder engagement meetings. I wanted to give you all an update on some of the edits that staff has made to the proposed plan since you guys last met in June. I'm going to keep this presentation pretty brief, but I do, as always, sort of want to remind you all of your goals and objectives and sort of why you started designing these stakeholder engagement meetings.

The purpose of these is, again, to really build relationships with fishery stakeholders, by allowing an opportunity for two-way conversation and doing that by providing opportunities for open dialogue and mutual learning between council members and stakeholders, helping to increase general knowledge of the fishery management process, to hopefully improve engagement and other council initiatives, providing a mechanism for stakeholders to bring their concerns and observations forward to council members, and then, last, but not least, an opportunity to share information, both stakeholders sharing information with you all as council members as well as providing you all an opportunity to share information on salient management issues. Again, the purpose of this is to engage them in more of an informal environment, a different environment than the traditional public comment process that occurs throughout the council.

We talked a lot, at the last meeting, and with the sort of core council planning group, about what are you all going to do with this information that's gathered, and these are very different than traditional public comment, in that, when you ask for public comment, often you're asking for comment on specific management actions, and there's a specific outcome that you're asking fishermen to comment on.

These are much more open-ended, but it's understood that fishermen are going to want to know how you intend to use the information that they would be providing at these meetings, and so, based on conversations with you in June, and with the core planning team, it seems like your intent

is identify -- Use the information to identify topics that might need to be addressed that just haven't been on the council's radar yet.

To set the council's workload priorities, we always sort of talk about your spreadsheet of doom. There are a lot of things to get done, and a limited amount of time to get them done, and so using input from these meetings to help set priorities, and then, last, but not least, it's inevitable that discussion is going to happen surrounding management actions that might currently be on the council's table, and so using information to guide you on active management actions.

We did make a couple of updates to the structure that we proposed in June, based on feedback, the first being sort of how we gather information from stakeholders when they initially arrive. We've tried a couple of different mechanisms. For example, at port meetings, we had flip charts up, and we found them to be not quite as effective as we had hoped, and so, based on that experience and recommendations from you all, we're going to instead of have key staff that will sort of walk around and specifically ask people that have arrived why they decided to attend and what they're hoping to get out of the evening.

The purpose of gathering this information, sort of at the outset, as people are walking in the door, is it can allow staff, to the extent possible, to shift some of the things we might discuss based on the interest of stakeholders who are there at the meeting at the time.

Then, of course, this hasn't changed, and a council member will provide a brief introductory presentation detailing the purpose of stakeholder engagement meetings, ground rules, and how the night will operate. Then we'll do some structured breakout sessions, and we had originally set this at three, and we've dropped it down to two breakout groups, where individuals who are attending will have an opportunity to have sort of structured discussion. They will be broken into groups, and council members will facilitate and ask questions, to gather information on specific topics.

We'll take a break, and then we'll do the unstructured breakout sessions, and this is more like a tabling event. Staff and council members will be scattered throughout the room, and attendees will be able to sort of go to whatever topic interests them for discussion. We had originally had that set up to have four or five stations, and we've dropped it down to three, and sort of the reason you're seeing both the structured breakouts and the unstructured breakout groups sort of downsizing a little bit is to make sure that we do have enough time for discussion. We're trying to limit these meetings to two hours, understanding that stakeholders' time is valuable, and that it's hard to expect them to spend more than two hours on a weeknight participating in something like this.

Then, last, but not least, a council member will provide sort of an ending presentation, thanking attendees and discussing where the information they provided goes next, and so just some small updates to the structure we presented in June.

The big thing we wanted to sort of bring to you today is where we intend to hold the meetings in winter 2025. As a refresher, the plan is to hold meetings for sort of a week long, and so we would go to say four cities in a given state during one week, and then four cities, or however many, in a different state, and only do two states a year, and alternate every other year, and so, for 2025, staff is proposing that we do North Carolina and Georgia first, and, again, this is sort of based on input we've gotten from you all, as well as sort of the council member steering committee.

Our logic here is that North Carolina has council members that are well-established and familiar faces, and no one is currently new, and we've had great success doing outreach in North Carolina, and then we're pairing North Carolina with Georgia to try to get a larger swath of the coastline each year, as opposed to doing just the northern end of the South Atlantic Council's jurisdiction and then the southern end, and so those are our proposals.

In terms of specific meeting topics, those are all set sort of to be determined with council members that are representing those two states. The only sort of decisions we've made, as staff so far, is, for sort of the unstructured discussion, to have a federal fisheries management 101 station and a citizen science station, the logic here being it's important, in participating in these meetings, to understand the council process, and we know that that can be something that is challenging. It's not the most clear process always to stakeholders, and then citizen science because we have a huge amount of experience doing outreach for citizen science, and we're already prepared with a variety of materials that we could provide to attendees, and, again, those sort of to-be-determined topics will be decided with council members from North Carolina and Georgia.

Our next steps, coming up, we're working on scheduling a meeting, again, with that core council planning team, likely near the end of October, and we'll be reviewing the structure of the meetings, to make sure everyone is comfortable with what is currently outlined, discussing all of the different outreach opportunities, and then, of course, considering how we're going to evaluate the effectiveness of these meetings.

Like I said, we'll meet with the North Carolina and Georgia council members, and then we're also going to be presenting this plan to the Snapper Grouper AP, and the Outreach and Communications AP, and, luckily, it's looking like both of those meetings will occur before we meet with the council core team, and so we'll have all of that input as we go into finalizing the plan, which will be presented to you all at the December meeting, and so I know that was a really quick update, in the interest of time, but I wanted to make sure that -- To see if there were any questions and to make sure you all were comfortable with sort of the decision to do North Carolina and Georgia as our first two states.

DR. BELCHER: Thanks, Christina. Are there comments for Christina? Kristin.

MS. FOSS: Yes, and I have a couple of questions. Thanks for the great presentation. Could you explain kind of what you're envisioning for the structured and unstructured breakout groups, and so would -- I assume they're a little informal, and then folks would move between those groups, so they have an opportunity to talk about, you know, the fishery 101 and citizen science, you know, each of those topics, and then how many workshops are you envisioning per state?

MS. WIEGAND: So the structured breakout groups are intended to function -- I guess we're getting ready to do mackerel port meetings, but similar to what we've been doing for mackerel port meetings, where there will be sort of two groups. There will be two topics, and we'll split attendees up based on, you know, whatever mechanism we decide, and they will have an opportunity, both groups, to talk about the two topics.

Then, for the unstructured session, we were imagining -- Think of a tabling event, and like you've been to fishing expos and stuff like that, where there are sort of stations, and people are allowed

to mill in between the two, and it would be set up a bit like that, but, obviously, significantly smaller in scale, but there would be staff and council members at each of sort of the three topic areas, and fishermen would be able to go and learn about fishery management 101, if that's what interested them, or citizen science, or an undetermined topic, and hopefully we'll have three council members and five staff at each of these, and so, if there's something that maybe isn't one of those three topics, or wasn't part of the structured opportunity, there's still then opportunity to go and say, hey, I was interested in this, and can we chat about it, real quick, and so a much more sort of free-flowing conversation, as opposed to the structured groups, where there would be a specific list of questions that we were trying to use to facilitate discussion.

Then, to answer your second question, in terms of the number of meetings, it will probably depend on the state, and the size of the state, and we would be intending to work closely with council members to identify the number of meetings, and no more than four, and that's sort of the max that can be done in a week, and so a max of four, or maybe less, depending on what the state and council members felt like they needed.

DR. BELCHER: So other questions or comments for Christina? Jimmy.

MR. HULL: Thank you. Just one question. How do you intend to advertise this out to the stakeholders? I mean, is there -- Is it the same way we've been doing it?

MS. WIEGAND: So the same way we've been doing it, but also hopefully a whole lot more. That's one of the things that we're working on, as staff, right now, that we plan to bring to sort of the core committee, and then to you all as a final plan in December, but it would be news releases, partnering with states, AP members, looking at getting into different magazines even, and we're fortunate right now to have a great outreach team, a pretty expansive outreach team, that's done a lot of work in communities, and made a lot of great contacts, and we're hoping to capitalize on that, to get individuals to sort of spread the word on our behalf.

I will say it was very successful for North Carolina port meetings, and hopefully it will be for the Florida port meetings too, and I know it was very successful for the BFP MVP event, and so sort of continuing to capitalize on the people we know in communities to help get the word out.

DR. BELCHER: Other comments or questions for Christina? Okay. Seeing none, thanks, Christina. Next up, we have Judd Curtis talking to us about the revised SSC workgroup approach.

DR. CURTIS: Thank you, Chair. The document before you is the draft of the SSC workgroup approach. The council drafted, and approved, the first iteration of this document in 2016, and so we thought it would be maybe time to revisit it, and overhaul, as needed, and this stemmed from some of the discussions coming out of our August webinar meeting, where the first version was presented, and we solicited some feedback from the SSC and SEP members on how to improve the document and just better codify what was actually happening with the workgroup approaches.

Over the last three years, since my time here, we've had probably three or four of these workgroup approaches that have formed and provided additional insight to the full SSC, and so the changes made really kind of boil down to these highlighted portions in here, in your document, and so the major change, really, is procedural, in that, instead of just kind of deciding, well, let's make a workgroup, and try to attack some of these issues, to have a more formal and codified process.

A workgroup proposal would be written by staff, and the SSC Executive Committee, and then provided to the council for approval before any kind of work or formulation of a workgroup is started. Once the council then approves that workgroup approach, we'll have a formal scope of work that defines the workgroup-specific objectives, tasks, and timelines, and then this will then -
- The scope of work will be presented to the full SSC, and the SEP, if needed, and the workgroup will be populated.

Work will be ongoing. Depending on the various needs of the workgroup, invited experts will be added to it, stock assessment analysts from the Science Center, et cetera, in addition to the SSC and SEP members. One notable change also is that the workgroup chairs for each of these workgroups will be providing more regular updates, at in-person SSC meetings, even if there is no update, and just saying that work is ongoing, and we have nothing to report, but, ultimately, just to keep the SSC more abreast of what's happening in those sub-workgroups.

Then one key component of these workgroups to note is that, after the work has been completed, a final report will be generated. The chair will present the final report to the full SSC, at the next available meeting, and the full SSC will review that analysis, and make the final recommendations, and so that is comprehensively reviewed by the entire SSC, and so this is the document here. I'm asking the council for any questions, or edits, or other recommendations to the process, and then, eventually, approval of the document.

DR. BELCHER: Tim.

MR. GRINER: Thank you, Madam Chair. Thank you for the presentation. So, once the final report is generated, it goes to the full SSC to be reviewed, and for recommendations, and so does that mean that the council doesn't necessarily see the final report, in the form and manner that it was presented to the SSC, or does the SSC rework that final report, and how, and when, is it presented back to the council?

DR. CURTIS: The full SSC will see the final report from the workgroup, and then through -- I envision, through the SSC report to the council at the next meeting, they would cover the decisions made by the workgroup and, on the greater topic, the full recommendations of the SSC, the entire SSC.

MR. GRINER: Thank you.

DR. BELCHER: Other questions or comments for Judd? Amy.

MS. DUKES: Thank you, Madam Chair. Just a quick question, and so, when we talk about the working group, the specific objectives, tasks, and timelines, will folks from the Science Center, specifically the data analysts, assist with some of that effort, to ensure that we make -- That we get a useful outcome from this report? Oftentimes, you know, the whole reason we're doing this is that we have a better frontend approach, through these assessments, and I was just curious about how the Science Center is going to be involved in making sure that whatever this workgroup comes out with is going to be useful.

DR. CURTIS: I think that depends on the goal of the specific workgroup as well, and so we've had involvement with Science Center analysts for various workgroups, black sea bass, Spanish mackerel, the catch levels projections workgroup that provided some guidance, but also some upcoming, potentially upcoming, workgroups may be more -- More of a planning kind of subgroup, and think about some of the jointly-managed stocks that are soon to be assessed, and how to come up with a plan for approaching that, and that might involve kind of a joint workgroup, and that may or may not involve the analysts, and it just depends on the specific task, but, yes, we have had Science Center involvement in the past for the workgroups.

DR. PORCH: Thank you for this effort, and, just to follow-up on the previous question, is the intent of this primarily to help the SSC get engaged in some of these critical conversations, or analyses, or is it actually to develop a prescriptive document that says how those analyses should be conducted, and the reason why I ask that second part is I'm looking at the example below, with the projections, and, in that case, the Southeast Center was involved in that, but I could, looking at that example, see a case where maybe the SSC, and some other groups, develop a prescriptive document that says this is how this analysis should be conducted, even though the analysis might be conducted by the Southeast Center, or another cooperator, in which case there's a big potential for disagreement, if the center wasn't involved in that to begin with.

DR. CURTIS: I think anything, you know, technical, related to the stock assessments, we would certainly want the input of the Science Center analysts onboard with the workgroup approach, and, you know, it's not meant to be prescriptive, but to outline just -- If there's more technical issues, that we're not able to tackle in the framework of a single SSC meeting, because it requires additional work on the backend, instead of taking so much time at the SSC meeting to have the workgroup really focus in on some of the real specifics and technical aspects of the workgroup before making a recommendation to the full SSC.

DR. BELCHER: Other comments or questions? Okay. Thanks again, Judd.

MR. CARMICHAEL: So this is a council document. This SSC workgroup approach was specified a number of years ago by the council, and so these changes -- We really would like the council to support, endorse, and so, basically, making a motion to approve the revised SSC workgroup approach would be in order.

DR. BELCHER: Tom.

MR. ROLLER: **So moved.**

DR. BELCHER: Do I have a second for that? Tim. Any further discussion? **Any objection to the motion?** Okay. **The motion carries.**

MR. CARMICHAEL: **So the motion would read: Move to approve the revised SSC workgroup approach.**

DR. CURTIS: We'll make sure that gets into the committee report, the motion does, and I don't know where the motions document is right now.

DR. BELCHER: Tim.

MR. GRINER: Do we have a rough timeline of implementing this workgroup?

DR. CURTIS: Effective Friday.

MR. CARMICHAEL: Yes, and it would be, you know, the process, essentially, and then it lays out how individual workgroups would be created, and monitored, and that's what the changes are really getting at. It looks like, you know, a lot more involvement with the SSC Executive Committee and a little higher-level coordination of the workgroups, and there are a number of workgroups that are underway now that the SSC is working on, and so it would be, you know, topical, but they would start applying this process now, which I think is the SSC's leadership effort, to try and get a better handle on this. Some were just sort of being created and languishing, and I think that's really at the core of this, Judd, if that's right.

DR. CURTIS: Yes, and there was a few that, at one point, the kind of default response was, from the SSC, well, let's make a workgroup to tackle this, and instead of -- It was kicking the can down the road, and we had a bunch of workgroups that didn't really get populated, or work didn't even begin on some of those things, and so, to try to prevent that moving forward, we have actually specific tasked workgroups to tackle specific issues.

MR. GRINER: So I guess I'm trying to wrap my arms around not only the timeline, but how are these -- How are the issues that the council is concerned with -- How are they prioritized, or who decides what the workgroup is going to work on when?

DR. CURTIS: So that can come out of discussions from SSC meetings. There have been some council decisions that recommended forming -- Having a workgroup, an SSC-specific workgroup, look at it, and so I don't think -- We haven't been so prescriptive as to say how to go about doing that, and I think, if the council felt that they wanted the SSC to really dig into something, they could recommend the workgroup, as well as discussions coming out of an SSC meeting, if they decide they want to form a workgroup, and then bring that proposal to the council table.

MR. GRINER: Could we possibly put that on the agenda for Other Business, to talk about adding something for this workgroup to look at?

MR. CARMICHAEL: Yes, and this isn't a workgroup. This is a process for all workgroups. The SSC has multiple workgroups, and so, if you have like a topic in mind that you would like the SSC to consider, then, yes, it could be something the SSC says we need a workgroup, and it could be something they say we can address it in some other way, and so just make sure we've got that, you know, separate.

I was just thinking, as you were talking, that, you know, we go through on the agenda, and we talk about topics for APs, and we don't talk about that so much explicitly for the SSC, but, you know, we do kind of anticipate that, as we go through amendments and everything else, that topics come up that you guys are like, hey, I need this looked at, and then they could go to the SSC, and so I think, you know, if something comes up in the discussion, or you've got a particular topic in mind, that you want to say, hey, I would like the SSC to look at this, if it's not something that comes up as one of our FMP discussions this week, then, before the week is out, say, you know, when we're

doing the committee reports and whatnot, let's make sure we get that down, so we can get it on the SSC's agenda.

MR. GRINER: Thank you. I think I can wait until we get into the FMP discussion on a certain topic, and then we can have a discussion about it and bring it up then. Thank you.

DR. BELCHER: Okay. Again, anyone else? Okay. Judd. Okay. Thanks, Judd. We're going to have to reorder -- We're going to have Allie come up and talk about the Shrimp AP restructuring discussion, and then we'll take a break, and then we'll go into the Hudson Canyon presentation.

MS. IBERLE: All right, and so you guys just looked at this document in closed session, but I wanted to kind of review it and go back over and have you guys just relook at the discussion, really quickly, in Full Council, and so, again, this kind of stemmed from discussion that started at the June meeting, where possibly combining the Shrimp, or penaeid, AP and the Deepwater, or rock shrimp, APs together into one kind of all-encompassing Shrimp AP.

This document includes just a really quick overview of the way that the APs are set up now, and then we kind of talked about -- Again, that was one kind of discussion for these APs, is combine or not to combine, and then the other was adding an additional seat, and so we had that joint meeting of both APs in April, and we invited some participants from Virginia and Maryland to give us a little bit of information, and perspective, from the emerging shrimp fishery in Virginia and Maryland. That went really great, and we got some really great information, and there was some interest in keeping that kind of line of communication open with that emerging fishery as it develops further.

That was one of the main things to consider, both keeping the APs separate and combining, is whether or not the council would like to establish additional seats and how those seats will operate, and then we talked a little bit about some things that are on the horizon to consider when combining the APs, such as any changes on the resubmission of Coral 10, and whether or not that will involve the Shrimp FMP, which you guys will talk about on Wednesday, considering sub-panel approaches, if that would be kind of a more flexible, and applicable, approach to bringing in the penaeid AP members, or vice versa, with the Deepwater Shrimp AP members when needed.

Then we also talked about helping to increase participation, and so we want to hear from the shrimp fishermen, and get those people engaged in your AP, and then we talked about your pros and cons list, and I'm not going to go through each one of these bullets, but definitely thinking about making sure that voting is fair for both of the different fisheries, and, obviously, there's a lot of overlap between those fisheries. However, there are some really fundamental differences in how they operate, and then just making sure that topics are covered fairly and equitably, or fairly, for each AP, or each fishery, and so that's pretty much kind of an overview, and I will hand it back to you guys.

DR. BELCHER: Okay, and so continued discussion and finalizing what the approach is. Kristin.

MS. FOSS: Just to reiterate that, you know, I'm supportive of keeping both of these APs, you know, separate, and maybe we could work some magic with timing, if there happened to be overlapping issues, and then continued support for adding those liaison seats, trying to be

proactive, to make sure we have that representation, as those fisheries emerge in the Mid-Atlantic area.

DR. BELCHER: Okay. Does anyone else have anything else they would like to add to that? Allie.

MS. IBERLE: (Ms. Iberle's comment is not audible on the recording.)

DR. BELCHER: Okay, and so any other further comments or discussions relative to this? We'll make the motion at Full Council. Okay. Sonny.

MR. GWIN: Thank you, Madam Chair. If I may, just a comment. I just wanted to comment on the Maryland pilot program, and it is still a pilot program, and also remind the council, and everybody, that Maryland only has seventeen miles of coastline, and the fishery that we're looking at, as far as the shrimping with the beam trawl, is going to be a very small fishery, and so I just wanted to add that in there. Thanks.

DR. BELCHER: Thanks, Sonny. Okay. Seeing no other conversation, or questions, at this point, Allie, I guess we can -- So then you're good?

MS. IBERLE: Yes. That's it for me.

DR. BELCHER: Okay. I have five to three. I'm not sure on the time that LeAnn needs, but let's go ahead and say fifteen minutes for a break, and so, at ten after, come back, and we'll tee-up for the next presentation.

(Whereupon, a recess was taken.)

DR. BELCHER: Okay. We're going to go ahead and get started again. We are going to be receiving a presentation on Hudson Canyon National Marine Sanctuary from LeAnn Hogan, and so, Chip, to you.

DR. COLLIER: All right. LeAnn, it should be requesting you to become the presenter. All right. We're seeing your screen.

MS. HOGAN: Okay. Great. Excellent. Well, let me just start by saying hello, and thank you to all of you at the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council for inviting me to come today to present to you. I think this may be the first time that I've presented to the Full Council. I'm LeAnn Hogan, in the Office of National Marine Sanctuaries. I'm in the Eastern Region of the program. Our program has three regions, the Eastern Region, the West Coast Region, and the Pacific Islands.

Today, I'm going to give you an update about the proposed designation of a sanctuary in Hudson Canyon. Just to give you -- I'm sure you're all familiar, and the Office of National Marine Sanctuaries is within the National Ocean Service at NOAA, and so I just wanted to take a minute to orient you to the sanctuary system. As you can see, there are sanctuaries across the country and in the Pacific Islands, those round blue and white dots, and we just actually designated our sixteenth national marine sanctuary.

We had the celebration earlier this month, and that's Lake Ontario National Marine Sanctuary, on the other side of the State of New York, and so, currently, we have five sanctuaries in designation, and it's kind of an unprecedented time of growth for the program, and so it's very exciting. You will see Hudson Canyon, the Lake Erie Quadrangle, Chumash Heritage, Papahānaumokuākea, and then the Pacific Remote Islands.

All right, and so this -- Just showing you this real quick, I think that the thing that I would want to impress upon you is that part of the value of the sanctuary program -- Yes, there is a regulatory component, and we, you know, take our conservation mission, and our protection mission, very seriously, but, also, we do a lot of outreach and education, and whether that's through visitor centers, which a lot of the sanctuaries in the system have visitor centers associated with them, or whether it's K through twelve education, and so our ability to reach communities, and work within the communities, is really a significant part of the sanctuary program.

Then another core part of the sanctuary program, and really the way that we accomplish our mission in the program, and our connection back to the communities, are sanctuary advisory councils. Each sanctuary has an advisory council, and I will get into this a little bit more later on in the presentation, and usually sanctuary advisory councils are established after the sanctuaries have been designated, and you will see there just the variety of types of seats that we have on our advisory councils. Every site is a little bit different, and so the sanctuary advisory council is going to be a little bit different, depending on the community and the sanctuary itself.

Okay, and so that was really quick about the program in general, and so now I'm going to shift to Hudson Canyon, and I'm sure -- This may be a repeat, if some of you were on the Atlantic Highly Migratory Species Advisory Panel meeting, that Matt Brookhart and I presented to, but I'm sure that most of you are aware of where Hudson Canyon is, a hundred miles, about, southeast of New York City.

It is the largest submarine canyon on the Atlantic coast, and so, in 2016, the Wildlife Conservation Society and the New York Aquarium nominated this area to be a national marine sanctuary, and so we got that nomination, and we reviewed it. We have criteria that we look at, and then we evaluate the merits of the nomination, to see whether it meets our criteria, and, really, is this place nationally significant, and so we put it on the inventory of nominated places in 2017, and then I will get into a little bit later on where we are in that process.

The other thing that I just want to say about this area is we know that, as an ecological hotspot, we know that this area is significant. If any of you follow the NOAA Fisheries aerial surveys that they do for marine mammals, this summer, on July 22, the aerial survey found fifty-three right whales congregating at the head of Hudson Canyon, and so it just gives you a little bit of a sense of this area and how special it is.

Okay, and I'm going to go through the designation and the clearance process. This is going to sound very similar. You all are probably very familiar with the fishery management process, and the Magnuson Act, and the Sanctuaries Act is a little different. There are some differences that I will go over, and I will take any questions that you may have about those differences.

Just quickly, I wanted to -- I'm not going to go through these, but just to say that, when we started the designation process, in June of 2022, we put together our goals, and these are NOAA's goals

for the proposed designation, and we laid these out in our notice of intent when we started the process.

Okay, and so everyone always asks how long does it take to designate a sanctuary, and we say three to five years, but, truly, it usually is like closer to the five-year mark. I think Lake Ontario was five years and a couple of days, and so -- One thing I will say is that we really pride ourselves on the -- You may say, oh, that's a long time, but we value the public process. We are required to go through the NEPA process, and we are required, under the Sanctuaries Act, to do an environmental impact statement, any time we are designating a sanctuary, and that takes time. It takes a lot of time.

We have public comment periods, and we have public meetings, and so that is very, very different than say a monument. Monuments are done by the Antiquities Act, with no public process, and it's very different than the sanctuary process, under the Sanctuaries Act, and so we initiated our public scoping in June of 2022, and one of the things that we heard was that a lot of people wanted us to develop a pre-designation sanctuary advisory council, and so they had done this in the Lake Ontario designation, where the sanctuary advisory council provided input and guidance to NOAA during the designation.

This is kind of a new idea, and so -- And it worked very well in Lake Ontario, and so we established a pre-designation advisory council in May of 2023. We have met six times virtually and one time in-person. We met in April of 2024 in-person, and I will mention, and I will show you who is a part of that advisory council in a little bit, so you'll get to know more about that.

The stage that we're at right now, we are developing the sanctuary proposal, and I will go through the documents that we produce while we're developing those documents, but, basically, we take our input from scoping, and we do data analysis and research, and we draft our environmental impact statement, our management plan, and our proposed rule, and then we probably all are probably familiar with the clearance and interagency review, NOAA Department of Commerce, OMB, and so this is an interagency review of the documents before they get released.

Then we do our publication of draft documents, and we usually do sixty to ninety-day public comments, and, like I said, we do public meetings, and then, after that, we determine if we need to make any changes from the draft to final, and then we develop our final documents.

Then, before a sanctuary can be finalized, there are kind of two little nuances in the Sanctuaries Act, and the one that applies to Hudson Canyon, because it is solely in federal waters, and it's not in state waters, but, before the designation can become effective, Congress has the opportunity -- Congress as a whole, and not individual members, has the opportunity to review the final designation documents during a forty-five-day consecutive session. Once that is -- Once that review period, that forty-five-day review period, is over, then the sanctuary can be finalized.

We have never had, in fifty -- Let me just say, because sometimes I get this question. In fifty years of the program, we've never had either the governor of a state, when the proposed sanctuary is state waters, or Congress say, no, we don't want this, and you cannot go forward with the sanctuary.

Okay, and here is a provision in the Sanctuaries Act, which we refer to as 304(a)(5), and so this provision requires us -- Any time we are designating a sanctuary, we are required to go to the appropriate fishery management council, or NOAA Fisheries, and ask whether the councils feel - - Or recommend any draft fishing regulations under the Sanctuaries Act that would need to be put into place in the proposed sanctuary, and so we did this very early on in the Hudson Canyon process.

We sent letters to New England, Mid-Atlantic, and South Atlantic Councils and the Atlantic HMS Division, and so we've heard back from all the councils and Atlantic HMS, and everyone has recommended that fishing regulations under the Sanctuaries Act were not necessary and that the fisheries should continue to be managed by the councils and by NOAA Fisheries, and we have said that we agree with that recommendation, and we're going to incorporate the analysis that was provided, and those recommendations, into our environmental impact statement, going forward.

Okay. Moving on to the documents that we produce, you all are probably very familiar with environmental impact statements. This is where we put together our alternatives, and the alternatives -- The way that we structure our alternatives, we have boundary options, and we have the regulations, and the prohibited activities in the sanctuary, and then our management actions, and we do our detailed analysis of the affected environment, biological, social, economic, and cultural resources of the area, and we also have the ability to have cooperating agencies for our EIS, and, as you all know, this is a very busy place in the ocean, and so we have requested, and they have accepted, for the U.S. Coast Guard and the U.S. Navy to be cooperating agencies.

What this means is that they -- We provide them with draft sections of the EIS, and they collaborate with us, and they get to see the shapefiles for our boundary options, and so it really is a really good way to stay coordinated with the Coast Guard and the Navy through the development of the documents.

Then the next thing we have is the management plan, and we consider the management plan really the way that we plan and manage the sanctuary, and it is truly the nonregulatory side of the sanctuary, of the management, and so you see there the different types of action plans we have, education and outreach, and this is where, a lot of times, we set up research and monitoring, and strategic science plans, and we include goals and objectives, and we are required, by the Sanctuaries Act, to update management plans every so often. It is five years, and so that is something that gets redone, and we look at the management plan, just to make sure that it is still relevant and it is still meeting the needs of the sanctuary, once it's designated.

Then, finally, the proposed rule, or the rulemaking, and the rulemaking is where we describe and define the preferred boundaries of the sanctuary. We describe the terms of designation, and so the terms of designation includes all the activities that would be subject to regulation, and so, if an activity is not in the terms of designation, then we cannot -- Under the Sanctuaries Act, we cannot regulate that activity. We also describe prohibited activities, and then you will see there that all of our regulations are within 15 CFR Part 922.

Moving on, you may see some familiar faces in this picture. This is the sanctuary advisory council, and, Chip, I don't think you were there for our in-person meeting, and Chip Collier is on the advisory council, and so this was from our first in-person meeting in Monmouth, New Jersey, and

so here are the different categories of seats that we have on the advisory council, and then you will see the members on the left, and then the alternates on the right.

We have a limit on how many members we have. We have fifteen voting members and fifteen alternates, and so this advisory council will be in place until the sanctuary is designated, and then, once the sanctuary is designated, we have the ability to look at the charter, and look at the composition of the different seats, and do we need to make any changes, once the sanctuary is designated.

Those are the voting members and alternates, and we also have government non-voting seats, which is great, because this really is our connection to some of our federal partners and our state partners, and you will see our NOAA Fisheries colleague, Sara McLaughlin, and she's Atlantic HMS, and we used to have a GARFO representative, and they're doing some switching in the Office of Sustainable Fisheries, and so we will have another rep from GARFO, hopefully soon, and then we have New England, Mid-Atlantic, and South Atlantic Councils. We have the Coast Guard, Navy, and BOEM, and then also New York, New Jersey, and Rhode Island representatives.

I talked a little bit about this, and so you're probably wondering what is the advisory council's role in the designation, and, really, the advisory council provides advice, and they make recommendations to NOAA on the designation and management of the sanctuaries, and they -- They do not have -- In terms of like can they see parts of the DEIS, or the boundaries, before they're released to the public, that is no, and that is not -- But we have had a lot of meetings, where the advisory council makes recommendations.

One of the main involvements and pieces for the advisory council has been the draft management plan, and they formed subcommittees to give us input, and recommendations, on the management activities for the draft management plan, and so they -- The advisory council subcommittees worked from December of 2023 to June of this year, and they formally transmitted those recommendations to us, and so we will take their recommendations for management plan activities, and we will use that in the development of our management plan.

All right, and so next steps. One of the exciting things about our program, and the designation, is that we received IRA funding to implement these designations, and we're very excited. We were able to use some of those IRA funds to put together a team, and we received ship time on a NOAA research vessel for a cruise in Hudson Canyon, in the summer of 2025, and it will be focused on - - We're working with the Northeast Fisheries Science Center, and some of our colleagues from the Office of Science and Technology at NMFS, and from the Deep Sea Coral Program in the Office of Habitat Conservation, and we were able to secure a deep ROV.

The head of the canyon has been surveyed, but only down to 500 meters, and so we were able to secure a deep ROV that can go to 1,000 meters and deeper, and so that's really exciting, because we really have never explored those areas of Hudson Canyon, and we were able -- Also, we would be doing telepresence during those ROV dives, and there will be other parts to that scientific plan. We're just starting to plan that scientific mission, and we're actually getting a working group together within the advisory council, so they can help us with science priorities and ideas for that scientific mission.

Then we are continuing to move along with developing the draft designation documents, and then our hope is to publish draft documents in 2025. I left it vague on purpose, and we hope this is spring of 2025, but, like I said, it is -- There's a lot going on in the sanctuary program, with five other designations, and so that is our best guess at this moment. I think -- Yes, I think that's it, and so I will just pause. Again, if you have questions after this meeting, please feel free to reach out. We have a Hudson-Canyon-specific website, that you see there at the top, and it gives you lots of information about the process and about our program, and so I will pause there.

DR. BELCHER: Thank you, LeAnn. Any questions, or comments, for LeAnn at this time? Chip.

DR. COLLIER: I just wanted to let the council know why we had this presentation, and it might seem odd for the South Atlantic Council to be getting a presentation on a Hudson Canyon that's going to be going in up off of New York. It is because of the Dolphin Wahoo Fishery Management Plan, where the South Atlantic Council is the lead council, going all the way up to Maine, and so this could potentially impact a fishery management plan that is important to the South Atlantic Council, and so we wanted to give you all a chance, early in the process, to hear about what's going on in the Hudson Canyon, to see if there's any comments in the beginning, and we'll keep you updated as the draft proposal goes in, and potentially be prepared to submit comments that the council would like to have addressed, or presented, for the designation of the Hudson Canyon.

DR. BELCHER: Thanks for that, Chip. Other comments and questions? Okay. Seeing none, thank you again for the presentation, LeAnn.

MS. HOGAN: You're welcome. Thank you.

DR. BELCHER: Okay. We are going to go ahead and work through some more agenda items. We have the NMFS reports up next, the Southeast Regional Office report, and, Rick, do you feel -- Andy, or we can actually start out with John, if you want, and that will give you a couple of minutes. John is going to give us the update on the East Coast Climate Scenario Planning Initiative.

MR. CARMICHAEL: Okay. I mentioned a little bit about the East Coast Climate Scenario Planning Initiative when we went over the staff reports, and so this has been underway for a while, and I just thought that it might be useful to give you a complete update on what's been going on over about the last year, and so a bit of background.

What is scenario planning? It's just a tool to help organizations plan for uncertain futures, and, in this case, it's being applied to the uncertainty of what climate change is going to do to our stocks, our fishermen, and then our management efforts. One of the things that was noted going into this is that implementing whatever came out of the actual scenario planning process was going to be a challenge.

The Pacific Council had done something along these lines, a number of years ago, and that was one of their very strong recommendations, as this was being planned, to those of us working on organizing it, was that, you know, it's one thing to go through the process there, and plan your scenarios, and come up with some action items, but really getting it off the ground is the real challenge, and so that was something that was given a lot of thought as we even entered into the initial planning for this, and so what we went through was planning, scenario planning, initiative

being applied to east coast fisheries, and so it involved the three councils along the Atlantic coast, the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission, as well as the regional offices and science centers from both the Northeast and Southeast.

It was a structured process conducted during 2021 to 2023, and so there were a number of stakeholder workshops, and there were in-person and webinar events and everything, trying to get as much, and as broad, input as possible, and staffs from all the different organizations involved developed frameworks over time, and narrowed it down into four possible fishery futures in 2041, and so they were looking out, like twenty years down the road, what would things look like, and then it culminated in a manager summit workshop, which was February of 2023.

Folks got together and thought about, you know, what are the top issues, and what do we think is going to come of these scenarios, and where do we go next, and there was -- A number of people in the room here were there. It was a pretty big effort, lots of people, a lot of good conversations, and it was a pretty intensive few days though, definitely, in getting through that. All the information about this process is hosted on the Mid-Atlantic Council website, and so you can see everything that was for the summit workshop, various reports, what came out of the scoping process and everything, and it's all available there. They've done a great job in documenting this process so far.

The workshop, as I mentioned, it was February of 2023, and it was the councils, NOAA Fisheries, et cetera, there, and we looked at governance, management, and monitoring recommendations to respond to the possible futures, and, importantly, we developed priorities and what are the next-step action items, and then there was a report, a summary report, that documents that process to that point, what happened at the summit workshop, and then all the recommendations.

Following the summit was the real challenge of moving from having these great plans to actually doing actions, actions of coordinating three councils and an interstate commission, and so, really, a lot of this was led by what's been called the core team, and this is the staff who organized the process, and each entity had folks serving on the core team. These are the guys that did the heavy lifting and made all this stuff happen.

During 2023, following the summit, they developed an action plan to implement summit recommendations. Regional leadership then met in 2023 to coordinate the action plan, and one of the significant outcomes of that was creation of two standing groups, and so the first is the higher-level, the management-level, the East Coast Climate Coordination Group, EC3G, as we refer to it, or at least some do, and some hate acronyms, and so, you know, you will hear it referred to as various things, but this is the executive directors, the regional administrators, and the science and research directors from the Northeast, Southeast, the three councils, and ASMFC.

The goal here is to oversee implementation, and so coordinating and prioritizing actions, identifying the resources and needs, assigning staff to contribute to the needs and get things done, and really enduring collaboration and coordination amongst the partners in all of these efforts, and so the group met -- Originally, it was meeting as part of what's called the Northeast Region Coordinating Council, which is somewhat similar to the SEDAR Steering Committee, but it just gets involved in a whole lot more things that just stock assessment, and then this EC3G allows us now to just focus-in on the folks involved in this, and it really puts all of us on equal footing, as opposed to working through say a regional entity, like the coordinating council.

A charter was developed, and an organizational structure, and you have that as Attachment A7c, and the group intends to meet twice annually. Once will be in-person. The first in-person meeting was held this May, here in Charleston. There's a process in there for a chair and a support host, to rotate amongst the members, with a standard rotation, so folks who know and when they're going to be in charge, and the representative for us is me.

The core team continues, and largely the folks who helped make all this happen are continuing to make implementation happen, and, as I said, this is staff-level of all the partner organizations. They are responsible for tracking fishery and ecosystem changes, and it's really about sharing information that they're learning through their regular job, essentially, with the others, to let us know about changes, identifying management and governance challenges, addressing potential action items, and then doing activities to try and actually make action items become realities.

They're guided by what's called an operations document, and that's Attachment 7b. They meet quarterly, and they have a chair, and it also rotates, just like the EC3G group. Our representative is Lara Klibansky, on the IRA funding, and previously it was Kathleen Howington. Kathleen took over in this after Roger retired. Roger was very involved in getting all of this off the ground, as part of the initial core team members. While Lara is with us, through the IRA funds for the next few years, it will allow Kathleen to focus on other things.

The action priorities and opportunities, priority planning is dealing with the potential action menu, which, again, is Attachment A7b. That is what came out of the summit, and it stands as things that we really want to look at in long-term, and then this is narrowed down year to year for the annual action items, which you'll see, for the current year, is Attachment 7e, and so there's a lot of documentation with this. Again, I will say that, if you really want to dig into this, and get into the weeds, the Mid-Atlantic Council website has it all covered.

The other thing we're looking at is the role of the Inflation Reduction Act. We really view the IRA funding that's coming along as a chance to get this process kickstarted and to hopefully overcome some of the implementation challenges that were experienced out on the Pacific.

A couple of things coming out of the potential action menu, and I'll hit both of these. There were three things that were considered of cross-jurisdictional governance, and so, when we talk about say shrimp shifting out of our jurisdiction into another area's jurisdiction, that's an example of that. Managing under increased uncertainty, that is, you know, we don't really know how climate change is going to affect all these species, and then data sources and partnerships, just ways we can all work together. There is high, medium and low priorities with each one of these and then evolving guidance, as progress is made or new challenges are realized.

The annual action items are intended to be specific, achievable actions for a given year. The EC3G group that I mentioned would go through those, review progress in the current year, look at what's on the action menu, look at what is feasible to be done, considering resources and other things that are underway, and come up with the annual items that partners are then encouraged to pursue, to contribute to, to try and find funding for, and that's where IRA comes in as a great resource, and make progress on these various tasks that we all think are important.

The 2024 topics are completing the charter and core team guidance, which has been done, and so the charter was provided, and the core team guidance is completed, and updating the action menu, and then developing a status tracking tool, which is just a way of keeping up with what has been done.

The 2025 action items were connecting the IRA projects and action item progress, and so just to try and keep coordination between what we're all doing as councils, three councils, with three different sets of IRA projects, what we're doing that can further this scenario planning process. One of the things we're looking at is evaluating recreational fleet diversity trends, which is something that was done in the Northeast, and the E3G group thought that it was quite interesting, and informative, to understand what's going on with their recreational fisheries, and so they wanted us to apply a similar approach to our fisheries. Recognize the need to identify social vulnerability indicators and key questions, because the social aspects of climate change are, you know, being really recognized as very important.

The science centers are working to develop an interim survey coordination plan, because it's hard to know how stocks are moving if different regions are monitoring fish in different ways, and then, finally, it was the CEFI information, coordination, and Atlantic management integration workshop, which was a way to try and make sure that the CEFI efforts by the agency are in line with what the Atlantic councils are trying to do through scenario planning and use that as an opportunity to further make progress on the implementation.

This is quite an effort, and it hadn't even been conceived until the meeting in May of 2024, and it came together and happened in August of 2024, and so that is an impressive turnaround, and, really, thanks go to the core team for making this happen, as well as the Mid-Atlantic Council for allowing it to occur in the location of their August meeting, and it just basically took over the space, once the council meeting had adjourned, and met for the next day-and-a-half, to work on this effort, and so, you know, the core team from all the groups, as well as the staff who participated, and the agency coming together and doing that, was really quite an effort. There was a lot of skepticism, in May, as to whether or not we could actually pull that off, but folks really stepped up and got it done, which was great. We were able to send -- Let's see, and I think Chip and Lara and Kathleen were all able to go to that.

I want to hit on some of the IRA activities and the scenario planning that we are specifically doing in the South Atlantic Council under our approved IRA projects, and it's looking at AP representation, and the letters there, with the numeric, the G2, M5, D3, et cetera, refer to the different things in the action plan, and so the Governance 2 priority was looking at AP representation across the council. If you want to know what that means, think about what we just talked about with shrimp, and how species change, making sure that we have a process in place to give fishermen from other areas a voice.

Reviewing permit systems is something we intend to do, and that's M5, and then holding a climate and ecosystem data workshop is D3, and the idea there is to build off the Atlantic science coordination workshop of a few years ago and to also look at what other information may be out there in the region. State partners, and the Sea Grant offices, do a lot of climate work, and they support a lot of research, and how can we start getting that stuff tabulated and just being aware that it exists and try to bring it into our management system.

Other IRA projects that I mentioned, you know, are not quite approved, but close, and some of the things that we intend to look at is looking at climate information availability and usage, and so not just what's out there, as I mentioned in the workshop, but how it would be used, looking at NEPA products, categorical exclusions, and programmatic EISs are used in some regions to make NEPA operate a little more efficiently, make our process operate a little more efficiently, and looking at opportunities for consistent involvement in data collection, and so talking things like citizen science, but also cooperative research and study fleets, and so there's a lot of ideas that are out there that are using folks that are on the water anyway to try and meet our many research needs.

Looking at committee structure and use, which is getting at the idea of how do we use committees, versus the Mid-Atlantic, versus the New England Council, and are there ways to make sure, as we have these species across jurisdictional boundaries, that we're giving the respective fishermen an appropriate role within each council's process, and then looking at risk policies, and how do we take our risk policies and make them climate responsive and climate adaptive.

We've just recently done an ABC control rule amendment, and it's kind of hard to think about starting another one of those, but, at some point, as these things progress, we may be able to modify that, or tweak that, to be more climate aware and responsive in setting our own risk tolerances.

Then the last thing, as I mentioned, was the CEFI, and the workshop is coming up, and so you'll hear more about CEFI certainly in future meetings, but, essentially, it is addressing NOAA's requirements for climate-informed management, is the goal, trying to build an ocean-wide modeling and decision-support system, and there's a number of staff within each region, science centers, working on these various phases of it, and so the simple graphic there really shows what it's all about, doing regional ocean modeling, developing an information hub that everybody can see the information, having regional decision support teams, and that's sort of the council aspect, and decision makers, and that's you, doing climate-informed action, and so that's what this is all about. It's just getting started, and you'll hear plenty more in the coming years about it.

What the CEFI process has identified as the core requirements for climate-ready decision-making, and so, you as a council member, what do you need to do to make climate-ready decisions, and providing robust forecasts and projections of what's going on in the ocean, providing operational capability to assess risks, evaluate options, and provide robust advice, and so think, you know, actions and alternatives in an FMP, as well as what goes on in a stock assessment and being able to adapt to changing environmental conditions, and decision-maker capabilities so that you, council members, can use climate-informed advice to reduce risks and increase the reliance, the resources, and the people that depend on them.

Then continuous validation and innovation through observations and research, and so it's a lot. You know, it's a lot that's planned within CEFI, but I think we can all look at that and say, yes, that's definitely necessary, and it's where we need to go for the future.

Then how do we get engaged in that at the Atlantic level? This was the workshop in August. We recommended having this workshop so that we can have communication between the councils on the Atlantic coast and the CEFI groups within the agency, between Science Center personnel, council staff, et cetera, and so we engaged council representatives and CEFI staff coastwide, and we organized this workshop, identified climate-related project overlap for the Atlantic coast, and really started, importantly, working on the communication pathways, early in the process, between

the scenario planning and the CEFI projects, and we started talking about how CEFI products can be integrated into the management process.

The intent there is really to make sure that what's coming out of CEFI is things that the councils think they need, that are consistent with the scenario planning efforts, and not just things that may be really neat and interesting, but don't help you with your decision-making roles, essentially, and I think that was the end, and so that's what's been going on.

There's actually been quite a lot over the last year in scenario planning, and, as I said, the coordination group will be meeting twice a year, and, as we update the action plans and things like that, I'll be providing it to you. We'll probably normally meet in the spring, and so I would say normally around the June meeting that I'll be able to give you an update like this of what's happened over the past year, and I'm open for any questions, Carolyn.

DR. BELCHER: Thanks, John. Questions and comments for John? Kristin.

MS. FOSS: I appreciate the update, John, and keeping us in the loop as we move forward with this initiative, and so I know we have multiple overlapping stocks and joint FMPs with the Gulf Council, and so I just want to highlight the importance of continued coordination with them, whether that's through staff, et cetera, and I just want to make sure that there aren't any decisions made for these shared stocks without the Gulf Council at the table.

DR. BELCHER: Sonny.

MR. GWIN: Thank you, Madam Chair. Not a question, and just a comment. I was the only council member to stay for that CEFI meeting, and, when I went, I say, oh boy, this is going to be boring, but I just -- The reason I'm making this comment is I want to thank your staff for not making it boring. Their presentations, and their involvement in that, was -- It definitely kept me interested, and I'm certainly glad that I stayed. They did an excellent job. Thank you.

DR. BELCHER: Other comments, or questions, for John? Okay. Thanks, John.

MR. CARMICHAEL: Thank you.

DR. BELCHER: All right. Circling back, Clay, just because you were coming in, and we got a little bit ahead, and so we were going to go ahead and do the center and Regional Office reports, if you're good to go with that, this afternoon. Andy, are you good to go now?

MR. STRELCHECK: I was hoping that Clay wouldn't show up, so that I could give his report for him, and so thanks for the extra time, and so a few updates, and maybe a question for the council. I just want to say thank you, again, for your help with the Southeast Equity and Environmental Justice Plan, and so we finalized that, and published that, in August. Now the real work begins, in terms of implementing and acting upon that, and so, if you haven't seen those, they're now posted to our website and finalized for all of the regions throughout the country.

A couple of updates on catch limits. For gag grouper, I would say we came as close to nailing the catch limits as we could, 101 percent for the recreational limit and 98 percent for the commercial

catch limit. Given the short seasons, that's very good, and, obviously, it's helpful for the rebuilding plan for gag grouper going forward.

Golden tilefish, we did reopen for one week in the commercial sector in late July, and I believe we're close to landing that full quota at this stage. The question I had for the council, and I would love to get some feedback, is we opened golden tilefish on January 1 for the recreational sector, and we opened it for two months and then closed it, and, obviously, recreational landings are difficult to estimate, given the few intercepts, but we have an estimate that is at 70 percent of the recreational catch limit, and so we're talking less than, I think, a thousand fish, if we reopen, and we have had landings come in reported out of season in past years, and so we're just looking for some feedback, input, from the council on options, preferences, if they had any, of, if we do reopen, when we would reopen golden tilefish. Obviously, there are some challenges, just given the limited amount of quota that's available, and so I'll pause there, if there's any input.

DR. BELCHER: Do folks have anything to give to Andy on that? Tom.

MR. ROLLER: Personally, I would like to see it opened when -- It's hard to say, but sometime before the end of the year, because it's not necessarily an accessible fish, right, or at least it isn't up my way, and so we're getting in that time of year where weather starts to get pretty unreliable, and so, if we open it in November, I don't know how much access that's going to provide the recreational community, or at least that's what I tell my customers when they're booking offshore trips in the fall, and it's like, you know, come closer to the beginning of October, because, every single day you seem to get into there, it seems to get worse.

I do think we need to, you know, going forward, reevaluate that January 1 opening for that fishery, particularly with the small quota, and I would like to see it opened a different time of the year, particularly since it really seems to -- You know, if there's some intercepts down south, it just makes it so our fishermen can't access them in North Carolina.

DR. BELCHER: Kristin.

MS. FOSS: I think we would be supportive of reopening, and I could get back to you later this week on maybe some ideas of when the best time would be, if possible.

DR. BELCHER: Other comments? Tim.

MR. GRINER: Andy, could you go back and say -- If you reopen, how many fish would be in the reopening?

MR. STRELCHECK: 819.

MR. GRINER: So, if you did reopen, would there even be enough time to figure out, before it started back, before the next season opened up, whether or not you went over in the final waves, whether you caught the 800 fish, or went way over?

MR. STRELCHECK: So, if we opened in Wave 5, which is the current wave, September and October, we would not have data until mid-December, at the earliest.

DR. BELCHER: Jimmy.

MR. HULL: Thank you. Is there the possibility of carryover to the next season of that available quota? No?

DR. BELCHER: John.

MR. CARMICHAEL: I was going to ask that too, and is that because we haven't accounted for that, because we did address carryover in the ABC control rule revisions, but there were certain criteria, and I don't know if they would apply to this stock. I don't remember the details.

MR. STRELCHECK: I would have to go back and look. I don't think there's any sort of automatic guidance for the Regional Administrator to carry it over at this point.

MR. CARMICHAEL: Because I will just say that, you know, one of the issues is, if you carry stuff over, you run into potential issues of being over your ABC and ACL in the next year, and we normally set ABC at ACL, and so, if you carry anything over, then you would be over your ABC in the very next year, and so the control rule had a process for doing that and letting the SSC say if they thought it was appropriate, and then it would allow the ABC to be temporarily increased, basically by action of the council and Regional Administrator, and so, while the provision is there, and it makes a lot of sense, it's a little bit of a complicated process, because of the legal restrictions on it.

DR. BELCHER: Tim, you still had something?

MR. GRINER: Yes, and I think John answered it, with what he just said, but I was kind of the under the impression that the ABC control rule was not as automatic as I had originally thought it was, and there's still that process, and does that process include an actual amendment to a fishery management plan to include that ABC control rule for that species?

DR. BELCHER: Go ahead, John.

MR. CARMICHAEL: I think that needed to be considered as part of it and addressed in getting the SSC engaged to say, yes, we would allow this in this case, but I think Mike worked on that amendment, and he probably knows the details a little better than I do, and he works on snapper grouper, and so he probably knows where tilefish stand in this, maybe.

DR. SCHMIDTKE: So, in regard to carryover, if -- What has to happen is that carryover needs to be set when the ABC is set, and so, when you pass an amendment that says we're setting an ABC for this stock, and we are setting it with carryover, with respect to our stocks right now, because of the recency of that amendment, none of the ABCs that are on the books right now have been set with carryover. Now, when you set it with carryover, when there is an amount that can be carried over, that becomes an automatic process, but it only becomes automatic if you've set that original ABC through an amendment with a carryover kind of provision along with it.

DR. BELCHER: Further suggestions, or comments, for Andy? John.

MR. CARMICHAEL: Could it possibly open -- I'm just thinking of not having an open and close and open and close for the like people that fish in this, and is there any value to having it reopen like sometime in December, so it just rolls over into January, and then you could maybe make it a little bit easier to have a partial wave type situation of, you know, being open for a few weeks, and I don't know how long you would project that you would take that, you know, remaining 30 percent, but maybe if we open around the holidays or something, and just roll over into January and the next year, and give people a longer overall season.

DR. BELCHER: Andy.

MR. STRELCHECK: Well, I appreciate the feedback, and, you know, I guess I just wanted to highlight that this is, obviously, an immense challenge, given the small amount of quota remaining. You know, last year, for example, we landed 38,000 golden tilefish, or at least reportedly landed 38,000 golden tilefish, which was well over that catch limit, right, and so here we have a year where we're under the catch limit, and we want to, obviously, try to harvest it, but we don't really have a lot of fish to go around, to distribute, and figuring out how to open it, and get the landings statistics, so that we can actually estimate that, is a real challenge.

Okay, and a couple other updates that I just wanted to bring to the council's attention, and the Protected Resources report is in the briefing book. Maybe the main things just to note is that agency decisions, or rules, on various ESA actions, including the pillar coral uplisting to endangered, our green sea turtle critical habitat rule, and the North Atlantic right whale vessel strike rulemaking are still pending agency review, and so no updates to report there.

I wanted to give an update on the permits system. I believe I've talked with the Gulf Council about this, and not the South Atlantic, and so, at the last meeting, I think I updated you on some of the challenges we're facing, and so we have been working with a contractor to develop what's called a snapshot, which is essentially a database that we can use for amendments and actions that is up-to-date through 2023.

We're on several iterations of kind of reviewing and cleaning up that database, and we are getting closer, incrementally, and we're not quite over the finish line, to where -- We should have that available at some point in the near future, to be able to use that for amendments and actions. In the meantime, my staff has also been working on making sure we can accurately recreate all of the historical permit counts for all of our various permits in the South Atlantic and Gulf of Mexico, and so we are continuing to work on both of those, but we hope to have some good reports, for council staff and others that are working on amendments, very shortly.

Then a new hire and some retirements, and so John mentioned all the climate-ready fisheries proposals and work that's ongoing, and we saw the need for some support for all the work that's ongoing within the agency, and so we've hired Mick Walsh, who -- If she hasn't reached out to you, and your team, John, she'll be reaching out soon to introduce herself, and so we look forward to her involvement in all things climate, related to the IRA proposals and work that's ongoing, not only with the councils, but within the Fisheries Service.

Then, for retirements, many of you may know Ginny Faye, now known as Ginny Fay, now known as Ginny Croom. She is my Habitat Division Chief, and she is retiring at the end of the year, and so we just closed the advertisement for Ginny's position, and we hope to hire our new Habitat

Division Chief in the coming months, and then I did clear this with him in advance, but Dr. Jack McGovern, who is our audience, he is retiring on November 30, and so this is his last South Atlantic Council meeting.

Jack is a very humble man, and one of the kindest people I've ever met. He told me that he started coming to South Atlantic Council meetings, maybe at this very hotel, back in the 1980s, and it looked about the same as it does today, but we estimated, during lunch, or a recent conversation, that he's probably been to about a hundred meetings, and so we are going to miss Jack tremendously. Our hope is to get an advertisement for his position out on the street imminently, and so we'll be hiring for a new division chief here shortly, and so that is my report.

DR. BELCHER: Well, congrats, Jack. (*Applause*)

MR. CARMICHAEL: Jack, you gave us no time to prepare a nice slide show to run for you during the dinner. I'm really disappointed. How dare you?

DR. BELCHER: Charlie.

MR. PHILLIPS: Thanks, Andy. I think you said something about a snapshot of fisheries, and I'm guessing that's going to include red snapper, which will help you in your endeavors to stop overfishing?

MR. STRELCHECK: So you probably aren't up-to-speed, and so we redid our permits system, a couple of years back, and the frontend of the system, what you interact with, is working exceptionally well, very efficient, and reducing errors. The backend of the system, the database, has some problems with it, and so that snapshot is essentially our attempt to take the data, and information, and make sure it's clean and processed in a way that's usable for amendments and actions, but we haven't been able to fully recreate all the data that's being input in the system in a way that we can use it for the work we're doing here, and so we have been contracting that out and making progress to fix that.

DR. BELCHER: Jimmy.

MR. HULL: Thank you. Andy, just one question. So, when SERO and quota monitoring -- When they project that you need to close a fishery, because we're getting real close to the quota, and you estimate the time of that, what's the timeline from when you see that you need to take action before it hits the street? I mean, is it days, weeks, hours?

MR. STRELCHECK: So, from the time that we determine that we need to close the fishery to when it publishes in the Federal Register is usually, I will say, three days, and then you, obviously, have to allow time for people to be noticed of the closure. The challenge we face, and you even reached out to me about red snapper, is we're estimating for non-reporting, right, and so, if we don't have fully reporting from some of the dealers, then we're ballparking it based on past practices and actions, and trying to, obviously, recreate what we think is going to happen, and that adds, obviously, an additional level of uncertainty.

MR. HULL: Thank you, and so, to ballpark it, it would be the time you need to notify the fishermen that may still be offshore to get inshore, and finish their trips, and I think you said three days.

MR. STRELCHECK: Five days. Sorry.

MR. HULL: Okay. Thanks. That helps.

DR. BELCHER: Okay. Any other comments, or questions, for Andy? Okay. Moving on, the Southeast Fisheries Science Center report. Clay.

DR. PORCH: Sure, and so I also have an announcement of a new employee. We just hired our Deputy Director for Science and Operations, Dr. Trika Gerard. She worked her way up from doing plankton research to formally my chief of staff, and she is now the Deputy Director, and Dr. Lisa Desfosse is in her phased retirement, and so she'll be there to help mentor Trika as she takes the helm of one of the most difficult deputy jobs in the country, and so we're really excited to have Trika onboard.

I just wanted to tell you about our surveys. Despite some of the challenges we've had in the past couple of years, our Southeast Fishery Independent Survey, SEFIS, is departing for its last tarp video survey cruise of the year, on the R/V Savannah, and that will be primarily sampling in Georgia and Florida waters. At the same time, Pisces is out right now, mapping for about twenty days, to expand the SEFIS hardbottom sampling universe, and so we had, historically, not gotten that much north of Hatteras, and not much south of Cape Canaveral, and so we're trying to expand the range of that survey, so it goes throughout the whole domain of the South Atlantic jurisdiction, and so we're really excited about that one.

The National Coral Reef Monitoring Program survey is going on in the Dry Tortugas right now, and that's the one where we get an index of not only coral and other habitat conditions, but also the abundance of things like yellowtail snapper, hogfish, and other things that are centered in their distribution around south Florida.

The South Atlantic Deepwater Longline Survey was paused a bit, because we had trouble getting money to South Carolina, with the new financial system that the Department of Commerce asked us to implement this year, but, fortunately, South Carolina has graciously agreed to go ahead, unless Amy tells me different, to --

MS. DUKES: (Ms. Dukes' comment is not audible on the recording.)

DR. PORCH: We gave them, you know, our assurance that, you know, the money is there, and it's just a matter of executing it, but they're going to go ahead and do the sampling, so we won't miss a year for the SADL, South Atlantic Deepwater Longline, Survey.

Other than that, we're still working on expanding the at-sea for-hire observer program in the four Atlantic states, and we're trying to iron out the details, and so the funding is there to do something that we've never done before, and I'm really excited about that, and I think, whatever obstacles are left, they're not unsurmountable, and I think we'll get something going, hopefully in 2025.

Some of you may know, with the dolphinfish MSE, we had lost our -- We actually hired away our lead analyst, but we've contracted with Blue Matter Science to assist with that management strategy evaluation, and we expect to complete that in the fall of 2025, and the only other thing that I was hoping to roll out, but I didn't know that I was going to go today, was actually our SEAFish website application, where we're actually making all of our indices of abundance from our various surveys available for the public to view, and I don't know if it's possible now to -- Can I share my screen? I'm logged onto the webinar, and I could walk through it, real quick. Thank you for the last-minute accommodation.

We sent a message to the councils, a while back, letting you know that we created the Southeast Abundance of Fish and Shrimp Data Visualizer, and I'm really excited about this. We've been wanting to do this for several years now, and we finally found a good platform for rolling this out. We got all of our ducks in a row, and now we're able to actually present some indices in close to real-time, particularly things like our longline survey, where, you know, we're collecting the data on the survey, and, within a matter of a month or two, we can get some of this information up on the web.

Here's an example that I'm showing of scamp in the South Atlantic, and it's actually really easy to use. I can send out the link, and so anybody who wants to play with this, even while you're here, but you just log-on, and you get a screen that looks like this, and all you have to do -- I can change it from South Atlantic to Gulf of Mexico, and I can change the species, and I was looking at scamp. If I want to go look at trends from red grouper, I can change it to that, and then it will show all of the indices that we have for red grouper. This is from the South Atlantic trap-video survey, and it will tell you the information about that species. It includes a species profile, and you can just click on that, and it's just a little slow to load up here, and it will tell you all about the species.

You can click back to the survey, and, in some cases, you have multiple surveys. In the South Atlantic, typically, we just have the one or two, either the SEFIS survey or the SADL survey, and, for some species, we have the deeper-water bottom longline survey as well, the SEAMAP survey, but, I mean, you can play around with this at-will. It's really easy to use, and, typically, associated with each index, there's actually a link for the working paper, and so, for those of you who want to get into the nitty-gritty technical details, you can do that. You can download the paper and have a read, but the whole idea is to make this information available, again, as soon as we can process the data.

With the video surveys, you're typically going to be a year or two behind, because it takes multiple partners to read the videos, but we're working on automated image analysis that will enable us to actually put this information up into the cloud, process it, and come up with, again, almost a near, you know, real-time index of abundance, and so I expect that may take a couple of years, before we get it fully completed, but, for some species, like red snapper in the Gulf of Mexico, we actually have something like 96 percent classification accuracy already, and so we're getting close, and IRA is speeding that along, but I'm very hopefully that, within the next few years, even the video survey will be able to update rather rapidly, and so that's all I had to present, but I'm open to if you have any questions.

DR. BELCHER: Thanks, Clay. Any questions for Clay, or any comments? Okay. Seeing none, we are at a point where we're probably going to go ahead and adjourn for the day, because the other items we have -- One, we're waiting on a presenter to be here for tomorrow, and the others

are just in-depth enough that we probably don't want to start anything at 4:20, and so we're going to go ahead and, like I said, we'll recess for today, and we'll come back at 8:30 tomorrow, and we'll start with the WECAFC presentation. Andy.

MR. STRELCHECK: I just wanted to mention -- An oversight on my part, and one more retirement, for people that work with Dr. Mike Travis, and he is my Social Science Branch Chief, and also he works heavily on disaster determinations, and so Mike is retiring in October. We've already selected his replacement, David Records, and so, if you haven't met David, we'll make sure to introduce him to you going forward. Thanks.

DR. BELCHER: Thanks, Andy. A reminder too for the social tomorrow night. Kelly, do you want to come up and --

MR. KLASNICK: (Mr. Klasnick's comment is not audible on the recording.)

MS. DUKES: Just to add to that, so we are going to have our meal at the outdoor classroom. If you didn't get the invitation from Kelly, it has a weblink for the map instructions, and I'm pretty sure that we'll have a hard stop tomorrow at five o'clock. Madam Chair, is that correct? I would like that, please, and I would just ask that everybody park at the outdoor classroom, when they get onsite, and there's a lot more available parking there, and then a little walk over to the actual boat slip.

The Lady Lillian is in port, but, based on weather, she's going to try to sneak out tomorrow, at the 8:00 p.m. high tide, and so we're going to have a little cocktails on the fantail of the Lady Lillian, at 5:45, or 6:00, whatever time folks can get there, for about an hour, and we'll definitely need to vacate that spot by about 7:00, and we'll go back to the outdoor classroom to enjoy our meal.

(Whereupon, the meeting recessed on September 16, 2024.)

SEPTEMBER 17, 2024

TUESDAY MORNING SESSION

The Full Council Session I of the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council reconvened at The Town & Country Inn and Suites, Charleston, South Carolina, on Tuesday, September 17, 2024, and was called to order by Chairman Carolyn Belcher.

DR. BELCHER: Good morning, everyone. Welcome to day two of the September council meeting. We are going to start out with the SEFHIER discussion. Our WECAFC person, we haven't made connection with yet, and so we're going to bump that behind, and Myra and John are going to walk us through the SEFHIER improvement amendment.

MS. BROUWER: All right. Good morning, everybody. Hadley and I are going to tag-team on this topic on the agenda. I'm going to start us off with a series of summary slides, and then I will

hand it over to Hadley to walk you through a document we've put together, a decision document, and most of you are familiar with what those look like, and so we are talking about modifications to South Atlantic for-hire reporting.

We'll do an overview first, to get everybody on the same page and up-to-speed. We'll talk about the Comprehensive For-Hire Reporting Amendment, which is the amendment that stood up the SEFHIER program, and we'll go over the purpose and need of that amendment, and a summary of our intended outcomes, and bear in mind that this evaluation of these intended outcomes is what we, as staff, are putting forward to you, and we haven't conducted a formal evaluation of any of this.

Then we'll talk about the recommendations of the technical subcommittee that was put together back then, that really helped put that amendment together. We'll go over recent council actions, and so the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council, and also what you guys -- The guidance that you gave us in June, and where we are on this amendment, and we'll also talk about the Highly Migratory Species proposed rule, and then, like I said, we'll jump to the decision document. We have a draft purpose and need for you guys to look at, a series of draft actions and range of alternatives, and then, most importantly, some questions that will help us figure out how to move forward from here.

First off, as I said, the Southeast For-Hire Integrated Electronic Reporting, or SEFHIER, program was launched with the implementation of the Comprehensive For-Hire Electronic Reporting Amendment, which was begun -- I think it was in 2013, and it finally was sent in in 2017, and it was implemented the first of January, 2021.

The purpose and need of that amendment, and I'm just going to go ahead and read that into the record, and the purpose was to increase the accuracy and timeliness of landings, discards, effort, and socioeconomic data of federally-permitted for-hire vessels participating in the South-Atlantic-managed fisheries, and those fisheries are the snapper grouper fishery, coastal migratory pelagics, and the dolphin wahoo fishery. The need of that amendment was to improve charter vessel and headboat fishery data used for management and to improve monitoring and compliance of federally-permitted for-hire vessels in the South-Atlantic-managed fisheries.

Now we're going to show you a series of tables with -- We've kind of dissected the intended outcome of that amendment, the Comprehensive Electronic Reporting Amendment, and then we sort of posed has it or has it not been achieved, and so the first intended outcome was to improve the timeliness and accuracy of catch data. We do not think that has been achieved. Based on the letter that you received back in June, the data that are now being collected through the SEFHIER program are not deemed useful for management, and so, therefore, the timeliness, and the accuracy, of catch data have not improved.

The second outcome was to require electronic reporting for all federally-permitted vessels, regardless of where fishing occurred. We think that this has occurred, and it was implemented with that amendment. Next down, another outcome was to work with NMFS to address validation, accountability, and calibration with existing survey methods, and we do not think that's been achieved. In the letter that I just mentioned, NMFS stated that concerns over noncompliance, and lack of validation of for-hire logbook data, prevented those data from being used in management.

The Comprehensive Electronic Reporting Amendment also intended to exempt the South Atlantic reporting requirement if a vessel that had multiple permits was required to report under a more stringent -- More stringent requirements in a different region, and so, here, we think yes and no, and so this exemption was applicable for permitted vessels in the Gulf of Mexico. The economic portion of the reporting requirement kind of drew in a bunch of vessels that have permits, specifically for dolphin wahoo and coastal migratory pelagics, in the Mid-Atlantic and the New England regions.

For some of the aspects, the GARFO requirements are as stringent. However, they don't have the same economic or no-fishing reporting, and so their reporting requirements are considered less stringent, and remember that, back in I believe it was June of 2021, the New England Council sent you guys a letter kind of expressing concern, and the additional burden that those fishermen were having to go through because of this requirement.

Now we're shifting to talking about recommendations from the technical committee, and, as I said, this was a body of biologists, resource managers, with experience to kind of figure out best fishing practices, or best practices for reporting, and so they met, I believe back in May of 2014, and they provided recommendations to both councils, and so these recommendations also went to the Gulf, and so, again, the same format, the recommendation and then have we accomplished it.

Logbook data collected by an authorized platform was one of the recommendations, and we think that, yes, that has been accomplished, and we do have eTRIPS/mobile, eTRIPS/online, and VESL, and those are the three platforms that currently accept electronic data in our region.

A recommendation was also to submit data to ACCSP or the Gulf Fisheries Information Network, and, yes, that's been accomplished, at least for the ACCSP portion, and, also, there was a recommendation to integrate those data by ACCSP into a single composite dataset, and, again, that also has been accomplished, and then this dataset was to be distributed to appropriate agencies for analyses and use, and made available to the public via ACCSP, and, here, we had to say yes and no. We do know that the datasets are available through ACCSP, but they're not being used for management by the agency.

Another recommendation was for NMFS, and/or ACCSP or GulfFIN, to develop a compliance tracking procedure that balances timeliness with available staff and funding resources. Again, yes and no. Recall that we had discussions in December, and then again earlier this year, where we heard from Amy Dukes about how South Carolina tracks compliance in their system, and also the way that NMFS does it, and there seemed to be some inconsistencies there. It is unclear which of those procedures is most accurately tracking compliance.

The bottom of the table, next up, the recommendation was for NMFS to use a validation method developed in the Gulf of Mexico logbook pilot study and the MRIP South Carolina validation project as a basis to ensure that the actual logbook report was validated and standardized, and so this has not been accomplished. NMFS has not worked to validate the logbook in South Carolina, or the South Atlantic region, and we do know that there was a validation effort in the Gulf of Mexico.

Another table with more recommendations from the subcommittee, and, at the top, we have dual survey methods, and so the existing MRIP and the new methodology were to be run side-by-side,

for no less than three years, and that there would be no management advice expected from the new method, and so SEFHIER, for the first year. Has this been accomplished? Yes-ish, and MRIP sampling is in place, and it will be for the foreseeable future, and, as I said, the for-hire logbook rule has been effective since January 4, and so we're about three-and-a-half years into collecting those data. However, we would like to clarify whether the clock has in fact started or not. It seems to be that the clock would not start until the agency approves the information for being used for management.

NMFS require and maintain a comprehensive permit email database, and this is done. This is done for all federally-permitted for-hire vessels issued a permit by the Regional Office. NMFS include procedures for expanding estimates for nonreporting, and so no, because this is something that presumably would have to come after compliance is high enough for NMFS' approval and validation, and so this will likely take quite a while.

NMFS allow multiple authorized applications or devices that can transmit data from sea to report data, as long as they meet required data and transferability standards, and yes. This is either not applicable for our region, right, because we did not require a VMS, and the logbook data can be transmitted, currently, via a mobile device, as long as there is cell service.

Then, finally, another recommendation from the technical committee was to explore ways to determine the impact of state-permitted vessels on landings of federally-managed species and pursue a long-term strategy of including the entire fleet, federally and non-federally permitted, in the reporting program, and this -- We don't know if this effort has been undertaken.

DR. BELCHER: Andy.

MR. STRELCHECK: Before Myra transitions to the Gulf Council action, I guess I wanted to make a few comments about the recommendations, and, one, I hope this doesn't come as a surprise to the South Atlantic Council, based on the letter we provided and wrote when this action was approved, right, and so we were clearly indicating that, you know, this is a start to a program, and it could maybe provide us minimal levels of effort, but the reality is that we can't validate this program, and we can't ultimately implement this program as a way of managing this fishery right now, because of poor reporting and poor compliance with the program, and so that's obviously why we're talking about this, and wanting to make improvements to the program, and, ultimately, increase the accountability and reporting compliance, so that it can be used and ultimately compared to MRIP and validated for use by this council.

I just wanted to emphasize that, because, you know, it comes across, with the recommendations, like NMFS, you know, hasn't done things, or has failed to do things, but we're certainly not going to spend time, energy, and money to validate something that we know can't be validated at this point, and, until we get the compliance improved, until we get the reporting improved, we recognize that this program has limited utility for the South Atlantic.

The other thing that I guess I just wanted to raise, and, Amy, maybe you can help me here, and so my understanding is my team talked with your team, after that issue came up about differences between South Carolina and SEFHIER, and reached some resolution on that fairly quickly. I guess there were some issues with maybe dually permitting vessels, and can you clarify that, since that's a statement in the recommendations?

MS. DUKES: Certainly, Andy, and if I may, Madam Chair. So, yes, we have been comparing vessel lists from SERO federally-permitted vessels to South-Carolina-licensed vessels. Of course, there's going to be a little bit of divergence from time to time. Currently, if you took a snapshot in time, looking at the data, there are twenty-seven federally-permitted vessels under SEFHIER that are not South-Carolina-permitted, and so, unfortunately, there's no way for me to be able to provide information on that compliance rate.

Our thought process is perhaps the vessels that are not dually permitted are likely helping -- Are negatively impacting that overall compliance rate, and so, when I provide a compliance rate for dually-permitted vessels, it won't capture those twenty-seven that, of course, I don't have information on, but you're right that your team, and the South Carolina team, have been emailing, at least once a month, to compare those licensed vessels, and where we match and where we don't match.

Of course, there's still some issues with the Permits Office itself, and just trying to get that background, and I'm hoping that snapshot backend database will help even provide some more clarity for us, moving forward. We have been doing additional outreach for those dually-permitted vessels who haven't been necessarily using the right platform, and there's still a little bit of confusion there, but, when we compare those lists monthly, we're able to identify the areas, and the vessels, that need the outreach immediately. Most of that outreach is coming from the Department of Natural Resources. Does that answer your question, sir? Okay. So it's about a monthly comparison list.

DR. BELCHER: Tim.

MR. GRINER: Thank you, Madam Chair. Andy, I was just -- You know, I'm kind of curious. You know, the need for this was to use it for management, and are there particular milestones, or events, that would actually -- That we could actually, you know, know that, if we hit that milestone, then we have checked-off a box that makes that portion of it usable, or that we're getting closer to being usable for management?

I guess it seems to me that the ability to use this for management kind of just is out there, but it keeps moving further and further away from us, and I'm just wondering if there's a way to use bullet points, or milestones, that, you know, if you get to this level of compliance, or you get to -- Whatever it is, but is there a level of compliance that makes that issue go away, or how do we know when we're getting to the point where it's now usable?

MR. STRELCHECK: I mean, I don't know if there's a magic level, and, obviously, you want to have strong confidence in the data that you're receiving through both compliance estimates as well as validation, right, and so the changes that we potentially will be making to this program, through the amendment process, to me, would be a huge step in the right direction to help with compliance and validation, and then, obviously, we would be able to start from there, in terms of reevaluating, you know, how much that improves the program, and ultimately how quickly we could get toward ultimately, you know, a comparison with MRIP and full use of the program for management.

DR. BELCHER: Tom.

MR. ROLLER: I want to thank Andy for his comments, because, as someone who was involved in this process, back in, you know, 2013, or 2014, as we started this logbook, the discussions of the council, at that time, were exactly as he said, that this was not going to be useable with how it was put forward, and that was made very clear by Roy Crabtree, at the time, and a lot of the discussions at the council were based upon the fact that this was the beginning of the program, that we were going to make changes, and it's been over ten years, and so I would hope that we would be ready to make some changes, so that this data could be validated and used, because, as a life-long for-hire fisherman, I hear fishermen complain all the time about MRIP and its use in data management, and every different rendition of it, for as long as I've been fishing.

I hear for-hire fishermen complain about not being taken seriously, about not having good data for fisheries disaster declarations, and I hear complaining about a lot of things in current management, and I would hope that that would mean that people would be ready to have better data to be managed better and more accurately, and so -- But, when it comes down to it, if we cannot create a program that is producing data that is much better than MRIP, I don't see why we would be doing it in the first place.

DR. BELCHER: Okay. Any other comments at this point? I'm going to go ahead and ask Myra to continue on. Thank you.

MS. BROUWER: All right. Thank you. Okay. Moving along to what the Gulf Council has been doing, and you heard a little bit about this from Billy yesterday, but they are currently working on a for-hire reporting amendment to replace their previous reporting rule, because that was set aside, as we all know, by the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit back in February of last year.

Their amendment includes actions that would establish the frequency and mechanism for data reporting from charter vessels. They would modify the existing reporting requirements for headboats, establish trip notification and effort reporting requirements, and so hail-in and hail-out, and establish reporting of economic data, and, here, the Gulf Council is exploring a sampling, rather than a census approach, for the economic component, and we're going to talk a little bit about that a little bit later in the presentation.

Here is the guidance that you received from NMFS, and so, to recap, in June of 2024, the Regional Office, and the center, noted that for-hire logbook data cannot be used for management, due to low compliance and lack of validation, and so the recommendations to staff was to create an amendment, or start working on an amendment, that would require logbook submission prior to offload of the catch, a dockside intercept survey to estimate misreporting and nonreporting, require a declaration, or a declaration/prelanding combination, prior to a trip, require landing only at approved locations, and require weekly did-not-fish reports when fishing does not occur, which I actually already in place.

In June, you passed a motion to start this amendment, as I said, and you did also tell us that let's look at incorporating actions that can be taken in the near-term without an amendment, including additional outreach, consider actions and alternatives that the Gulf Council is considering, and also actions to modify reporting frequency, hail-in and hail-out, landing locations, no-fishing reports, and a validation survey.

Here is what we think can be done without the council having to take action through an amendment. Improving outreach is something that can be done, and this has been shown to increase compliance, increase enforcement, officer presence on the water or dockside, and, you know, we all know that this depends on resources, and funding, and there could be better enforcement of the harvest prohibition and the ability to renew permits, if somebody is delinquent in their reporting requirement, and there could be an increase in monitoring, and so there could be a requirement for observers, increased dockside sampling, administer a validation survey, and those are all things that can be done without council action, and, of course, they're all going to be dependent on prioritization of initiatives by the agency and personnel and dollars.

Here's where we can, again, pause for questions. As I said, we're going to be talking about the objectives for what we're doing at this meeting regarding this amendment. We have a draft purpose and need for you to review, draft actions, and then questions on how to move forward, and so are there any more questions before I hand you over to Hadley to take you through the decision document?

DR. BELCHER: Tim and then Amy.

MR. GRINER: Well, looking at that list then, I mean, really, the only thing this council can accomplish is to increase outreach and education. I mean, I don't see how the council can actually implement any of the others, because it's really based on, you know, what NMFS has the ability to do. We can't really increase law enforcement, and, you know, it really comes down to that funding and that ability for NMFS to implement those things, but we can certainly focus on the outreach and education component. Thank you.

DR. BELCHER: Amy.

MS. DUKES: Ditto. I was more curious -- I agree with Tim directly, and outreach and education has really been the tool that has allowed South Carolina's program to excel, and we are in constant contact with our fishermen, boots-on-the-ground as well, and I think that plays a really big role in it. I know that's a harder lift for the service, but I was curious to the magnitude of staff and time between the headboat program and SEFHIER, and, Andy, is there -- You may not be able to quantify it by staff members, but is the amount of energy, and effort, from an outreach and education perspective, with compliance and reporting, similar in magnitude on the headboat side, versus the SEFHIER side? The number of vessels is drastically different, and so I was wondering if the staff commitment was also different, proportionate.

DR. BELCHER: Andy.

MR. STRELCHECK: We've never done a direct comparison of, you know, how the headboat outreach is conducted and works relative to the SEFHIER program. I have two fulltime employees, and I think four or five contractors, that work on the SEFHIER program, throughout the entire Southeast, the Gulf of Mexico and South Atlantic, and that's based on, you know, a limited budget from Congress that has helped to support the program, primarily dedicated toward the Gulf of Mexico, over the last four or five years.

DR. BELCHER: Kerry.

MS. MARHEFKA: Myra, can you go back to the previous slide, please? Maybe I'm missing it, but you made a discussion about the ability to renew the permit, versus like nonreporting, and currently, right now, if you are not compliant on your logbooks, can you get your permit renewed?

MS. BROUWER: Well, no, you can't get it renewed if you're not compliant, but if, there's a long period of time that passes, and I think if, you know, folks were a little bit more mindful of their permits potentially not being renewed, because of their lack of reporting, that that can be a little bit more forcefully enforced, I guess.

DR. BELCHER: Tom.

MR. ROLLER: On that note, I mean, we've had this conversation before. It's -- When people aren't compliant, you just go put a bunch of did-not-fish reports in, or you can't get your permit renewed, and you just go get another one, because they're open access, and so --

DR. BELCHER: Other comments? Jimmy.

MR. HULL: Thank you. I have a charter boat, and I have a hired captain on it. He's an old guy, and his education and outreach has been pretty much me, and, if he gets jammed up on reporting with the app, he ends up calling a telephone number, and leaving his name, and they call him back, and, well, he's often not there to receive that call, because he's fishing, and so things just linger on and on in time, and, finally, they just get fed up with it, and they walk away, and so I think it's boots-on-the-ground, as you mentioned, and somehow we've got to get people to visit the back of the back to inform these guys, and talk to them, something like citizen science education, where we have a formal meeting for these guys, and get them educated on a lot of things, and I think that's the way you've got to go, because, the way it's going now, there's not a whole lot there.

DR. BELCHER: Judy.

MS. HELMEY: Well, the form itself is a little confusing, because, once you start filling it out, if you make a mistake, you can't go back and change. Like, if you make a mistake on the AM and PM or the date, you can't -- Even before you submit it, you cannot change it. I mean, so, the other day, I made a mistake, and put "PM", instead of "AM", and it wouldn't let me, and I finished the whole report, and it wouldn't let me submit it, and so I had to wait for them to call me and ask me about it, and so what I don't understand is the whole -- If we were able to make all the changes on it while it wasn't submitted, I couldn't see what the problem is with that, and so, right now, that's where a lot of the problem is. Some of these decisions you make on the form, you can't change it, even before you submit it, and so I say maybe we should look at some of that.

DR. BELCHER: Andy, to that, and then Amy.

MR. STRELCHECK: I mean, we're getting into a pretty deep level of detail here right now, and, Judy, I'm happy to have one of my staff talk to you, and so I'm being told that you can correct the form until it's submitted, but, after it's submitted, you cannot correct it, and so, if you're running to an error that's different than at least, you know, our understanding, and the way the system is supposed to be designed, then I would like to make sure we resolve that.

DR. BELCHER: Judy, to that?

MS. HELMEY: I did talk to them, and they said that it was some kind of glitch in the form, and so you might want to check it, to see, or maybe -- We've been having a lot of problem with that, and so, if you do the AM or PM wrong, and you don't even submit it, you cannot change it after it's -- You can't go back and change it, but I would like to talk to somebody about it. Thanks.

DR. BELCHER: Amy.

MS. DUKES: Judy, I will help you too, babe. I'm all about that, but I did kind of want to circle back, before we jump into the decision document, and one thing that I think kind of goes through my mind is that I do believe that a vast majority of our for-hire captains are doing a great job, and I don't want a few exceptions, that are major exceptions, to be punishing the whole fleet. Outreach, building relationships, is key, and I really want to continue down that path, but I think we need to -- When we're talking through these, we need to make sure that there is an incentive for the captain to want to report, an incentive for the captain to use.

The validation side of it, I understand, and I get, and I'm not necessarily opposed to it, but the one thing I do really want to stress is this idea that NMFS created the one stop, and the intent of that one stop is to allow a single report to meet multiple reporting requirements, and I feel that, every time we make a change, either at SERO or GARFO or HMS, that divergence is not going away. I think that divergence is getting further placed apart, and we can't keep going down and tweaking these things without taking into consideration the intent of one stop, and we're not there, and so I just wanted to say that. Thank you.

DR. BELCHER: Jimmy.

MR. HULL: Just to follow the comment of what Judy said, it's reported to me, from other captains in my area, and mine, the same thing, that you can't change the date, when you make a mistake, nor can you change the species, if you make a mistake on that, and so there's -- If they can, they need to be taught what they're doing wrong, and so that goes along with training and outreach.

DR. BELCHER: Thanks, Jimmy. Other comments? Okay. Tom.

MR. ROLLER: Well, I appreciate these comments, and, I mean, I've certainly had some glitches with the app too, but I think this is a little bit in the weeds, because I think the overarching problem that we need to be discussing here is not just outreach, but how we can have a compliance better than 40 percent, and data that's actually usable for management, because, while we can do some outreach, I can tell you that I know a lot of people that fish fulltime in federal waters and don't have it, because the consequences are low, and they're probably not going to get caught, particularly in a state like North Carolina, that doesn't have joint enforcement authority, and our state doesn't do any enforcement of these permits.

I just kind of shrug my shoulders a little bit, and I would like to see something that -- Until there is some real consequences for not complying, and not -- Well, until there's real consequences for not complying with this program, I just don't see how we're going to have high compliance and good data.

DR. BELCHER: Okay. Any additional comments? All right. Seeing none, we'll move on to John to walk us through the decision document.

MR. HADLEY: All right. Well, good morning, everyone. What we're going to be going over is Attachment 6a under the Full Council I briefing book, and so Myra went through the kind of intro and background materials, and I'm going to jump down here to kind of the nuts-and-bolts of the discussion and kind of frame where we are in the amendment and kind of the near-term set of goals for the amendment.

The objectives for this are review the timing, and we'll go over that in a minute, the draft purpose and need, and we'll go over a set of potential actions and range of alternatives, and, as requested at the last meeting through your motion, a lot of these are at least mirroring what the Gulf of Mexico is considering.

I will mention that these amendments are sort of going on a parallel track, and so the Gulf has had a meeting. Their amendment will continue to develop as this one does as well, and so it's going to be, you know, a changing process, a process that kind of changes over time, but the actions that are in there right now are similar to what is being discussed by the Gulf of Mexico.

Then sort of that last bullet point, probably after the discussion, I think the for-hire reporting AP will come back to that December, and so, you know, that last bullet point is -- We've probably already answered that, looking at that AP meeting sometime early next year.

Looking at the tentative amendment timing, we're really starting to just get an idea of, you know, what, conceptually, do you want to look at in the amendment, and consider in the amendment, and so what we're building towards is an approval for scoping in December, and so we're trying to get those concepts down right now, and sort of start to flesh out the range of alternatives, but we really are trying to get those ideas in the amendment and then come back to you in December with a more filled out document that you can approve for scoping.

Really, the timeline there, it's very tentative, but, assuming it moves along as expected, you're looking at formal approval of the amendment in June of 2026, and so we're very early in the process here, and it's something that the council will be discussing over the next year-and-a-half or two years or so, with regulatory changes several years thereafter, and so it's 2027, or 2028, and so the take-home is we're early in the process. The point there is we're working towards approving for scoping in December.

We'll start out with the draft purpose and need statement, and this is just some information that's been put together by council staff, and the idea is to just start to get an idea down on paper, and get your thoughts on what you see as the purpose and need of this amendment, and so I'll read this, very quickly, and turn it over to the council for discussion.

The purpose of the amendment is to make modifications to the SEFHIER program to improve the accuracy, precision, and timeliness of landings, discard, and fishing effort data for the for-hire component of the recreational sector of the snapper grouper, coastal migratory pelagics, and dolphin wahoo fisheries. This amendment will affect those three fisheries. The need is to improve compliance, adjust reporting requirements, and allow for data validation, so the information can be used in managing the fisheries for those three FMPs, and so, with that, I'll turn it over for any

thoughts, anything that you would like to add, take out, sort of conceptually, for the purpose and need statements.

DR. BELCHER: Robert.

MR. SPOTTSWOOD: Thank you, Madam Chair. We continue to talk about fishing effort data, and should we not be trying to get to catch data, when we're going through this process? I mean, if we're going to have a program to get information, shouldn't we be getting to catch data and not effort?

DR. BELCHER: Thoughts? Amy.

MS. DUKES: I think catch is captured with landings and discards.

DR. BELCHER: Okay. Other comments, or questions, or suggested modifications or changes? Is everybody good with what we have currently as the purpose and need? Robert.

MR. SPOTTSWOOD: Would anybody have an issue with a modification to clarify that, fishing catch data, rather than effort?

DR. BELCHER: Comments? Andy.

MR. STRELCHECK: I mean, we're just being more specific, in terms of the data that the logbook is collecting, and so we're collecting all three of those, landings, discards, and effort information, and so I would recommend that we keep it as-is.

DR. BELCHER: Robert.

MR. SPOTTSWOOD: What kind of information goes into effort, and a lot of the things that I've heard about these surveys, you know, the types of information that's asked you, know, economic information and other -- Fuel consumption and other questions, does any of that come up in this realm that -- That's kind of what I'm trying to do, Andy, is get more specific. I think what we need from this is what's being caught and what's being discarded. I think that's the information that we're looking for, in order to make fisheries decisions.

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

MR. ROLLER: I want to just go back to that catch question. I'm with Amy on that, in particular because landings and discards I think capture that, and I just think we're getting a little bit too technical on it. I do understand that. I mean, catch is a common use, but, regarding the data being collected, I mean, that's what we're going to be discussing, the economic components and how we do -- How we do that, and if we don't do that, and, if we do it, how we do it. That's something we're going to be discussing, and catch was a point of contention when this was first approved.

DR. BELCHER: Tim.

MR. GRINER: A couple of things. You know, I think it's very, very important to keep the words "landings and discards" in there, and I think, when it comes to the fishing effort data, I think that's

very important too, and, in my mind, fishing effort data is things like how many people, how many hooks, or how many lines, how many hooks per line, and how long did you fish for, how long were those hooks in the water, and so those are important concepts. Those are important things we need to know.

Nowhere in this purpose and need does it mention anything about economic data, and so, if economic data is important, it needs to be in this purpose and need. I don't feel like it's important. It is not going to get us -- It has nothing to do with the validation, and it has nothing to do with what National Marine Fisheries Service has told us they need to be able to use this for management purposes. Nowhere in there does it say that we need economic data to use this SEFHIER program for management purposes.

GARFO doesn't do it, and it's not used in New England. There are no no-fishing reports, and there is no economic data collected, and those are big fisheries. If economic data is so important, it needs to be in this purpose and need, but, as I see it, this economic data -- If that's what we're going to include in this, it doesn't solve the problem of validation, and it doesn't make any of this more usable for management purposes, and that's what we're after, at the end of the day, is to use this program for management purposes. If in fact we are after some economic data, it's got to be in this purpose and need. Thank you.

DR. BELCHER: Okay. Tom.

MR. ROLLER: I think I'm going to agree with Tim here a little bit on that, because the use of data like this is multifaceted for our industry. Our industry is a really important fishing industry for the entire country, in every coastal state, or most coastal states, but, if we're going to have this data, it's not just about catch. The benefits of it are not just about catch for management, but it's also about how good data is used for things like disaster declarations, something that I've dealt with multiple times in our industry, and our state has very, very little data.

So, if economic data helps for that sort of stuff, that's great. Obviously, we do it with the commercial trip ticket programs, right, where some economic data is captured, and it's on a limited survey basis, right, and so, if that needs to be in here, I'm supportive of that, but I just think we need to be careful how we word it, because I think it does need to be different than how we've done it in the past.

DR. BELCHER: Amy.

MS. DUKES: I have no objection to adding that language to the purpose and/or the need, but I think it just want to remind this body that the minimum data elements, the core data elements, that were established under Amendment 39 do outline three, or four, economic questions, and I don't believe that there is an intent to change those at this point, those minimum data elements, and so they're already being captured, in essence, currently, under the current program.

DR. BELCHER: Thanks for that, Amy. Andy.

MR. STRELCHECK: Amy captured what I was going to say, and so I do like the suggestion though of including economic data in the purpose, and I think we could just modify the purpose to

say landings, discards, fishing effort, and economic data, because we're wanting to improve the accuracy, precision, and timeliness of all of those.

DR. BELCHER: Other comments? Okay, and so, with that amendment, everybody is okay now with moving forward on the purpose and need, as written? Okay.

MR. HADLEY: All right. Thank you for that, and we are going to move on, and I will mention - - Actually, before we leave the purpose and need, you know, just thinking ahead to what you'll see in December, the intent here is for -- You know, to get the council to come up with a draft purpose and need, and you'll have the IPT -- The IPT will meet and review it, and so I imagine that the IPT will have some suggestions, or maybe some potential edits, but so this is kind of the step one, and we'll come back to you in December, potentially with some IPT suggestions, but, you know, I wanted to get your thoughts first on paper, and I certainly appreciate that, and so that will be coming back next time.

Moving on, we're going to switch gears to the draft actions and alternatives, and, again, you'll see some of these actions are fairly well developed, and, you know, at this point, it's so early. Usually it's more at the conceptual stage. However, you know, trying to capture the motion that you made in June, that you did want to consider the actions that the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council is considering, I wanted to go ahead and fill out some of those alternatives a little bit, in some circumstances, and so that really kind of brings across the point of, you know, this is, at least at this point, what the Gulf is considering, and so that's why this is a little bit more developed than a lot of the scoping documents that you've seen.

With that said, I'll jump into the handful of actions that we have included in the discussion document, and so the first action is modifying the reporting frequency of fishing trips, and so the purpose of the action is to increase reporting frequency and improve monitoring and enforcement and increase the quality of reported data.

Essentially, what this would do is apply to vessels with a valid charter/headboat permit, regardless of whether they are in the Southeast Regional Headboat Survey or are reporting as a charter vessel, and so this is the whole for-hire program, and it would be looking at changing the reporting frequency, and so, currently, each trip must be reported. However, the trips must not -- There is essentially a weekly reporting deadline, and so reporting is required for each trip. However, the set of trips per week are not required until the following Tuesday of a Monday through Sunday reporting week, and so you're really looking at trip-level reporting, but on a weekly basis.

The other alternatives considered look at stepping up that weekly basis. Alternative 2 looks at reporting required after each trip, and so, instead of that weekly reporting, you're looking at reporting after each trip, with two subalternatives. Subalternative 2a would require reporting within thirty minutes of arriving at the dock, regardless of whether fish are harvested on a trip, and Alternative 2b would be require reporting prior to offloading, if fish are retained. If fish are not retained, then that thirty -- The reporting requirement within thirty minutes of arriving at the dock would apply, and so that's getting at that reporting prior to offloading provision that was -- That has been discussed several times, and it was in the letter that you received from SERO and the Science Center in June, and so that was one of the suggested additional elements to be added to the -- Potentially added to the program.

Alternative 3 is a similar measure, and it would step up that reporting basis. However, it would require daily reporting, and so at the end of the day, and not necessarily thirty -- It doesn't have that thirty-minute timeline after arriving at the dock, and so there would be daily reporting, and Subalternative 2 is the reporting would not be required before offloading fish. However, under Subalternative -- Sorry, and that should be 3b and 3a. If fish are harvested during the trip, electronic reporting is required prior to offloading, and so, again, that same provision in getting at that prior to offloading if fish are harvested on a trip.

I discussed mostly what -- You know, what's encompassed there. However, it is noted that Alternatives 2 and 3 are at least similar to the measures that are being considered by the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council. I will note that it's a little bit different here, since the Gulf is kind of starting from scratch again, and so, if you looked at their document, and you looked at this document, it's not necessarily mirroring each other, and so they're in a little bit of a different situation, but this is something that is being considered by the Gulf Council. What we're looking for here, as far as feedback from the council, is discuss the draft action, the range of alternatives, and is this something that you want to continue to consider for scoping.

DR. BELCHER: Tom.

MR. ROLLER: I think this range of alternatives is pretty comprehensive and good for what we should be considering here, and I'm supportive of them going forward as they look.

DR. BELCHER: Trish.

MS. MURPHEY: Yes, and I was just wondering -- The thirty minutes, if that might be a little tight, if maybe we consider sixty minutes, because I was just sort of thinking, and, Tom, you may be able to answer better, but I know we're discussing that with our mandatory reporting, having a reporting time before, you know -- Before hitting the dock, but I guess what I was thinking is, if you're at a busy dock, you know, trying to get out of the way, trying to get all your stuff together, if you might just need a little bit more time before you report, and so, anyway, just a thought, if thirty minutes might be a little tight.

DR. BELCHER: Tom and then Amy.

MR. ROLLER: So, first of all, I do like reporting, if fish are harvested, prior to offloading them, and I think that's going to get you the best accurate estimates, because that's when you've got everything right there in front of you, and you're probably counting stuff, and you're putting them in baskets, or I know that's what I do.

As far as the timeframe if fish are not harvested, whatever. I think we can hear from that at scoping. Thirty minutes, sixty minutes, ninety minutes, fifteen minutes, ten minutes, I think it's a little irrelevant, to be honest with you. I do like the idea of it being per trip, and not per day, because there are certain times of the year, particularly the busy season, when people are running two trips a day, and I know I do, but, you know, when you're busier, like that, and you're not harvesting fish, it's really not that much to ask people to do this, and it doesn't take that long, you know, particularly if you're used to it.

It's only going to take a couple of minutes, and so, regardless of the amount of time -- Yes, sure, thirty minutes might be tight, but that's what we're going to send this out to scoping for, and listen to our new AP, as well as our other APs.

MS. MURPHEY: That sounds good. I just know we've been having these discussions too, with our mandatory reporting, and the same thing. We wanted it reported before hitting the dock, you know, but we've been kind of going back and forth discussing that.

DR. BELCHER: Tom.

MR. ROLLER: So I think like that's interesting, and I know, with recreational fishermen, it might be a little bit different. For-hire guys tend to be pretty routine in how we do things, you know, and I think that's one reason why MRIP doesn't capture for-hire, particularly for-hire, fleets very well, just because we leave earlier, we leave later, and we leave from creative spots, just because it's just kind of built into our own efficiency of our business model, right, and so I think that, regardless of the time, people are going to figure out how to build that in, and I can -- I'm already envisioning a lot of different ways that I would be doing it, you know, subconsciously.

DR. BELCHER: Amy.

MS. DUKES: Wow. I hear you, Tom, and I'm definitely in support of increasing our reporting periodicity. I don't like the daily, because of that fact that trips do take -- Or boats do take more than one trip a day, and that's going to get a little complicated. I feel like there should be perhaps some additional alternatives that we haven't yet talked about, because of the fact of a potential Action 2, where there may be some trip notification. If there is a trip notification, to me, that is a sense of validation, and it would then allow the captains a little bit more time than thirty minutes after their trip to complete an entire trip record and submit it. I feel like there could be some middle ground here, maybe.

DR. BELCHER: Other comments? Tim and then back to Tom.

MR. GRINER: Thank you. You know, I agree that the thirty minutes is -- I mean, that's -- To me, that's not even plausible. I mean, from my perspective, and we know what we're doing, it takes us thirty minutes to even get our shoes on and get the boat tied up, before we even open the box, you know, and so I can imagine having a family, that half of them are sick, and they don't know where their towels are, and to get everything off the boat in thirty minutes, but, like Tom said, this is for scoping. You know, send it out for scoping, and it doesn't matter whether you put thirty minutes in there, or sixty minutes, or an hour, and it's just something to send out for scoping, to get some idea of what these captains think is a reasonable timeframe.

You know, they may say it's better for us if I can sit down at the end of the day, you know, and I've got my paper, you know, pad that I write everything down, and give me time to get home, you know, and take a shower, before I sit down and have to do paperwork, but I think those are things that -- That's why we send it to scoping, to flesh those out. Thank you.

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

MR. ROLLER: Well, I think the important thing is that, if fish are not harvested, reporting would need to occur within thirty minutes, and I think that's -- I don't think that's really -- Regardless of what the time is that we decide, but, from my own perspective, I can tell you that what gets more complicated than having to report at the end of one of two trips is trying to go back, three or four days later, or that night, and try to remember what you did that day, particularly when you're tired and busy. I think, if we're looking for timeliness and accuracy of data, asking people to do it pretty close to the end of the trip is probably too much to ask.

DR. BELCHER: I've got Judy, Charlie, and then Andy.

MS. HELMEY: I kind of agree with Tim. That's -- Thirty minutes is not a lot of time, plus I do -- Of course, I know it's going out to scoping and everything, but I really would like to be able to go home and do it then, because I have enough trouble filling it out as it is, and I'm part of the old people, and so I agree that we might need more time.

DR. BELCHER: Charlie.

MR. PHILLIPS: Thank you, Madam Chair. Like Tim said, this is going to scoping, and so I would put the widest range of alternatives in there that I could, and then sort them back, because, if we go to scoping, and the alternative range isn't big enough, then we've locked ourselves in, and so I would encourage us to put the widest range we can, because, you know, my guys are commercial guys, and, like Tim, you come in, and it takes a while to get everything sorted out, and then that's not even counting the fires that you have to put out, and maybe you've got an engine issue, or a leak has sprung on your boat, or any number of things, and there's always something, but I would encourage us to put a wide range of alternatives going to scoping.

DR. BELCHER: Andy.

MR. STRELCHECK: I agree with most of the comments, and so, you know, this is early in the process, and I think we could certainly ask people about that timeframe, and get input during the scoping process, and I agree with the range of alternatives. You know, one thing I will note, right, and so this timeframe for reporting is also, you know, helping with validation, in terms of, you know, kind of the --

I will say the mark-recapture methodology for surveys, right, and so what you want to avoid is people reporting because they're being sampled, or surveyed, right, but a port agent, right, and not reporting when that person isn't around and walking away from the dock without reporting those fish, right, and we know that there's going to be a small fraction of trips that are actually sampled, and so, the tighter that window is after a trip, right, the faster that data has to be entered into the system and completed, to avoid, you know, nonreporting from happening. Whether thirty minutes is the correct window, or sixty minutes, or something else, let's get comments from stakeholders.

DR. BELCHER: Tim.

MR. GRINER: I think, you know, the other thing that came to mind with me is, you know, we've given -- In this document, we've given them three alternatives to report. You know, they have eTRIPS/mobile, eTRIPS/online, and VESL. VESL is -- If you choose VESL, that is completely online. That means you have to have, you know, a computer, and you have to have an internet

connection, and I think, if somebody has VESL, I think you're going to be hard-pressed to make them report within thirty minutes, simply because of internet access and using that platform. You know, if you're going to put that kind of stringent timeframe on it, you're almost limiting everybody to a mobile platform.

DR. BELCHER: Amy.

MS. DUKES: Thank you, Madam Chair. To that point, Tim, there is a mobile application for VESL currently in the works, and so, based on this timeline, I think we would be able to have that pushed through and implemented by then.

MR. GRINER: Thank you for that. That's excellent.

DR. BELCHER: Okay, and so, circling back around, obviously, a lot of thoughts about whether the time window is right or not, but, given the fact that we have an alternative for reporting after a trip, reporting at the end of the day, and are there other options that we should be thinking about besides that? I think that's more to what John is looking for. Amy.

MS. DUKES: Again, just to kind of go back to that one-stop reporting, and be cognizant of other groups, other than the Gulf, that are also currently looking at changing for-hire requirements for reporting, and perhaps just have some of that, from an information standpoint, available for those scoping meetings as well. Thank you.

DR. BELCHER: Thanks for that, Amy. Okay. Anything further? All right. Seeing none, back to you, John.

MR. HADLEY: All right. Thank you. So we're going to move down to what would be Draft Action 2, and so this is looking at requiring trip notification for for-hire vessels, and, essentially, what this is requiring is that permitted for-hire vessels would provide notification to the National Marine Fisheries Service declaring the intent to initiate a for-hire or fishing trip, as well as return from a for-hire or fishing trip, or both. You know, this is looking at a hail-in and hail-out provision, essentially, a hail-in and/or hail-out provision.

If you look at this action, you know, currently, there is no hail-in or hail-out provision for federally -- For South-Atlantic-federally-permitted for-hire vessels. Alternative 2 would add this requirement, and so it would essentially be a trip declaration, and so departing and returning when engaged in any type of fishing or for-hire activity, and so this would cover essentially commercial fishing, going out for pleasure, and so, you know, personal -- I guess you would say in a private mode, and you're not necessarily in a for-hire capacity, but you are going fishing, and that would still require reporting, hail-in and hail-out, and any other, you know, trips, such as for bait, and so this is really looking at covering all fishing -- Requiring reporting for all fishing activity.

Then Alternative 3 is similar, and it would be any type of fishing activity, and so this would be for-hire fishing activity, private recreational vessels, as well as fishing trips for bait, and so what is missing -- Or I guess the difference here, if you will, what's missing in Alternative 3 is that other for-hire activity, and so, if it was going out on say a dolphin watching trip, or something like that, and that would not fall under the hail-in/hail-out provision or anything like that, and it would be

specifically focused on fishing, whereas, in Alternative 2, you're looking at any for-hire activity, as well as any fishing activity, and so that's your difference there between those two alternatives.

Again, these are measures that reflect similar measures that are being considered by the Gulf, and I will turn it over to the council to, you know, further discuss this action, and range of alternatives, and, you know, whether or not it's something that you want to continue to further develop for review in December for approval for scoping.

DR. BELCHER: Comments from the group? Kerry.

MS. MARHEFKA: I just have a question. NMFS has the capability to handle the volume of hail-ins and hail-outs of every boat that has a charter permit? I mean, we're talking boats that go charter fishing in Maine, that happen to have a dolphin -- Are fishing for dolphin, and they would have to call in every time, potentially, every trip they took, and there is the capacity to handle that?

DR. BELCHER: Amy.

MS. DUKES: It would be a part of the reporting, electronic reporting, platform, where they would actually have to go in and, in essence, start a trip, say that they're going fishing, or leaving port, and then what that fishing activity is going to look like through the application.

DR. BELCHER: I've got Jimmy and then Andy.

MR. HULL: Yes, and now you've included all commercial trips, and so basically anybody with a federal permit in these alternatives, and it says commercial, for-hire, private, any boat, anybody with a federal permit, is the way I read that.

DR. BELCHER: To that, Kerry?

MS. MARHEFKA: Yes, and it's my understanding that, if you have a federal for-hire permit and a commercial permit, and so, in my case, like I don't have a for-hire permit, and so I wouldn't have to do it, but, if you're dually-permitted in that area, you would have to.

MR. HULL: Okay. I'm not really opposed to the hail-out. I think it could be used as part of the validation effort, and, basically, you're initiating the trip report yourself right then, but -- You know, here I am hailing out on the report, on the app, and, you know, I think it's something that should be sent out there for scoping, to see what comes back from that.

DR. BELCHER: Andy.

MR. STRELCHECK: Yes, and so we've already built this for the Gulf, right, and so this is not something that's new to us. Yes, there's a lot of trips that would be reported, but we see this as a necessary requirement for that validation, right, because, when you know upfront that a trip is occurring, and it has hailed-out, you can then, on the backend, see did it report a logbook at the end of the trip or not, and we can follow-up directly when those trips are reported.

DR. BELCHER: Tim.

MR. GRINER: Maybe I got a little confused, and maybe Amy can clarify that, and so am I understanding right, correct, Amy, that the hail-out portion, or the starting of a trip, is the beginning of the -- Of your submission of your eTRIPS, or VESL, or your electronic reporting is the same mechanism you use for your hail-out? If so, has that -- Does that information -- It wouldn't even transfer until the actual report is submitted, which would be after the -- Which would be after that thirty minutes, or that daily, and so, if the hail-out is not being reported separately, what good is the hail-out?

DR. BELCHER: Amy, to that?

MS. DUKES: To that point, you are correct. It is technically a part of the actual trip report, but it is captured that, at this date, and at this time, the trip began, and so it's the metadata of the actual report is where it would be captured.

DR. BELCHER: Tom.

MR. ROLLER: These are valid points, but I think we're getting into more of a technical aspect of how a hail-out is reported, right, and so, I mean, if we're doing it -- I mean, I think that's a bigger data discussion, and I don't know if we need to really have that here, other than the idea of a hail-out, and I'm supportive of this going forward, because I think it's an important part of validation, you know, which goes back to agreeing with Jimmy's comment there.

I would, you know, also remind the council of previous discussions we had around this regarding, you know, the previous range of alternatives about what a hail-in would look like, versus a trip report, and I think we had some really good discussions on that, and, also, there was a lot of discussions about this, when this amendment was first created, you know, a decade ago, regarding what fishing activity would look like.

For example, if you're a boat like me, that fishes sometimes in federal waters and sometimes in state waters, you're still going to be reporting that state-water fishing activity, even if you're not using your permit, just simply for the fact that that's just a better way to capture the data of that fishing boat. Now, I do like the idea of, if there's no actual fishing activity, like if you're going for -- I don't know, and does collecting sand dollars count as fishing activity? But like, if you're doing something different like that, I do think that's a reasonable thing to have for people here, like ecotours and things that don't include harvesting of fish.

DR. BELCHER: Andy.

MR. STRELCHECK: So I just wanted to mention that Dr. Jessica Stephen is on the line, if, you know, we want her to talk about this in more detail, but maybe a better suggestion would be if, you know, the council has questions about mechanistically how we do this, and then I'm happy to offer a presentation, and further discussion, at the December council meeting.

DR. BELCHER: Other comments and discussion on this? Okay. Are people happy then with the current range of alternatives under this action? Okay. John.

MR. HADLEY: All right. Thank you, and we'll move on to what would be draft action -- Excuse me. Sorry. I totally missed some of the further discussion there. You know, I think we covered

a lot of that, as far as the fishing activity sort of range of alternatives that would be considered. As long as you're comfortable with, at least for scoping, having hail-in, and a potential hail-out, you know, that sort of consideration, it sounds like we can go ahead and send that out for scoping as well.

As far as the landing, the -- You know, I guess, as far as the landing location, that seems like something that the council is comfortable with considering, at least for scoping, sort of declaring essentially hail-out, and so saying you're initiating a fishing trip, and then hailing back in at a specific location, and that seems like kind of the range of alternatives that you're considering for scoping? I am seeing heads --

DR. BELCHER: Sorry. Jimmy.

MR. HULL: This is to -- I'm sorry to go backwards, but back to where my question with the commercial -- I would like to see a change in that language, to where it states dually-permitted vessels, so that, down the road, in scoping, it explains that better, or, like me, they're going to question it. So you have like Alternative 2, and it's for any sort of fishing trip, commercial, for-hire, private, or bait fishing, and commercial, or somehow put "dually-permitted commercial", and put "dually-permitted" in front of it.

DR. BELCHER: Kerry.

MS. MARHEFKA: I mean, you just have to be a little careful with that language, because "dually-permitted" also means like a GARFO permit and a SERO permit, and so there just needs to be some -- There's multiple means of "dually-permitted".

MR. HULL: Okay, but, the way it reads now, it just says "commercial, for-hire, private", and I think it would be an improvement to somehow state that, that it's multi-permitted.

MR. GRINER: I'm with Jimmy, that it's very confusing, and, in fact, I don't see why we can't just remove the word "commercial" altogether. We're not talking about commercial fishing here. We're talking about for-hire and the private rec, or we're talking about for-hire, really, and so I don't know why commercial is even in there. It has nothing to do with commercial fishing, and I would move to remove the word "commercial" from there.

DR. BELCHER: Andy.

MR. STRELCHECK: So, if you read the first part of the alternative, it's explicitly stating that it pertains to a valid charter vessel or headboat permit, right, and so, when we're talking about essentially the type of fishing activity, it's based on that boat having then other permits and declaring essentially what type of activity they're going to be conducting, right, and so they have to have, first and foremost, the federal for-hire permit, and then, if they're also commercially permitted, they would declare, at that point, that they're going commercial fishing, rather than for-hire fishing, and then that would notify us, for example, that we would not expect a for-hire logbook at that point, for that particular vessel, and you would report a commercial logbook, right, and so it's just essentially giving us the ability to distinguish what type of trip you're making and ensuring that we're validating correctly for the type of activity that you're conducting, no more and no less.

DR. BELCHER: Further comment to that? Tim.

MR. GRINER: Thank you for that clarification. That does help a lot, Andy, and I just wasn't looking at it that way, that you're trying to distinguish whether you're commercial fishing or for-hire fishing, but it seems like, to me, that would be all part of that report. You know, if you've got to hail-out, then you're hailing out as a for-hire.

DR. BELCHER: Jimmy.

MR. HULL: Yes, I get what you're after, but I still think the wording -- If you put, after any sort of fishing trip for vessels with commercial permits, for-hire permits, and use the term "permits", and holding these permits would have to report what type of trip they're -- What permit they're fishing under, and it's just going to be -- It's just confusing, and it's going to -- I can see it at the AP, and I think a further clarification would be better, but maybe it could be clarified verbally.

DR. BELCHER: Trish.

MS. MURPHEY: So I'm thinking the issue might just be the wording overall, because, the first time I reviewed this, I really didn't see a difference, and then, when I heard John explain it, I went, oh, I get that now, but now I'm still unsure that these are clear enough, because how I took it was say, Jimmy, you're going to go out to fish your pots off your charter boat, but somebody decides -- You know, asks can I pay you to take me out with you, as a charter, to go fish your pots, and then you sell your catch, but, at the same time, you will give me some fish, and so that's how I actually took that part, because we actually do have some trips, in North Carolina, that people pay people to take them -- They pay commercial guys to take them gillnetting or trawling, and so that's what I thought it was, but now I'm back to unclear again, because, from Andy, it just sounds like we're just trying to differentiate trips. Anyway, my take-home, at this point, is, somehow, all of this needs to be clarified, because I'm confused again.

DR. BELCHER: Andy.

MR. STRELCHECK: I agree with Trish and Jimmy and others, and so my recommendation is to ask the IPT, John, to work on some revised language, based on this discussion, to clarify the intent.

DR. BELCHER: Thanks for that, Andy. Amy.

MS. DUKES: Thanks for that, Andy, and I think I would also ask for some clarity too with respect to when a for-hire trip changes to a commercial trip, based on the first fish over the rail, and that might cause some confusion, too. For instance, in North Carolina, if you are on a recreational for-hire trip, and you land a giant bluefin, sometimes those trips change categories while you're fishing, and so that could be something to take into consideration.

I guess, just from a perspective -- A question for you, Andy, and is there any way that a trip declaration would only be required if in fact the charter boat, or the headboat, was utilizing their for-hire activity, or is that just not going to be at a sufficient enough use for validation, meaning you wouldn't have to say that I'm going for bait, or I'm going for a pleasure cruise.

DR. BELCHER: Andy.

MR. STRELCHECK: I mean, I'm not opposed to considering that. I think, you know, the -- It reduces the burden on fishermen, in terms of the amount they have to report, right, but it does open up potentially some additional loopholes, in terms of activity that may not then be reported, if people aren't submitting, you know, their declarations appropriately.

DR. BELCHER: Amy.

MS. DUKES: I think is something that's probably worth the utility of thinking about an additional alternative to do that. It's a huge way for us to buy-in these changes with our for-hire community, and, again, finding that middle ground, saying, hey, we need you to do this, and kind of meet us in the middle, and I'm just wondering if that sort of alternative would help with some buy-in, as we start to promote this and push this through.

DR. BELCHER: Andy.

MR. STRELCHECK: You know, based on Amy's comments, I'm wondering if we could just design it with some subalternatives, right, the kind of everything, versus a narrower scope, like you're suggesting, and then that gives us options to choose from, going forward.

DR. BELCHER: Other thoughts? John, is that helpful?

MR. HADLEY: Absolutely, and so I have notes on direction to staff, and some points for the IPT to flesh out, and so I appreciate that, and, you know, this will look a little bit different the next time you see it in December, and so thank you.

Moving along to Action 3, this is an action that would establish approved landing locations for for-hire vessels, and so this would be a preapproved, essentially, landing location to offload fish, or to offload passengers, and, really, the idea here is that it would improve the ability of the agency to enforce and monitor compliance and reporting, as well as conduct a validation survey, and so, currently, there is no approved landing provision for federally-permitted for-hire vessels, for South-Atlantic-permitted vessels, and so we're looking for some feedback. We'll be looking some feedback. If you do want to pursue this, what sort of alternatives you may want to consider, sort of a range.

You know, presumably, if there was an Alternative 2, where you do have preapproved landing locations, it would mandate that the charter or headboat vessels offload clients, or harvested catch, at preapproved locations that are readily accessible to law enforcement or survey technicians.

The recent permit -- One thing to consider is, you know, looking over to the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council, and you do have several dually-permitted vessels, and so, ideally, these provisions would line up with the Gulf of Mexico, but, also, looking north, you do have different provisions, or would potentially have different provisions, for vessels located in the Mid-Atlantic or New England regions, and there's a considerable amount of overlap there.

I pulled some information from the for-hire papers that you have reviewed, and for-hire discussion documents, and this is a bit dated information, but, as of 2020, you had approximately 14 percent

of your vessels, South-Atlantic-permitted vessels, were homeported in the Gulf of Mexico. However, looking north, you had about 12 percent that were located in the Mid-Atlantic or New England regions, and so you have considerable -- That's just to say you have considerable overlap of both regions, and preapproved landing locations would need to sort of have that full geographic scope, most likely. You know, that's just kind of food-for-thought and further discussion.

You know, as far as the committee action here, we're looking for whether or not you do want to consider this, and consider developing it for scoping, and, you know, just as far as a discussion question, and starting to think through some of the details on how we would like to develop, or you would like to develop, your alternatives in this action, noting that the coastal migratory pelagic and dolphin-wahoo-permitted vessels may be outside of the region, particularly to the north, and, you know, we would have to work toward preapproving locations for those permitted vessels, and potentially consider a request that NMFS provide information on how landing locations were approved in the Gulf of Mexico.

This is something that the Gulf Council, and the National Marine Fisheries Service, has gone through in the Gulf of Mexico, before the program was essentially stopped, but, you know, it's not the first time that this has been developed, and so that may be some additional information, if you're interested, that could be provided, perhaps in December or at a subsequent meeting.

DR. BELCHER: Tom.

MR. ROLLER: You know, our fishing fleets vary across the country, and a lot of it is just geographic, right, and like this would make sense for some areas of the country. I think, in the Southeast, it's really unrealistic to expect this. It's also unrealistic to expect this, because, here across all the states we manage, we're seeing -- I hate to use the term "gentrification", but we're losing shoreside infrastructure very quickly, and so it would be a struggle to have any sort of preapproved locations.

Now, that being said, that doesn't mean that I want to have this removed. I think it's important for stakeholders to see what the options for validation would look like. I think it's really unrealistic for this, and, you know, I'm really curious to hear what the other thoughts on the council is, but I'm not inclined to remove it, because I think people need to see the full range of what could be considered, because, when we talk about looking at buy-in, having daily reporting looks -- Or hail-in and hail-out looks a lot better than this, right, and so --

DR. BELCHER: Andy.

MR. STRELCHECK: Tom, can you clarify why you think this is unrealistic?

MR. ROLLER: I think back to my county, and I'm not saying it's unrealistic for everywhere, and we have a really diverse fleet, that leaves from a lot of different places, and we've got twenty-foot boats, and we've got sixty-foot boats, and we've got big boat ramps, and we've got small boat ramps. and we've got people leaving from private marinas. When you look at areas like southeastern North Carolina, it's really, really scattered across our counties, right?

Now, you go up to like Dare County, North Carolina, and the fishing fleets are very concentrated, regarding around a few marinas, whether you're in Hatteras or you're in, you know, Oregon Inlet,

or Pirates Cove, and that would be more realistic up there, but I think -- You know, I imagine, maybe in Georgia, you're a little bit more concentrated, and I don't know, because you're a smaller coastline. That's why I would say it would be unrealistic, but I'm just looking from my perspective, from my region of North Carolina.

DR. BELCHER: I've got Andy, to that, Kristin, and then Amy.

MR. STRELCHECK: I mean, thanks for that, Tom, and so I first agree, right, that this is scoping, and we should keep it in. I think it's worth considering. You know, I think the biggest challenges we've had with landing locations have been mostly the issues of access, versus private properties, and being able to get port agents, or law enforcement, onto a specific property, but, in terms of what, Tom, you're describing, I guess I think of landing locations as --

As long as, you know, we've done a good job of encompassing the depth and breadth and diversity of landing locations, right, and that they're in the system already, then there's that opportunity for fishermen to utilize any landing location that's preapproved, right, and so, whether you're leaving from a small dock, or a large marina, or a boat ramp, right, as long as those have been preapproved, you have that flexibility to come and go from those areas, using those preapproved landing locations, and so I'm not sure it's as restrictive as people might think, and it's really -- The key is, upfront, making sure we have gathered sufficient information on all of the landing locations that would possibly be used by the for-hire fleet.

DR. BELCHER: I've got Kristin, then Amy, then Kerry, and then Tom, and then Tim.

MS. FOSS: I appreciate those comments. I think the council would just have to weigh if this is one of the most important parts of our validation, and whether it's absolutely necessary, or too overly burdensome, and, if we were going to continue with this, I would be interested in hearing how it was previously implemented in the Gulf SEFHIER program, and how they went about looking at this preapproved landing notifications.

DR. BELCHER: Amy.

MS. DUKES: Thanks. Kristin, I had a very similar thought process, as well as how they were able, in the Gulf, to quantify this, and perhaps even the idea of looking at current trip locations that are being provided in SEFHIER, and determining a percentage of those that would be likely considered an approved location, versus an unapproved location, and I just feel like we need to be able to, even for scoping, justify the need for this a little bit better, in numbers, than just it would be nice.

DR. BELCHER: Kerry.

MS. MARHEFKA: I'm curious. If we move forward with this, are we going to find out, from law enforcement, that we also need approved landing hours, or is it only commercial fishermen who are dangerous after sunset?

DR. BELCHER: Andy, to that?

MR. STRELCHECK: Well, I appreciate the smartass response, but, with the hail-out provision, you are declaring a time when you're returning to the dock, and so they are providing that information, Kerry.

DR. BELCHER: To that?

MS. MARHEFKA: To that, in the wreckfish fishery, they're also saying what time they're coming back to the dock, but they are limited to having to be back to the dock by -- I forget what we landed on, 6:00 p.m., I believe, and so there needs to be some continuity, and, if you recall, in the wreckfish plan, we found that out, that need out, well into the process, and so, if we're going down this road, I would like to know what the pitfalls are now, regarding enforcement.

DR. BELCHER: Tom.

MR. ROLLER: So, first of all, Kristin, thank you. Your comments were excellent, and I completely agree with you, and I think that's the way to go forward, and I also appreciate Andy's comments, in response to what I said, and that's a really interesting way of looking at it, and I'm much more supportive of the idea in how you explained it, and I'm glad that we're having this discussion, and I guess my kind of like philosophical question here is, is this sort of having like a huge range of preapproved locations -- Is that a way to capture some of this fishing effort that is leaving from very private docks, whether it's a private residence or something that really isn't accessible to the public, and, if that is an issue, and we have that discussion, I think that's a very valid way of looking at this.

DR. BELCHER: Tim.

MR. GRINER: Thank you. To Andy's comments, and I can kind of see that working in certain areas, but, you know, from my observations, from where I am, you know, observing the charter guys there around me, and in my area, and there's really no place that you could do a preapproved place. I mean, everybody is -- Almost everyone is in a private area, and they're private docks. The one marina that is there is completely full, and they have a fuel dock, but you're not -- They're not going to allow -- They would not allow charters just to come in and go all day long and unload at a fuel dock.

There is no place. There literally is no place that you could preapprove and that guys with charters could just come and go all day long and unload. Just the infrastructure, just really and truly, is not there, not in the entire county where I fish, and so I -- You know, I don't know where these guys would go. You know, physically, I don't know where that approved place would be.

DR. BELCHER: Judy.

MS. HELMEY: Thank you, Madam Chairman. I kind of agree with Tim, because, in our area, if you don't have -- If you aren't paying rent at a marina, you're not allowed to unload and load there, and now they have stopped the charter boats from unloading and loading at the public ramps, some of them, and so I don't know what -- I don't know how you get approved areas, and I run out of my house, which you could -- I would assume mine is approved, since the DNR comes and checks me all the time, and the federal people, and so I don't know how we would do that.

DR. BELCHER: Okay, and so, circling comments back up, Tom, and then we'll talk to what John has.

MR. ROLLER: Well, first of all, I'm very curious to hear how charter boats are no longer allowed to load and unload at launches, and so let's have a discussion there, and it's something that I'm scared of. I guess, you know, from my own perspective, you know, I'm in a mid-sized private marina, and I think there's probably 150 boats, and there's three charter boats, and so, you know, I think about -- There's a lot of circumstances like that, right, where there's maybe a marina with a hundred private boats, and there's three or four charter boats, and so I -- As long as we have some sort of program that allows some of these places to be -- If we have a wide range of preapproved locations, I think that's going to be more palatable, because, if I have to start leaving my marina, and adding in an hour every day to go meet people at -- Or unload or meet people at different spots -- One of the reasons why I am where I am is because I have good parking, and good places to clean fish, which is a really important aspect in the for-hire industry.

DR. BELCHER: Andy.

MR. STRELCHECK: So I'll go back to the earlier comment and just suggest -- I think we're getting to a level of detail here where it's important to have a presentation, and a discussion, of maybe how this has been implemented in the Gulf, what it looks like, what it could look like in the South Atlantic, address the concerns around the table, as well as, you know, provide better understanding for council members to decide whether we want to go forward with a provision or not like this, and so I just propose that, that we bring something back in December along those lines.

DR. BELCHER: Kerry.

MS. MARHEFKA: A quick comment, and I think this action is a really good sort of example of why it's going to be really important that, when we scope this, we really need to do a good job at scoping north of us, and, obviously, this is sort of already happening in the Gulf, and doesn't pertain to that in this, but, for the Mid-Atlantic and New England, I think we're going to have to do a lot of outreach, to get people at scoping, because I think this will affect them in quite a different way.

DR. BELCHER: Fair enough. Okay, and so we were talking about actions -- For scoping purposes, the alternatives, or the depth to which we want to investigate, and no additional ones to think about? Okay. Back to you, John.

MR. HADLEY: All right. Thank you. This is the last action we have in here, and then the next one is just kind of turning it over to you for a few discussion questions, but this last draft action will require participation in the validation survey, and so the purpose of the action is independent validation of electronic reports would improve the utility of catch information for estimation.

However, essentially, a validation survey, in addition to requiring that catch be reported prior to offloading, as proposed under Action 2, would meet the Southeast Fisheries Science Center requirements for data obtained through SEFHIER to be used in management decisions, and so that's all to say that what this is doing is, right now, any sort of validation survey that were to be implemented would be voluntary, and so, you know, you could have a lot of noncompliance with

that, and what this action is doing is making any sort of validation, participation in a validation survey, if selected, mandatory.

This is essentially helping with making that validation survey useful in management, and so, currently, there is no mandatory participation in a validation survey, and, under Alternative 2, if selected by the Southeast Fisheries Science Center, participation in the validation survey would be mandated, under the permit provisions, essentially. Really, we're just looking for input of do you want to consider this for scoping, and further developing it, and, if you do, you'll see it again in December.

DR. BELCHER: Okay. Comments from the group? Tim.

MR. GRINER: Yes, and I really like -- I think it's very important. I would just ask Andy, or maybe even Clay or someone, and what level of participation, you know, whether it's randomly selected or however it's selected, but what level of participation, and say a percentage of permits, would that require to be validated for use?

DR. BELCHER: Andy, and then Amy.

MR. STRELCHECK: I mean, I don't know if there's any exact number. Obviously, the more the better. I think, in the Gulf of Mexico, when we had the validation surveys up and running, we were targeting upwards of 5 percent, and closer to 10 percent, of trips sampled, and so it's still a small fraction, but it's very costly to do validation surveys, and, obviously, the greater we can increase that percentage, the more accuracy we would have in estimation.

DR. BELCHER: Amy.

MS. DUKES: Thanks, Madam Chair. I take it that this validation survey would be specific to the permit holder, which may not be the permit operator for that trip, and so I see some disconnects there, and I guess I go back to, when MRIP is in play, during a for-hire trip, the interview is to the anglers, and the logbook reporting is from the captain, and so I don't want the disconnect that can happen from an out-of-state angler not understanding exactly what fish they caught, released, what have you, during the MRIP intercept, to then come back and negatively impact the trip, and/or the validation survey, that is then conducted with the captain and/or the permit holder. I'm curious as to how this would be beneficial, and, if you could go into a little bit more detail, that would be helpful for my understanding.

DR. BELCHER: Clay, or Andy, anything to that? Andy.

MR. STRELCHECK: I mean, not directly to that, and I think the concern I have is mostly is this the right range of alternatives, and, you know, selection by the Science Center -- To me, it's kind of like we should have an all or nothing thing here, right, and either everyone has to participate in the survey, or not, because, when we validate, we're doing random, you know, validation, and we're not going to be selecting a vessel and going out and finding it to try to validate it, but I want to make sure that it's consistent with our legal authority to collect that data and sample those trips and come up with the correct wording, and terminology, for the alternatives, and so I think there's more work to be done to refine this action.

DR. BELCHER: Amy.

MS. DUKES: Sorry, sir, but I still don't understand how -- Can you give an example of a current validation survey that is in place someplace else that would be applicable to this particular action that we're considering, and how it's conducted, and I'm just trying to figure out what kind of questions you ask, during a survey to a federally-permitted charter vessel, who potentially has been intercepted by MRIP, and has angler catch information, as well as has done an electronic logbook, and so what else are you asking in this survey to then bring those components together?

DR. BELCHER: Andy.

MR. STRELCHECK: I mean, I'm not the one doing the surveys, and I don't know that level of detail, and so that would be something that we could certainly bring back and talk about as well, in terms of some of the differences in terms of MRIP survey methodology in the Gulf, versus the directed for-hire validation that we were doing in the Gulf of Mexico. We have talked about, you know, the ability for economies of scale, and are there ways to, obviously, combine those two, and I think there's opportunities there.

DR. BELCHER: Tom.

MR. ROLLER: I would like to see something brought forward to see how this would work. I think I would really appreciate that, and I do agree with Andy's comment that this should be kind of all or nothing. This is not too much to ask for people to participate in, and I don't like the idea of people being able to opt-out. It is a privilege to fish in federal waters, and it is a privilege to make money off of the natural resources of this country, and so I don't really think it's that much to ask people to do that, but, that being said, I would love to see some examples of programs and how they're done.

DR. BELCHER: Other comments?

MS. DUKES: It's just another level of burden, and I'm just trying to figure out is it useful, and does it have a good intent, because, if it doesn't, then why are we doing it?

DR. BELCHER: Other comments? I do think the way I look at this is from the higher perspective, right, and we require -- We have a similar requirement on our commercial fleet, and I understand there's a little bit of a different component, because you're talking about limited space, and all of the detail that goes into that part of it, but the fact that, right now, if we wanted to do that, we have to ask, and people can say no, and so this at least gives us that ability to engage them to collect the data, if the opportunity is needed, and we just have to figure out the details of how that works at a later time.

I mean, we're kind of talking about that, but I'm not 100 percent sure how it's all going to fly, but I do think that's the one thing -- With this, it's, oh, well, if we could get observers on the boats, and it's like, but we can't compel them to do that right now, but, if you hold a federal shrimper's license, shrimp fishing license, trawler license, and the Science Center says you need to take an observer, the language is in there, under that permit, that they have to take an observer. I think this just basically gives us that ability to get that in there, and it doesn't say we're going to enact

it, but, if we can, and if we can afford it, and it's the right way to do it, it's the option on the table.
Tim.

MR. GRINER: Yes, I agree, and, you know, without digging into it, and I was kind of, first, wanting to get to, you know, what is a minimum, but, when you look at the wording, it does say "if selected", and so, you know, the Science Center could select everybody, and so they could select a certain subset, or they could just select everybody and say everybody is mandated to participate, and so I do like the idea of the mandate.

You know, you can't just -- It can't just be you have the choice to do it, and so, you know, the more I think about it, and the more I look at it, it's -- You know, to me, the overarching goal is to make it usable, so that the amount of people selected is enough to use, and however many needs to be selected, and that's what the Science Center will have to figure out, and, you know, it may be a moving target. They may -- You know, they may get halfway through a season, or three-quarters of the way through a season, and not need to select anybody else, because they have enough to validate. Thank you.

DR. BELCHER: Well, again, just a reminder that this just puts the frame in, and it doesn't -- Because observers don't get put on shrimp trawlers that frequently right now, because there isn't the monies to do that, and so all it is is giving us the tool that, when we can, because, right now, it's we can ask, but they can tell us no. If we at least have this in there, and we ask, they have to, as a condition of having the permit. Clay, you had your hand up?

DR. PORCH: Yes, and I'm just kind of struggling to see how this would work, short of, you know, mandatory participation for all, and, just stepping back, I mean, we always talk about, you know, we need better data, but, when we get into the details of providing better data, then there's a lot of pause given, and I do get that it's more burden, but I think Tom makes a great point, that we're at a stage now where, you know, clearly we need better data, and lots of people are complaining about it, but, when push comes to shove, people want to give it only on limited terms, and so I think we really need to move forward with this.

What I'm concerned about, in terms of this selecting only of a fraction of the fleet to participate in this is I don't see how you're doing the validation. We certainly wouldn't want to say you're selected, and then we're going to go and spot-check your catches, and somehow imagine that's validating, and that wouldn't be validating, and so that's where the random component is, where everybody is expected to report, and then you have, you know, whether it's port agents at the dock, or what have you, but somebody randomly inspecting the catch, and thereby seeing how well what they find at the docks matches up with what's being reported.

DR. BELCHER: Okay. Other comments? Jimmy.

MR. HULL: Just to that point, the port agents, and that's what we need, is a lot more of those, and intercepts, and so a lot of the problems that we're trying to solve here could be solved with port agents, and I realize that takes a lot of money, but so does observers and all these other things, and there's issues everywhere, but a port agent -- I mean, we rarely see a port agent at my dock, and we're at a private marina, and we land at the same slip every trip, and, generally, when I get a port agent, it's because I've notified them that I want them to come and take biological samples, and so -- But port agents could be something that could cure a lot of our problems, I believe.

DR. BELCHER: Clay.

DR. PORCH: I certainly think that would be helpful, and I also would love to see, you know, more observers on vessels, so we get better estimates of discards, but the bottom line is I'm not hearing people clamoring to appropriate the funding for expanding observer coverage, or expanding port agents, and that's the real challenge, which is why these kinds of mandatory reporting amendments are really important, because I'm not seeing the resources coming down the pike to expand, you know, the number of port agents or observers.

DR. BELCHER: Okay. Other comments or questions? Is everybody in support of continuing with this action and the alternatives? Are there any other alternatives we need to consider? Okay. Seeing none, John.

MR. HADLEY: All right. Thank you. Switching gears here a little bit more, and so we're out of the existing draft actions, and there are a few sort of other items, whether or not you want to consider them, and so first up is did-not-fish reports, and so, in the letter that was sent to you in June, it was -- It mentions the need for weekly submission of did-not-fish reports.

However, there is currently a did-not-fish report requirement in place, and so the requirement is already in place, where vessels must submit these reports by the Tuesday of the following fishing week. However, they can also be submitted up to thirty days in advance, and so, you know, we're asking for a little bit of clarification there on whether or not this needs to be an action in the amendment or if what is in existence is adequate.

I will mention that the Gulf Council was not considering did-not-fish reports. However, they probably will be in the near future, I believe, per their last discussion, and so that will probably be something that will be coming up before that council. HMS is considering monthly did-not-fish reports in their requirement, and you will be receiving a presentation from them on that in December, and then, also, to sort of throw it into the mix, considering your vessels to the north, in the Greater Atlantic Region.

There was a recent white paper developed by NMFS GARFO that recommended against implementing did-not-fish reports altogether, and so there are sort of different -- Amy brought up the sort of one-stop reporting, and how that may be going in different directions, and this sort of gets to that idea, is that you may -- You're going to be working with different areas of -- Different requirements, depending on the region or how the vessel is permitted for these did-not fish reports, and so, you know, that's all to say does the council want to consider changes to your existing did-not-fish report requirements, and, if so, what kind of changes do you envision?

DR. BELCHER: Tom.

MR. ROLLER: I'm really curious to learn more about this from a technical standpoint, to how we need it, and so, when I think about did-not-fish reports, I view them -- You know, with weekly reporting, they seem kind of important, I guess, and, I mean, what I don't like about it is the fact that there's a lot of people just putting in did-not-fish reports because they don't feel like reporting, right, and so I'm curious of how this would be integrated in with daily reporting, or multi-trip reporting, and how this would be needed.

I'm also cognizant of the fact that it's used to get around being able to put trips in, and so I'm curious to hear about more technical things, and I don't know if that's something that we can determine here at the council, and so I think we just need a little bit more information on that. If it's needed, I don't see an issue with it, but, again, I'm more curious to see like how this could be utilized going forward with the different sort of reporting timelines we're looking at.

DR. BELCHER: Tim.

MR. GRINER: Yes, and it's kind of interesting here, and, you know, I guess I'm very curious to learn more why, you know, the Southeast Fisheries -- Or NMFS and the Southeast Fisheries Center feels the need for the submission of DNF reports, but NMFS GARFO does not, and that, even within the South Atlantic Science Center, that the Gulf is not considering did-not-fish reports, and so I guess I would maybe want a little bit more clarification as to why does -- Why do we think it's necessary in the South Atlantic, but nowhere else?

DR. BELCHER: Clay.

DR. PORCH: I think we think it's useful everywhere else, and it's not the most critical component of the program, but it's another tool, and certainly it would help if there is some enforcement. In other words, if someone is caught filing did-not-fish reports, but they've been observed fishing, something should happen, but it's just another tool to try and keep -- To help make sure that the effort is being reported accurately.

DR. BELCHER: Andy.

MR. STRELCHECK: Yes, and I'm not up-to-speed on all the rationale for why GARFO is recommending not using did-not-fish reports, and so I think this is another component to a December council presentation that we could discuss, but my understanding is that the VTRs aren't being used for management purposes at this point in the Northeast as well, and so that is, you know, another consideration, is how is it being used for management, and what is the intent of the did-not-fish reports.

As Clay just pointed out, you know, from our perspective, this is another validation, so that, if we don't see trips coming in, we do know then that the vessel has to report, at least on some periodic basis, to say that I wasn't fishing, and that then tells us to not even look for logbooks. There are potentially, obviously, loopholes in the system, and a lot of that, to me, is also problematic when you have an open-access permit and people can just submit all of those at the end of the permitting process, in order to get permitted again.

DR. BELCHER: Kerry.

MS. MARHEFKA: I mean, we're never going to close every loophole, and, Tom, I understand sort of your rationale behind a flurry of DNF reports when your permit is due, but I have to say, as someone who reports, I actually find them useful. There are times, I will admit, that I am not perfect, and imagine that, and forget to send in a report, or, you know, it doesn't get from the boat to me, and, when I have to go back and make sure that I've reported weekly, checking those DNF weeks are really important for me to validate the weeks that I did fish, and so I personally am a

fan of it. When I found out about the GARFO report, I was sort of dismayed, because I don't like the idea of moving away from them. I think they're a good tool, and I'm supportive of having them remain.

DR. BELCHER: I know, from Georgia's perspective, from the commercial side, that was how we used to determine if people were arrears or not, and so at least, with the did-not-fishing report, we're not going to send a law enforcement officer to your house, after sixty days, to tell you that you're delinquent, when you could have been in the hospital, sick or whatever, and not able to turn them in. You know, that would have kept that from happening. Tom.

MR. ROLLER: So, to clarify my comments earlier, I'm definitely not opposed to did-not-fish reports. I see the utility of them, but I'm just asking how we can close some of the current loopholes, which I believe are a problem, right, and I think that maybe we do that with different reporting -- You know, going from weekly to daily reporting, and I do -- There's a couple of things.

You know, I really appreciate Andy clarifying that this could be a really good validation tool, and I really like what Clay said, and I think that's a question for enforcement, and how it's utilized. If people are putting did-not-fish reports in, and they're intercepted by MRIP, or seen in for-hire fishing activity, I think that -- I'm curious if that has some utilization, and if that's, you know, some sort of -- If that's an aspect of validation, I think I'm certainly supportive of it.

DR. BELCHER: Jimmy.

MR. HULL: Thank you. I just like to look at it as a practical application of how it's used. I have three dually-permitted vessels, and two of them never charter fish, and so, obviously, to comply, I have to go in there and hit the did-not-fish reports, and so, I mean, it's definitely a tool that I have to use, and you've already explained that in other ways too, but that's how I use them.

DR. BELCHER: Okay. Other comments or direction for staff on this one? Amy.

MS. DUKES: Madam Chair, it sounds like the council does still want to consider did-not-fish reports, but perhaps consider looking at other reporting mechanisms, and their proposed timeframe, so that we, again, try to keep that one-stop in mind, and I guess, while I've got the mic, I do support Andy's recommendation of having some sort of SEFHIER presentation provided to us, and, in addition to that, I would also ask that, if there are any one-stop published guidelines, that I have not been able to find online, that might be able to be provided as well, and I think some of those understandings of what the one-stop intent from the service was, and how we can be thinking about that in these amendments, would be helpful. Thank you.

DR. BELCHER: Okay. Other comments, or questions, on non-fishing reports? John, do you need more, or are you good?

MR. HADLEY: No, and I appreciate that, and we will -- You know, it sounds like we'll keep it in the discussion lineup for now, and we'll have additional information for you in December. Moving along, a few other points to hit, really quick, before we wrap-up the discussion, the Gulf Council is considering changes to the economic component, or, well, what would be changes to the economic component.

The economic component of the logbook would differ, essentially, between the Gulf Council and the South Atlantic Council, potentially, and so the Gulf Council is considering an action that may implement a random sampling design, rather than a census approach, to the economic questions that are being asked on the logbook, and so, essentially, the census approach is reporting on every trip, and the sampling design would be a report on a certain number of trips, if selected, and so the random sampling design, and so that would be a change.

The range being considered by the Gulf Council, at least for now, is 10 to 33 percent of the for-hire trips that would have sort of the economic add-on questions, trip-based questions, on there, and so, you know, a question for you, as the council, is do you want to consider an action that would sort or mirror what the Gulf is considering and change from the current census approach that is in place for the economic-related questions?

DR. BELCHER: Tom.

MR. ROLLER: So, when this was first approved, this was a big sticking point at the council, and I think -- I understand the need for it, and, I mean, a lot of us that know how the data is being collected know that it's really not too much to ask people like what their revenue was, or how much -- Particularly how much gas they're using. Big deal, right, and, actually, it's kind of helpful to put that in there, particularly, you know -- Particularly, because it just gives you kind of a record of that stuff, but I think going to kind of a random sampling design is a really good way to do this.

It's also a really good way to capture better buy-in. If you're not being asked this all the time, it doesn't seem like an invasive question of data. If it's just a random sampling here or there, and it's on a certain percentage of trips, I think it's a great way to get better buy-in on this, but it's also important to note that this data is important, because, if we are going to collect this data for management, the data we're collecting is not just about catch and discards and effort, but it's also about the economic impact of this industry, which can be used in a lot of different ways, and, since it's such a valuable industry, and it's often a lot of our operators, or at least I hear this, as a manager, that the for-hire industry feels -- I'm trying to think of the right word here. Not appreciated enough, and I think that's because we don't have a good capture of their economic data, and so, like I've always mentioned before, as well as like, you know, disaster declarations and stuff, and I think having this sort of data, in some sort of form, that also encompasses good buy-in from our stakeholders, is important.

DR. BELCHER: Trish.

MS. MURPHEY: I was going to say I support having a random sampling of the economic data, really just the same as Tom. You know, it's important data, and we are hearing more about fishery disasters, and climate change and all that, and it's all going to be a benefit in those areas. One thing I wanted to just kind of point out as well is so, we were talking about the stringent, the less stringent, and the yes and no, it was because the economic questions were different in one area than the other, and was that right, or --

MR. HADLEY: So yes, and so that was in relation to the GARFO-permitted vessels, and so they -- You know, under the GARFO regulations, they're filling out VTRs, but then, if they have the South Atlantic permit -- The VTRs don't have that economic component, and so that was considered more stringent, since the South Atlantic does have the economic component, and so

those vessels were being asked to also report that information, if that makes sense, and so that basically was the deciding point on whose reporting requirements were more stringent.

MS. MURPHEY: Okay, because I thought maybe it was different questions, but, anyway, I was just thinking that it might be good to just see what the other programs have, as far as questions, so that maybe there is some consistency across, I guess, the Gulf and Atlantic, as far as those economic questions, because I think, in the long run, that's probably going to be a good thing, especially when we are dealing with climate change and, you know, fish moving north and everything, and so I think that would just be an added benefit.

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

MS. FOSS: Just to reiterate that requiring these economic questions is really important for Florida, especially for fisheries disaster declarations. Following the requirements of the new Fisheries Resource Disasters Improvement Act, we really need this economic information, and, if we were going to look at, you know, more of a random sample, could we maybe get -- You know, understand more of what would the tradeoff be, if we're looking at random sample versus the current census approach.

DR. BELCHER: Andy.

MR. STRELCHECK: Good discussion around the table, and so, Kristin, I really appreciate your comments just now, because I was going to make that same point, right, that we now have expanded requirements under, you know, disasters, to allow for for-hire impacts to be considered, and so having a full census, versus a sampling, benefits, obviously, the states, in helping all of their stakeholders that are impacted by natural disasters.

I also want to thank Tom for his comments, right, because the issue has been really a sticky wicket in the Gulf of Mexico, you know, and Tom mentioned that it's not heavily burdensome, and there is benefits to that data, and I am not opposed to, you know, at this early stage, considering the same alternatives as the Gulf. I will just acknowledge that the Gulf is going down this path in part because of the lawsuit, losing the lawsuit, but they had the same economic questions as the South Atlantic, and we lost on an Administrative Procedures Act claim, which is essentially saying we should have, you know, more clearly laid out what questions we were going to be asking charter captains in the rulemaking process, right, which is very different than we're not authorized to collect census data for economic purposes.

The main concern that I've brought up in the Gulf of Mexico is, if we do some sort of random survey of some percentage of the fleet, how does that get implemented, what is the administrative burden and cost on the agency then, because we're kind of taking it off of the fishermen, but putting it on the agency, and can that be done through an electronic system or not, because, if it goes outside the electronic system, where the census is being done, then that's going to certainly drive up costs in order to even conduct that work for the agency, and so some tradeoffs to consider, but I'm certainly not opposed, for the scoping phase, to look at this.

DR. BELCHER: Tom and then Amy.

MR. ROLLER: So, Kristin, thank you for your comments, and you really articulated this need from the states really well, because this isn't just about disaster declaration, and it's also about fisheries disasters. When we talk about impacts of climate change, we have the potential to have some huge impacts to our fisheries, and I think that's really important, because, just for me to tell a story here, which I've probably told before, but, you know, we -- The State of North Carolina was really impacted by Hurricane Florence in 2018.

We had a fisheries -- You know, a natural resource fisheries disaster declaration, and those funds were not distributed until 2022. The people that really needed that money in the for-hire -- That was for the for-hire industry. The commercial industry has better data, and stuff was distributed much earlier, but we had to -- The state had to develop a program, and it had to approve stuff, and, while there were some delays due to COVID, which are fair, the people in the industry that really needed that support -- A lot of them were gone by the time that program came out, and that's unfortunate, and I think that we can do better, and I think that this is a way in which to do better.

Another point, and I don't know if this is the time to bring it up, but, when we're talking about, you know, random sampling of data, and just, also, let me just state, real quick, and I forgot, and I kind of glossed over it here in my quick notes, but, you know, I am also supportive of Andy's comments about following how the Gulf does this. I think that's a good way to look at it.

When we're talking about random sampling, I wonder if there's also a way for us to do like a random subset to get better spatial data, because spatial data is really lacking in this, right, and, I mean, currently, if we're looking at the grids that people put, it's a pretty wide area, and I just throw this out for like a big-picture discussion, because, as we're looking for big changes in, you know, ocean uses, whether it's windmills, windfarms, and, if you would have asked us, when we first did this logbook, if that would have been an issue, I probably would have laughed, but now here we are dealing with a lot of different states, right, and there are going to be other ocean uses, whether it's mining or other things that are going to happen in the next ten, twenty, thirty years that we probably can't even think about right now. If we do have better spatial data, I think it would be beneficial to all of our fisheries, whether commercial, for-hire, and recreational.

DR. BELCHER: Amy.

MS. DUKES: Thanks, Madam Chair. I'm just going to echo Kristin's comments on how important this economic data has been for us, and I am all about buy-in and tradeoffs to lessen the burden on our fishermen, and I'm wondering if this one is maybe not one. We've worked really hard, over the last couple of years, to educate, and to justify, the three economic questions that are in play, and, if we disrupt that data, and it's got some tradeoffs, of course, but I'm wondering if there's other avenues that we can figure out better ways, from a tradeoff perspective, and the burden to the fishermen, rather than saying, hey, we've been asking for these question now for three years, but now we're going to backpedal, in a way, and I'm a little uneasy about it.

DR. BELCHER: Thanks. Other comments? Robert.

MR. SPOTTSWOOD: In a fisheries disaster circumstance, do you envision a situation where fishermen aren't going to be asked to give P&Ls, and financial information, and answer all these questions at that point in time, when applying for funds, anyway? I mean, they're going to be

asked for all that information again, and so I would just reiterate -- They won't be? Okay. Well, then maybe I need to follow-up with you to figure out --

DR. BELCHER: That's something that I think -- We were going to have that presentation back in June, but the disaster stuff is a little bit different. We have -- We had a thing happen a while back too, where the understanding was it works like FEMA, that somebody shows up, and you just show up, and you get your checks, and it's really not that simple.

Like our disaster money for 2013 showed up in 2019, and it has to go through -- That's what the process was, and they've been working on that over the last eighteen months or so, to try to figure out how to get the monies. Florida was hit how many times in one year, and so keeping up with that, but, generally, the states are the ones that help figure out who the people are who have been financially hit. It's based on landings, and it's based on all the information that the states have, and that's -- Because the monies come directly to the state, and then the state has to figure out how to apportion it out.

Now, that could be changing with the disaster policy changes that are coming up, and I'm not as versed in that right now, as to what's been proposed, and, like I said, Mike Travis was going to talk with us in June about that, but he was, unfortunately, not able to do that. Other comments to this? John, do you think you have enough, or do you need more from us?

MR. HADLEY: No, and the other -- The for-hire reporting AP, that's something we'll come back in December, the timing of that, and so that's kind of a moot point at this rate, but any other items, and, you know, if there are any other additional topics, we can also discuss that at Full Council. You know, in the meantime, if you're brewing on it this week, and there's other topics that you want to add to this amendment, before scoping, you know, that's something we can add to that, certainly, and come back to you in December with more information.

DR. BELCHER: Thanks, John. Okay. Kristin.

MS. FOSS: It's more of, I guess, a timing question, and so is the plan for this to go out to scoping before the December meeting? No? Okay, because I just think it would be important for this for-hire AP to meet at some point and provide some critical information on at least what the council is considering, because there are a number of items that I feel like the council needs more information, so that we can build kind of like our record of why we're considering these things, and so I was just curious as to what the timing is for that.

DR. BELCHER: John.

MR. HADLEY: Yes, and so that's an excellent point. Since the for-hire reporting AP will probably go out to be readvertised, and you'll do more work on it in December, we can -- We will come to you with a document that you could approve for scoping, and you could always delay that approval as well, and so, if you wanted to wait to say approve it in March, and have that AP meet in the meantime, that's certainly something that we could accommodate in the timeline for the amendment, but that's -- It's flexible. That's all to say the timing is flexible, but the plan, right now, at least tentatively, is to come to you and ask if you would like to -- If you feel comfortable with approving it for scoping in December, but, again, that could be shifted further back.

DR. BELCHER: Okay. Any other comments, or discussion, that we need to have relative to this? Amy.

MS. DUKES: Thanks, Madam Chair. I just had one for the service. Andy, is there any discussions about a unique SERO application to collect SEFHIER data, outside of the VESL and the eTRIPS that are currently available as approved platforms?

MR. STRELCHECK: Yes.

MS. DUKES: Can you talk more about that, sir?

MR. STRELCHECK: Jessica Stephen is online, and so I would ask that Jessica speak to that.

DR. BELCHER: Okay. John. Jessica, John is going to open up your mic.

MR. HADLEY: I am just unmuting you on this end, Jessica. Hang on one second. All right, Jessica, and I'm going to unmute you. All right.

DR. STEPHEN: Can you hear me?

MR. HADLEY: Yes, we can.

DR. STEPHEN: Great. Thanks for that question, Amy. I'm involved in a couple of projects, and one of them is creating an application for the SEFHIER program, and we're just getting ready to get into kind of the proof-of-concept aspect to it. Once that is completed, it will become type approved and available for reporting. Likewise, the way we're building the application, we hope to also have it available, potentially, for some modifications and be applicable to commercial reporting as well. The work that we're doing is kind of creating this type of application that could support one-stop reporting, and so working in a way that the framework of the application could also cover HMS and GARFO reporting standards as well.

DR. BELCHER: Go ahead, Amy.

MS. DUKES: Thanks for that information, Jessica. Is this information going to be able to be more public, as the process continues? Specifically, is the data still going to be provided to ACCSP, from a data warehouse perspective, and then how is that application going to be articulated to folks, to ensure that we don't have confusion amongst our constituents, especially if they're already using a platform they feel very comfortable with?

DR. STEPHEN: Great questions, and so, as we're going towards it, when we get closer to kind of a proof of concept, we'll test it out with a couple of fishermen first, because it's always good to get buy-in about how it works, and if it kind of makes logical sense to them, because sometimes things make different sense to someone sitting at a desk. Once we have it at a stage where we're ready to release it, we'll do significant outreach to show that this is a new available reporting application, and it does not invalidate any other reporting application, and so all the ones currently in existence, such as eTRIPS or VESL, would continue to work and go forward, and, you know, for South Carolina, you guys use VESL, and so we'll be very clear about what applications can handle which different dually-permitting things that are out there.

In regards to where the data flow goes to, currently, all the data will continue to flow through to ACCSP. The agency was recently funded, through IRA funding, to create a kind of -- What I'm calling the Atlantic Seacoast Coastal Logbook Program, and so we're just getting started in that, and I envision that the future of that, which will combine together all of the different federal regions into having kind of one data flow for all of our logbooks, which will be good, so we can start looking at data for climate change and other differences that are occurring.

Once that's completed and moving forward, which probably will take a couple of years, we're going to be looking towards that to, again, help support one-stop reporting, and, just as clarity, I have a third project, that I'm also leading, that looks at a vessel permit registry that will go towards one-stop reporting. I know there were some questions out there about that earlier, and we've definitely got a lot of things in play that, in the next few years, we hope to have a really robust reporting mechanism that eases the burden for all fishermen, as well as easing the agency burden and sharing our data.

DR. BELCHER: Amy.

MS. DUKES: Again, thank you, Jessica, and then, to continue that, I mean, we've talked a lot, around this table, about outreach and education, and how are those components being built into this project, in order to be able to be able to let folks know what's going on? You've got a lot of dedicated resources to build these platforms, but are there also dedicated resources to ensure that we have additional outreach and education, so that, if we build these applications, that they will have somebody to help support them for our constituents?

DR. STEPHEN: So that's again, still a little bit more in the initial stages, but we do have at least one dedicated outreach person for the SEFHIER program, and I've also got another one within my branch, and then we do a lot of coordination with the Science Center, with these broader applications that are kind of crossing regions, and we'll also be gathering outreach support from the different other groups, GARFO, Northeast Fisheries Science Center, and HMS, to make sure that we're covering that kind of entire region, depending on which aspect of outreach we're talking about.

I think, as we realized with the SEFHIER program before, we needed a little more outreach, going up to where we had dual GARFO and HMS permits, than we had at the time, and I will remind folks that we were in the middle of COVID at the time, which really restricted our ability to kind of do the outreach, other than online outreach, and not everyone was kind of willing to sit in front of a computer, and so we're going to take the lessons learned from that and kind of move forward and use, also, our partnership with ACCSP, to continue outreach that way, and it's a great way to let the other states know some of the work we're doing and try to build in any connections that we can along the way.

DR. BELCHER: Thanks, Jessica. Okay. Any other questions, or comments, at this time? All right. John, do you have all that you need relative to this amendment?

MR. HADLEY: Yes, I do, and I appreciate all the comments and the discussion. Thank you.

DR. BELCHER: Okay. It's quarter to, and I'm going to go ahead and take a ten-minute break, and so be back at just about 10:50, and we will check-in to make sure we're good for the WECAFC discussion.

(Whereupon, a recess was taken.)

DR. BELCHER: Okay. If everybody would make their way back to the table, please. Okay. We're going to get started again. Next on the agenda is the Western Central Atlantic Fisheries Commission, or WECAFC, Flyingfish and Dolphinfish Working Group Update, and it's Rachel O'Malley.

MS. O'MALLEY: Good morning, everyone. I'm Rachel O'Malley, with the International Fisheries Division of NOAA Fisheries, and I'm here this morning to give you a brief update on the Dolphinfish-Flyingfish Working Group of the Western Central Atlantic Fisheries Commission, or WECAFC.

WECAFC, as many of you know, is a regional fisheries body that was created in 1973 to promote the effective conservation and management of living marine resources throughout the wider Caribbean. It has thirty-four member nations, including the United States, and, back in 2019, based on members' interest, WECAFC broadened the mandate of its flyingfish working group to include dolphinfish, and potentially other pelagic species that are not within the scope of authority of ICCAT, the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas.

WECAFC's Flyingfish-Dolphinfish Working Group recently held its first meeting, June 4 and 5 of this year, and it was hosted by the Caribbean Fisheries Management Council in San Juan, Puerto Rico. The U.S. delegation to this meeting included NOAA Fisheries' staff from the International Fisheries Division, the Southeast Regional Office, the Southeast Fisheries Science Center, as well as John Hadley from the South Atlantic Council and representatives of the Caribbean Fishery Management Council.

In addition, there were delegations representing Barbados, Columbia, Dominica, France, Grenada, Jamaica, St. Kitts and Nevis, St. Lucia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Trinidad and Tobago, and Venezuela, which is a very strong showing for a WECAFC working group, indicating the level of interest in these fisheries.

The long-term objectives of this new working group are to collect and share relevant data, analyze available information, and make recommendations for the sustainability of the fishery throughout the wider Caribbean. We learned that there is significant interest among other WECAFC members in increased biological sampling, collection of life history data, tagging, genetic studies, that could eventually help to inform a better understanding of the stock dynamics.

There was interest, among other WECAFC countries, in working toward a regional stock assessment, but it was also recognized that it's not feasible to conduct a traditional stock assessment at this time, due to the significant data limitations. The countries represented at this meeting -- Many of these developing countries identified a wide range of challenges related to a lack of scientific capacity, in terms of limited technology, financial resources, and human resources. Because of these challenges, the working group decided to take a stepwise approach

and initially focused on identifying critical data needs and then continue a dialogue to begin to address the gaps.

While acknowledging these limitations, there was also broad support, among the members, for beginning to discuss and consider some steps toward precautionary management of dolphinfish in the wider Caribbean region. This is great news, actually, because we learned that nations throughout the Caribbean are interested in cooperation, improving our knowledge of dolphinfish, and potentially developing a management plan for the wider region, with specific conservation and management measures.

The idea is to develop a framework of best practices that would guide precautionary management at the national level throughout the wider Caribbean. I do want to stress, however, that any regionwide plan would not replace, or amend, the regulatory measures that we have in place already within the United States, and so, in terms of next steps, the working group's recommendations will be presented to the full WECAFC meeting, at its next meeting in July of 2025, and this will kick-off something akin to our own domestic scoping process. The working group will begin to sketch out some potential options for a management plan for the region and evaluate a range of alternatives.

I just want to conclude by emphasizing that NOAA has a great team working on the plan amendments, and the management strategy evaluation, for dolphinfish here, and MSE is still the most important tool for the management of dolphinfish fisheries along the Atlantic coast, without a doubt, and so I thank you all for your time this morning. I know the council has a packed agenda this week, and I'm happy to take some questions now and also to speak to these issues in more detail with folks who are interested tonight at dinner.

DR. BELCHER: Okay. Thank you, Rachel. Questions for Rachel? Kerry.

MS. MARHEFKA: Thanks, Rachel. I understand that everyone felt there was need for management. Is that because other nations are noticing a pattern of perceived depletion, or any other issues, and did you hear that at your meeting?

MS. O'MALLEY: No, not an overall trend of depletion, but more of shifts in availability, and there was a lot of recognition that this fish is moving around, from one nation's waters to another, and so it just makes sense to begin to share information on that. I should have invited John, if he wants to say anything additional, since he was at the meeting, or jump in, if you want to answer some questions.

DR. BELCHER: John.

MR. HADLEY: I appreciate that. It was very beneficial to be at this meeting. I found it really interesting to see essentially the exchange of information. I mean, I think -- I got out of it, and I think a lot of the representatives there, and, essentially, just seeing all of the different -- There's a lot that's going on with dolphinfish in the Caribbean, and a lot of nations are implementing regulations for that fishery, and so it's just interesting. I think that exchange of information was highly beneficial, and it was just interesting to see that a lot of nations are interested in the species, in dolphinfish, and, also, there was sort of another discussion on wahoo, and how important the fisheries for wahoo are as well, and so that's sort of a summary take on it.

DR. BELCHER: Additional questions? Kristin.

MS. FOSS: Thank you so much for that presentation, Rachel, and I think it's exciting that other countries are wanting to take note and exchange information about perhaps expanding dolphinfish management, and so a question about that preliminary outline, and so who will start that? Is that like WECAFC staff, or the working group members itself, and kind of what are the next steps from there?

MS. O'MALLEY: Sure. Good question, and so WECAFC is a very small organization, and so, essentially, there is an Executive Secretary and one support staff, and there are twelve different working groups, and so all of the work is conducted -- Most of the work, virtually all, is conducted by the members, and it's a very member-driven process, and so there are different committees that put it together, but WECAFC has developed a regional FMP like this before, and queen conch is one example, and they will likely follow a similar process, where they have a contractor kind of start the outline, so that the working group members have something, a place to begin, and to flesh-out from there.

I didn't mention this, but, you know, likely the next time this working group will meet will be -- It will be next year sometime, because there is very little funding to meet in-person, and it was important to meet in-person the first time for this group, but I think, probably, going forward, work will be more virtual, and you can expect it to be very slow.

DR. BELCHER: Other questions, or comments, for Rachel? Okay. Thank you for your time today, Rachel. Okay. Since you all have behaved today so far, we're going to break early for lunch, and coming back early, but we're a little bit ahead, and the next item on the agenda is actually to talk about the allocation review trigger policy, and so we want to make sure that we have enough time to talk about that without being compressed on time, and so we're going to go ahead and break now and come back at one o'clock, and we'll begin with that.

(Whereupon, a recess was taken.)

DR. BELCHER: Okay, if everybody is ready, and I see the majority of folks are back, and we are going to start in with the afternoon session, picking up with the allocation discussion with John Hadley.

MR. HADLEY: All right. Thank you very much. We'll start off with a briefing presentation, and this is -- These slides are Attachment 8b in the Full Council I folder, and then we'll jump into the decision document, which is Attachment 8a, but, generally speaking, we'll go over just kind of a refresher, and background, on the council's allocation review guidelines, and some caveats with the sector ACLs and landings will be presented, and we'll review the Snapper Grouper FMP goals and objectives.

Then we'll -- From there, we'll have a break for a question-and-answer session, to clarify any of that information, and then we'll jump into the discussion document, and we'll review specific information for Atlantic spadefish and the jacks complex, and so the jacks complex is made up of three species, almaco jack, lesser amberjack, and banded rudderfish. Then there's some sort of discussion questions, after the information for each species, and the idea here is to get a discussion

on here's the allocations, here's how the sector ACLs have been utilized, and does the council essentially feel that the current allocations are adequate for these species, and why.

As a little bit of background, at the December 2023 meeting, as you may recall, the council had developed allocation review guidelines, and you approved them at the December 2023 meeting. You also updated your allocation review trigger policy, and, really, generally speaking, the guidelines specify how the council's sector allocations will be reviewed, and how that review will be documented, and the policy really specifies when that allocation review will occur.

One of the criteria that the council chose that would trigger an allocation review is time-based, and so you specified that you wanted all of your species to have the sector allocations reviewed at least once every seven years, and so there's several species that meet that time-based criteria, and so we'll work through those over several meetings, but sort of the first starter species, since this is the first time you've applied your policy, and your guidelines, and so sort of a trial process, and so we'll start off with some of the unassessed snapper grouper species, Atlantic spadefish, and, again, the jacks complex species, which do meet the time-based criteria.

As a little of additional background, all of the species that we'll review have no stock assessment. They're unassessed species, and there are no new catch level recommendations for any of the species, and so, as you may recall in your policy, you sort of have a divergence, where there's a situation where you review allocations under a new catch level recommendation and a situation where you review allocations when there is no new catch level recommendation, and so we're in that latter category.

I will mention, and, you know, it's on your workplan, that you have an unassessed species amendment, which would update the ACLs for each one of these unassessed snapper grouper species. However, that process of reviewing those new ACLs, and setting those new ACLs, continues to slide, and it has slipped, due to essentially data issues, and data being provided, as well as that allowing the SSC to work through their process of specifying new catch level recommendations, and so, seeing as the timing of that amendment has been delayed as indefinite, that's, again, why we're bringing these unassessed species to you, since it's unclear exactly when they will be reviewed again, and they do meet that time-based criteria under your allocation review trigger policy.

Another thing to keep in mind is that the recreational landings estimates that you'll be provided for each species are based on MRIP Coastal Household Telephone Survey methodology, and so the older, if you will, methodology, and they aren't updated under the Fishing Effort Survey, or FES, terms, and so that's just how the ACLs were set, and so that's how the ACLs are still being tracked, at least on the recreational side, and so reallocation, based on landings that include CHTS estimates, may prove -- May prove somewhat difficult, and I know we got into that discussion a little bit with the scamp and friends amendment, and updating the related unassessed species ACLs, but, with that said, if the council does say that, you know, this needs further -- That we need to further investigate these allocations, and potentially change them, you know, your staff will be able to provide potential solutions, should the council deem reallocation is at least warranted to be examined at this time.

According to your allocation review guidelines, you specified that you wanted to be provided the fishery management plan goals and objectives, which we'll get into in just a few minutes, and then,

also, the current allocations and rationale for setting those allocations, landings and ACL usage, by sector, for the most recent five years of available data, and the most recent fishery performance report, if available. There is no fishery performance report available for any of those species, for any of the species that we will review, and so we'll be focusing on those first three bullet points and the information that's provided for each species.

The idea is that a summary -- Based on your discussion, a summary report will be developed and presented to the council for review at the December 2024 meeting, and so, essentially, today is to have a discussion on -- Basically have the discussion portion, and then, in December, we'll provide a summary of that discussion, and that will be your approval, and that will serve as documentation that these species -- The allocations for these species have been reviewed, and here's the documentation for it, and, at the very least, come back to them within the next seven years, and so kind of resetting that clock.

All right, and so, with that, I'm going to go through the Snapper Grouper Fishery Management Plan goals and objectives, and then I'll pause for any questions, and so, as a reminder, this is one of the pieces of information that you wanted to be brought before you when reviewing sector allocations in this manner, and so Goal 1 -- There is four goals overall, but Goal 1 relates to science, and it specifies that management decisions for the snapper grouper fishery are based upon robust, defensible science that considers qualitative and quantitative data analyzed in a timely, clear, and transparent manner that builds stakeholder confidence.

There is five objectives under there, and I won't go through each one, but I will paraphrase them, and so Objective 1 promotes collection of quality data to support management plans and programs, and Objective 2 encourages the development of mechanisms to effectively engage and collaborate with stakeholders on cooperative research, data collection, and analysis. Improve knowledge of social and economic elements of the fishery, support improved and expanded monitoring and reporting programs, and promote data collection and analysis to support ecosystem and habitat considerations.

The second goal relates to management, and it's to adopt management strategies for the snapper grouper fishery that rebuild and maintain fishery resources and adapt to regional differences in the fishery and consider the social and economic needs of fishing communities, and so there are several objectives under here, six objectives, and, again, sort of paraphrasing some of them, Objective 1 is to develop management measures that consider subregional differences.

Objective 2 is develop innovative management measures that allow consistent access to the fishery for all sectors, 3 is to ensure management decisions help maximize social and economic opportunity for all sectors, 4 is develop management measures that reduce and mitigate discards, 5 is support management measures that incorporate ecosystem and habitat considerations, and 6 is develop management measures that support optimal sector allocations in the snapper grouper fishery, and so certainly that objective is part of this discussion today.

Goal 3 is communication, to employ interactive outreach strategies that encourage continuous participation and support two-way engagement between managers and snapper grouper fishery stakeholders, while building a greater understanding of science and management. Objective 1 is develop communication approaches that provide streamlined and timely information, to increase awareness and engage stakeholders. Objective 2 is ensure that the council communication

encourages support and engagement with a diverse audience of stakeholders. 3 is to improve awareness and understanding of fisheries science and research and how these inform management, and, similarly, for Objective 4, improve awareness and understanding of how social and economic issues are linked to fishery management measures.

Then, lastly, Goal Number 4 is governance, to commit to a transparent, balanced, and timely decision-making process that allows flexible, yet well-defined, protocols and strategies for managing the snapper grouper fishery. We have three objectives here, to create an accountable and flexible decision-making process for development and evaluation of management measures, build capacity to streamline management efforts and better coordinate with management partners, and improve communication with stakeholders, to ensure that the needs of the fishery are understood and considered throughout the process.

That's kind of an overview of the background information, going through the newly-implemented, or newly-revised, I should, say, or relatively newly-revised, Snapper Grouper Fishery Management Plan goals and objectives, and, again, I'm happy to answer any questions, but just kind of keeping in mind what comes up next, and we'll jump into the decision document, and we'll go through the specific information for each species, and so looking at the ACLs, the allocations, and the management measures for the four snapper grouper species that we'll discuss today. Any questions?

DR. BELCHER: Thanks, John. Questions at this point? Rick.

MR. DEVICTOR: Thanks, John, for going through the process there, and I should have asked this back when you were going through the process, but we had a question, in the office, about -- So are you going to involve the SEP and SSC in this process, when you go through the allocation reviews, especially when you skip the review stage and go right to determining that it should be in an amendment and looking at the action? Thank you.

DR. BELCHER: John.

MR. HADLEY: The SSC and SEP are not going to be included, at least at this point, and they have -- I believe they reviewed the guidelines, and then, also, if the council were to say the -- You know, say -- I'm just going to use a species, Atlantic spadefish, and, if the council said we would like to take a further look at this, then that would be something where the SSC and SEP would be engaged, and so that would be another step in the process, but the idea at this meeting, at least at this stage, is not to directly engage them.

DR. BELCHER: Other questions for John at this point? Okay. Seeing none, John.

MR. HADLEY: All right. Give me one second to move over here to the decision document, and so, again, this is Attachment 8a in your briefing materials for Full Council I, and I've scrolled down to the middle part. We went over the background information and the FMP goals and objectives, and so we're going to start off with Atlantic spadefish.

Getting at some of the information that is listed in the allocation review guidelines, that is to be presented, to just give you an idea of essentially where the ACL -- What is the ACL, where it stands, what are the current allocations, and what are some of the management measures, and also

some of the rationale, for the existing allocations, and so, for Atlantic spadefish, you have approximately an 812,000-pound total ACL. This was last -- This was specified via Snapper Grouper Amendment 29, which became effective July 1, 2015, and so this ACL has been in place for quite a while.

Overall, the recreational sector allocation, and annual catch limit, and so the recreational sector allocation is 81.47 percent of the total ACL, which equates to approximately 662,000 pounds. For the commercial sector, the commercial sector allocation is 18.53 percent of the total ACL, which is approximately 151,000 pounds, and so the rationale for how this allocation was developed was using the Comprehensive ACL Amendment equation that was applied to many snapper grouper species, and other species, where it had a 50 percent weighting towards the sector breakdown of landings from 1986 through 2008, and so a longer timeline, and then a 50 percent weighting towards a more recent timeline of 2006 through 2008.

Overall, as far as sort of recreational and commercial retention regulations, recreational retention regulations include a ten-fish-per-person bag limit. It's part of the twenty-fish aggregate snapper grouper bag limit, and, also, no size limit or season. On the commercial side, there's no trip limit, size limit, or season. As far as the accountability measures, summarized, of course, there's an in-season closure, once the sector ACL is met, and that's applicable for both sectors, and there's a payback provision for an overage, only if the total ACL is exceeded.

Moving down for a look on how the different sector ACLs have been utilized in recent years, this is using a -- This is landings information over the past five years of available data. Looking at the recreational landings, you have an average of relatively underutilization, for both the commercial side and the recreational side, and so the recreational sector, on average, has used approximately 19.4 percent of the total ACL, and so that's 19.4 percent of the recreational ACL has been landed, and, similarly, on the commercial side, approximately 18.7 percent of the commercial ACL has been landed. There have been no closures for the recreational or commercial sectors.

Looking at total ACL utilization, you can see total landings there have been well below the total ACL, and so approximately 19.3 percent, on average, has been landed over that time period, and so it really jumps around, from approximately 10 to 30 percent of the total ACL is landed, depending on the year.

This is where I turn it over to the council. Based on that information, the question that's posed is does the council feel that the current sector allocations for spadefish, Atlantic spadefish, are adequate for the fishery, and a little bit of discussion as to why, and so, if so, why does the council feel that these allocations are still appropriate, and, if not, does the council want to reexamine the sector allocations in an amendment to the FMP that would come prior to the planned unassessed species amendment that I mentioned earlier, and, you know, if you feel like you don't have enough information at this time, what additional information do you feel like you would need to make a decision on whether or not you feel like the current allocations are adequate?

DR. BELCHER: Thanks, John. Tim.

MR. GRINER: Thank you. Thank you for the presentation, John. To me, Atlantic spadefish is a pretty easy one. You know, both sectors are barely averaging 20 percent of their sector allocation, and, overall, you know, both of them added together were not even reaching 20 percent of the

overall ACL, and so this, to me, is one of those things where, you know, if it's not broke, don't fix it. There is really nothing to do here, as far as I'm concerned.

You know, it's one of those things that we decided to take a look at it every seven years, and, when you look at this fishery, you know, it has had some ups and downs, and, you know, it goes from 30 percent one year to 6 percent the other, but, overall, you know, it's not a fishery that I see growing, and I certainly don't see it growing commercially, and I don't really see the recreational sector ever getting close to 661,000 pounds, and so, you know, to me, this really is one of those ones that lends itself to just kind of leave it alone, keep monitoring it, and we're never going to have an -- I don't ever see us having an assessment on it.

You know, if we were to do anything, you know, there may be some benefit to trying to get rid of this CHTS currency, and put it into a currency that brings it -- You know, that brings it up-to-date, but, even at that, I don't think that's really going to change the percent of catch that would drive an allocation change. Thank you.

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

MS. FOSS: I agree, and I don't think either sector will -- As we can see, is even close to reaching their ACL, and we haven't really heard any stakeholder concerns, or received any new information that indicates we need to modify allocations at this time, and so maybe we can revisit this at the planned unassessed species amendment, and maybe revisit when we're going to look at that as well.

DR. BELCHER: Tom.

MR. ROLLER: Yes, and I agree with Kristin and Tim. If it's not broke, don't fix it, and I do think that we need to pay attention to it, particularly recreationally. You know, they're a very hard fish to target, and they have a different diet. They use jellyfish, up in North Carolina, to target them, and there is a lot of people -- I shouldn't say a lot, but there are people that do it, and you do see more people doing it, and so I do think it needs to be on our radar, you know, particularly fisheries closures, and like if this does expand. I personally don't see it happening, but we do need to just -- You know, just to keep what we're doing and see if it grows.

You know, I just also bring up, with spadefish, that I think they're a little different than some of the -- They also have a different value, at least up our way, and they form these big schools on the wrecks, and people love -- The scuba divers love to see them, and so they have this like intrinsic value that's outside of just fishing, and so --

DR. BELCHER: Kerry.

MS. MARHEFKA: I agree with everything that has been said. I will just say if, and only if, we do move forward with making changes to other species, and there is going to be an amendment to do that, it may be worth looking at the accountability measures, just to bring them up to -- We had started to be really consistent, in other parts of our Snapper Grouper FMP, with accountability measures, and only if we were already doing a plan, I would be open to changing the accountability measures.

DR. BELCHER: Other comments? Okay. In looking to the list of questions then, it sounds like, at least from the folks that have spoken, that maybe waiting until the unassessed species amendment is done, as opposed to jumping into anything for it right now. I guess, as far as feeling if the allocations are still appropriate, as Tim said, if it ain't broke, don't fix it, and so anything else you need from that?

MR. HADLEY: No, and I appreciate that, and, you know, we'll work to capture that, and we'll provide a summary discussion in December, and so thank you. All right. Moving along, a little bit of a more dynamic, tricky situation, but we're going to look at the jacks complex, and so the jacks complex is essentially a sum of the specifications for almaco jack, lesser amberjack, and banded rudderfish, but they're managed as a complex.

I will go over the complex ACL, and then we're going to go over each species specifically, and so, starting off, again looking at it on the complex level for all three species combined, and there's an ACL, a total ACL, of approximately 457,000 pounds, and this has been in place since Snapper Grouper Regulatory Amendment 13, and so this has been in place since 2013, and it's been fairly static for a while.

The annual catch limit and landings are tracked as a complex, and so, again, not on a single-species basis, and they're tracked in aggregate, and, really, if you look at the sort of de facto allocation of that total ACL, you have the recreational sector allocation is 58.57 percent of the total ACL, and so approximately 268,000 pounds. The commercial sector receives approximately 41.43 percent of the total ACL, which is approximately 189,000 pounds, and, as I mentioned, this is sort of a de facto allocation, where it's sort of the summed sector ACLs for all three of the jacks species, and we'll get into the specific allocations for each one of those species, but this is sort of the resulting allocation, based on those three species.

Again, the same Comprehensive ACL Amendment equation was applied to all three jacks species, and we went over that equation for Atlantic spadefish, looking at the 50 percent weighting towards the longer time series and 50 percent weighting towards a more recent time series.

Looking at the summarized retention limit and regulations, overall, the recreational retention regulations, it's part of the ten-fish-per-person bag limit, part of the twenty-fish-per-person aggregate bag limit, and no size limit or season, and there is a 500-pound gutted weight aggregate jacks complex trip limit, and there is a size limit of twenty inches fork length minimum size limit for almaco jack only, and there is no size limit for lesser amberjack or banded rudderfish, and there is no season. Looking at the accountability measures, there's an in-season closure for both sectors, once the sector ACL is met, and payback provisions for an overage, only if the total ACL is exceeded.

Looking at the sector-specific landings, 2019 was a big year for both sectors, and there is a fairly -- There is relatively high landings for both the recreational and commercial sector. You can see, for the recreational sector, landings of approximately 403,000 pounds, and that was 150 percent of the ACL, and there was a closure in 2019. However, later -- You can see the landings sort of jump around a little bit for the recreational sector, jumping around the ACL, and, on average, the recreational sector has harvested 95.6 percent of its allocation.

For the commercial sector, you see fairly high utilization as well, and you had a closure in 2019 as well for the commercial sector, and then, in subsequent years, you saw lower landings, but, generally speaking, you have 81.1 percent of the total commercial sector ACL is landed, and then, looking at total landings, and total ACL usage, outside of the 2019 year, you see pretty high, or relatively high, utilization, but it doesn't exceed the total ACL, and, again, you have that big year in 2019, and so, on average, approximately 90 percent of the total ACL is landed.

I'm happy to pause for any questions, and, again, we're going to go over each species within that complex that make that up, and you'll see where some of these landings come from, but any questions on the jacks complex, or how that functions?

DR. BELCHER: I always end up raising my hand, and it's one of those things, but is there -- Just because of the recreational component of it, is there any way that we can see what CVs are associated with some of those landings? I just think about the uncertainty with some of that, and like, if you have that one heavy-duty spiky year, was it a high enough CV to say is it -- You know, we have confidence in that? Was that high, or not so much confidence with that catch? I'm just trying to think if there's a way that we can kind of help bracket, to see if those realized changes are -- Chip, and I don't know, but I was just thinking even just for the future, just so that, as we go through it in the future -- It doesn't have to be right now, but if there's a way to put that with it, especially for those ones that are dominant recreational, and I think it would kind of help us get an idea of how certain we are with that amount. Kerry.

MS. MARHEFKA: I agree completely. John, can you please talk me through this complex issue a little clearer? I have some concerns, looking at almaco jack, that -- If we make a choice to make any changes, do we just change the complex, and not the individual species, and I'm having a hard time wrapping my brain around this complex situation.

MR. HADLEY: So the -- You would make a change to the specific species, and so, if you change the -- Any one of the species, then it would change the complex ACL accordingly, and so any one of those three jacks species, any change to those, are going to change the complex.

DR. BELCHER: Kristin, did you --

MS. FOSS: Kerry asked the same question that I was going to ask, and so I'm good.

DR. BELCHER: Other questions for John, before we go into the individual species? Kerry.

MS. MARHEFKA: Sorry, and I guess this is more procedural, but, just so I'm clear with everyone, I'm not talking about -- I'm not interested in necessarily changing percentage of allocation, but I am concerned about accountability measures, and so I don't know if this will be the vessel for that, or if that's a separate conversation, and it's only coming up because I see it in front of me, and also because, if you look at almaco jack, and you're seeing the accountability measures aren't working too sporty, and is this the appropriate time to have that conversation, or is this conversation strictly about the percentage?

MR. HADLEY: So I think that it's a good time to bring it up, and we could always capture it in sort of a direction to staff to consider in some other snapper grouper amendment, and, right now, the accountability measures -- I guess that would be a separate discussion, but, if you feel it's

important, we can sort of make note of it and bring it up in another amendment, or what have you, but I guess another thought on that is, if you wanted to -- It would take a management change, and so you could change the accountability measures for the jacks complex, and that would apply to almaco jack, as well as the other two species, and so, even if almaco is the specific issue species, if you will, you know, the other two would be changed as well.

DR. BELCHER: Kerry, go ahead.

MS. MARHEFKA: But I guess my question is we don't necessarily -- If we decide not to mess with the strict percentage change, but we do want to change accountability measures, maybe that's a different discussion, for a different workplan, a different day, is what I'm trying to make sure that I understand.

MR. HADLEY: Yes, and, I mean, like I said, we can definitely put a placeholder in it, but, right now, kind of the scope is the allocations.

MS. MARHEFKA: Got it.

DR. BELCHER: Okay. Other comments, before going into the individual species? Okay. John, back to you.

MR. HADLEY: All right. Thank you, and so we will start off with almaco jack, and so I'll go over the specifications for that species. Overall, it has a fairly high ACL, in relation to the jacks complex, and it's an approximately 303,000-pound total annual catch limit, and that was, again, put in place via Snapper Grouper Regulatory Amendment 13, and it's been around since 2013, and so it's been in place for quite a while now.

The sector allocations for almaco jack include, for the recreational sector, 51.3 percent of the total ACL is allocated to the recreational sector, and it's approximately 155,000 pounds, and then 48.7 percent of the total ACL is allocated to the commercial sector, and so that ends up being around 147,000 pounds. Again, this used the Comprehensive ACL Amendment equation, with that weighting, and so a 50 percent weighting towards the longer time series and 50 percent weighting towards the landings breakdown within that shorter time series of 2006 through 2008.

As far as the general retention limits, there's a ten-fish-per-person bag limit, and it's part of the twenty-fish-per-person snapper grouper aggregate bag limit, and there is no size or season, no size limit or season, for almaco jack on the recreational side. On the commercial side, almaco jack are part of the 500-pound gutted weight aggregate jacks complex trip limit. There is a twenty-inch fork length minimum size limit, and no season. Generally speaking, again, the accountability measures -- There's an in-season closure for both sectors once the complex, and not necessarily the sector, and so, again -- Sorry. So the species rather, and so there's an in-season closure once the jacks complex sector ACL is met, and a payback provision, again, only if the jacks complex ACL is exceeded and not the species-specific ACL.

Again, here, looking at how the annual catch limits have been utilized, you see fairly high utilization for both sectors, and then you have the closure for the jacks complex overall, and so that's inclusive of almaco jack, in 2019, and you just had a really big year for both sectors that

year, and you can see, where you saw those spikes in landings on the complex, a lot of those landings, or a majority of those landings, are coming from almaco jack.

On the recreational side, the average utilization from 2019 through 2023 is 139.4 percent overall, and, on the commercial side, you see a fairly high utilization rate, but not quite as high, of approximately 90 percent of the commercial ACL was landed over that time series.

Looking at total ACL utilization, generally speaking, there is fairly high utilization of the total ACL, with approximately an average of 115 percent of the total ACL landed annually, and, really, that jumps around between 90 to upwards of over 150 percent of the total ACL, and so, with that, we'll hand it over to the council for discussion on this, but, you know, do you feel -- The same set of questions apply here that were asked for Atlantic spadefish. Do you feel that the current sector allocations for almaco jack are adequate? If so, why do you feel that they are still appropriate for the fishery? If not, does the council want to reexamine them before the unassessed species amendment, or should we stay status quo for now, and, if you feel like more information is needed to make a decision, you know, what sort of additional information would you need?

DR. BELCHER: Okay. To the group. Comments, or thoughts, on this? Jimmy.

MR. HULL: I will just make the comment that it's obvious that this complex is really important to both sectors, and it's being utilized more and more, as other animals are not available, and so it's just something to keep an eye on, but I think, you know, you pretty much have a 50/50 split, and, you know, both sectors are using it a lot more, and so just to keep an eye on it.

DR. BELCHER: Kristin.

MS. FOSS: Yes, I agree. I don't necessarily know if we have any new information justifying like an allocation change right now, or population concerns, but it's something to keep an eye on. Do you know if we've heard -- I haven't heard any concerns from stakeholders, and has the council or anyone?

DR. BELCHER: John.

MR. HADLEY: I'm not aware of any concerns, and I do -- As was mentioned, they are, I think, an increasingly-important species, but I haven't heard any -- There were some market concerns on the size of almaco jack coming in on the commercial sector, which is why the size limit was put in place, but no resource-based concerns, that I'm aware of.

DR. BELCHER: Kerry.

MS. MARHEFKA: I agree with Jimmy, in that, you know, certainly, speaking for ourselves, it's become a really important complex, and I suspect it's the same for the recreational sector. Maybe the more information -- I think we wait until the unassessed species, but I would probably put this down as a topic for the advisory panel, because I know, in the past, Jack Cox has talked a lot about his concern for greater amberjack, and I'm curious if he has the same concerns for this complex as well, and I think it might be nice to hear from the AP what they're seeing, and, also, sort of more than just Jimmy and I's gut, and let's hear some information from them, as far as the importance for all sectors for these species, but, for now, I think we leave it as-is and wait.

DR. BELCHER: Tom.

MR. ROLLER: Kerry, that's a great point, and I really agree with that. I think we need to have the AP look at it, and discuss it, I mean, because, from my perspective, yes, sure, they're more important, and, I mean, kind of everything that's open is a little bit more important, right, but I'm not going to say there's any particular more interest in them. We've always caught them, and we always will catch -- Well, hopefully we'll always catch them, but like it's just one of those things, and I should say they've always been there. They've always been there, and it seems like, yes, there's more interest in them, but I would really like to hear from all our for-hire and recreational fishermen, as well as commercial fishermen, about the perspective on this and any sort of changes that we're seeing.

DR. BELCHER: Jimmy.

MR. HULL: Just one more comment. You know, we catch almaco when we're targeting amberjack, and so we're making an amberjack trip, and almaco are being caught at that same time. We don't go target almaco. They're mixed in with the amberjack, and the same with the lesser, at the same time we're targeting amberjacks.

DR. BELCHER: John, just for kind of a high overview, can you remind us of the unassessed stocks -- What's in the amendment, and what the plan is for the amendment, just so that folks have a little bit better understanding, when we say we're putting it off until that amendment?

MR. HADLEY: I might ask Chip for some assistance on that, but I'll go ahead and start, and so I believe that there's an SSC workgroup that's assigned to that, and, until that SSC workgroup can work through their specifications on how they want to advise the whole SSC to set new total ACLs, total annual catch limits, and provide catch level recommendations, and that's sort of the major step that needs to take place, and then, after that, the amendment would proceed after that, but that timeline has been slipping a bit, and so that's -- That's kind of where we are now, and why we're bringing these species to you, because, you know, it's indefinite, and they are due for review for their allocations, and so that indefinite timeline, I guess, is the sticking point, and I will let Chip weigh-in more.

DR. BELCHER: So then another point of clarification, and so which currency are these landings in?

MR. HADLEY: For the recreational portion, they're inclusive of the Coastal Household Telephone Survey, and so CHTS, the older, if you will, currency units, or terms, and so they will be updated to Fishing Effort Survey terms, or the ACL will be inclusive of FES terms.

DR. BELCHER: All right. Chip, do you have more to add to that?

DR. COLLIER: Maybe a little bit more. NMFS does have a working group that's trying to address the rare-event species, which at least two of these species in the jacks complex would fall into. Lesser amberjack and banded rudderfish are fairly rare-event species in the MRIP survey, I think, and so we're holding off on trying to recreate the landings stream until we can get some estimates

for these rare-event species, and then, once we get the estimates for those rare-event species, then the SSC can figure out what is the best technique to set an ABC for those.

Another wrinkle that has come up is the ability to use the discard logbook from the commercial fishery to estimate discards, and so that may not be included in the ACL in the future for the commercial fishery, just because that portion is going to be lacking, in all likelihood, because I don't know how much observer work has been done, and how often these species have been encountered, in order to develop an estimate of discards.

DR. BELCHER: Much clearer than mud. Thank you. Other questions about that? I am kind of, in one sense, leaning towards -- I think that's the difficult part, because of the currency differences. With allocations, I just think about the potentials with higher values, or even smaller values, on the recreational side, moving forward, that would cause allocations, and so I would like to hear what other people's thoughts are, about is this -- Maybe are we getting a little bit ahead of what would be better served with the unassessed stocks, or unassessed species, first, because we're not currently in FES numbers. We're working with CHTS numbers, and so, again, a potential for change, scope-wise, or scaler-wise, and is it possible that we could see a bigger amount in rec estimates, or a smaller amount in rec estimates, which would then cause a difference in allocations? Kerry.

MS. MARHEFKA: I think you're exactly right, if I'm following what you're saying. I mean, right now does not seem to be the appropriate time to be making these changes, and is that basically what you're saying? I agree with you completely. It looks like, also, from what we're seeing here, is, for the most part, neither fishery is being constrained by their allocation, for better or worse, in some cases, by the allocation, and so it doesn't seem appropriate that this is the time, and, if it's not in the unassessed species -- If that's not the right vehicle, what we do know is, in five years, and that's our timeframe, if I recall correctly, for -- Every five years, we have to look at whether or not we're going to reallocate, and, well, five years goes by real quick, and we might not be anywhere new with MRIP and FES in five years, and so we'll get to it, and it might not even need to happen in that vehicle, but I don't -- What I'm hearing, from everyone, is that we don't have an issue right now, or a need to reallocate right now.

DR. BELCHER: Trish.

MS. MURPHEY: I was actually going to give my comments after we heard lesser amberjack, but I think we're already there, and so my thoughts on this was -- When I reviewed this document, I guess my take-home is I would leave it alone. I mean, it looks like, on the almaco jacks, the recs have a fair amount of overages, but, on the lesser amberjack, there's overages on the commercial sector, and, granted, it seems like those allocations are low anyway, but, if you go back and look at the whole complex itself, the average is not -- It's not over, and, I mean, it's like they take care of each other, and so, overall, there doesn't seem to be an issue.

My thought, you know, just hearing, around the table, there's not a lot of information, I wonder -- And also bring it to the AP, and I wonder, if anything, to consider doing a fishery performance report on them, and at least we get some anecdotal data on them, and maybe that will also -- When we do get to that unassessed species FMP, we'll have that information as well, and so that's my thought overall, is I would leave it alone at this point, just because everything seems to balance out, and just gather information from the AP with the fishery performance reports.

DR. BELCHER: Other comments? Jimmy.

MR. HULL: I was just going to agree with that. I thought it made good sense.

DR. BELCHER: Other comments? Okay. John, does that help with that portion of it?

MR. HADLEY: It does, yes. I guess my question, to the council, is do you want to go through the other two species or kind of consider that comprehensive jacks complex discussion applicable?

DR. BELCHER: Kerry.

MS. MARHEFKA: I think we had a pretty comprehensive discussion, and I don't think there's anything in the other two species, in my mind, that wasn't covered by that.

DR. BELCHER: Other comments to that? Anyone against moving forward? Okay. Is there other information that you would like from the group, John, relative to this?

MR. HADLEY: No, but, just to summarize, I mean, I think, for the jacks complex, the council feels that the current sector allocations are adequate, but you would like to reexamine them whenever the unassessed species amendment comes up, and, in the meantime, ask the Snapper Grouper Advisory Panel to go through a fishery performance report for the complex.

DR. BELCHER: Does everyone agree with that? Shep. Okay, but is everybody in agreeance at that point? Okay. Shep.

MR. GRIMES: Thank you, Madam Chair. I just wanted to point out, looking at lesser amberjack, and looking at the percent of the commercial ACL landed, it seems like we have an accountability measure problem there, and maybe that's something you want to make sure to add to your list to address when you do talk about this. Thank you.

DR. BELCHER: Kerry.

MS. MARHEFKA: I think Amy and I have been going through, and that I think that happens to be an artifact of it being in the complex, and, short of taking it out of the complex, I don't know how you fix that problem.

DR. BELCHER: Shep.

MR. GRIMES: Well, taking it out of the complex is an option.

DR. BELCHER: Kerry.

MS. MARHEFKA: I mean, that was sort of my point when I was asking John about when the right vehicle -- There is clearly a couple of places that the accountability measures aren't exactly doing what they're supposed to for everyone, and so that's why I brought up earlier the question about is this the appropriate time to do that, and the way I understand it is that hasn't been worked into the workplan, and, if that's something that this body wishes to do, that's a conversation for

the day that we look at the workplan and say, hey, this is really important, to move forward with these accountability measure changes, and not necessarily in this vehicle, but maybe I misunderstood what you said.

DR. BELCHER: John.

MR. HADLEY: So I'm thinking that maybe a solution -- We can add it to the workplan, to the very bottom, the sort of other topics, or other activities, that the council wants to bring back up, and so we can capture it there, and then, when the opportunity arises, through a snapper grouper amendment, it will be there, and so the idea is that, you know, point taken, and we'll capture it there, and so at least it stays on the workplan and inside the council's consideration, if that's good with the council.

DR. BELCHER: Okay. Anyone disagree with that approach? Charlie, did you have something to say?

MR. PHILLIPS: You know, I see the percentages are high, but the numbers are so very low, and the percentages really aren't reflecting very high counts, and so it makes it look like it's a lot worse than I think it actually is.

DR. BELCHER: Okay. Other comments? All right. At this point, we'll be moving on, unless folks have anything else they would like to discuss relative to this item. John, you're good?

MR. HADLEY: All set, and I appreciate the discussion. Thank you.

DR. BELCHER: Thank you, John. All right. I'm going to go ahead and say take a five-minute break, because we'll be transitioning into the SEDAR Committee, and so, at two o'clock, we'll come back with SEDAR.

(Whereupon, the meeting adjourned on September 17, 2024.)

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Certified By: _____ Date: _____

Transcribed By
Amanda Thomas
October 18, 2024

Monday 9/16

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Dr. Clay Porch
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Bob Zales
Geoff White

SOUTH ATLANTIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL
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Full Council
Tue 9/17th

Non-Voting

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U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Representative
TBD

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SAFMC Sept. 2024 Council Meeting

Attendee Report: (9/16/24)

Report Generated:

09/20/2024 09:24 AM EDT

Webinar ID

504-848-323

Actual Start Date/Time

09/16/2024 12:55 PM EDT

Staff Details

Attended

Yes

Interest Rating

Not applicable for staff

Attendee Details

Last Name

Adam

Bianchi

Bradshaw

Brouwer

Bunting

Byrd

Caraballo

Cermak

Clinton

Cox

DeVictor

Dukes

Finch

Foss

Franke

Glazier

Glazier

Gooding

Gore

Guyas

Hadley

Helies

Helmey

Hogan

Hollensead

Horton

Hull

First Name

Bailey

Alan

Christopher

Myra

Matthew

Julia

Leysa

Bridget

Haley

Jack

Rick

Amy

Margaret

Kristin

Emilie

Edward

Edward

Elizabeth

Karla

Martha

John

Frank

Judy

LeAnn

Lisa

Christopher

Jimmy

KLASNICK

Keppler
Klibansky
Knowlton
Larkin
Lazarre
Lee
M Borland
Marhefka
McGovern
Mehta
Murphey
Neer
Newman
Oliver
Ott
Patterson
Pease
Phillips
Porch
Records
Roller
Rule
SCHLICK
Seward
Silvas
Sinkus
Smart
Stephen
Waldo
Walia
Walsh
Walsh
White
Whitten
Willis
Zales
broussard
carvalho
collier
griner
iverson
I
sandorf

KELLY

Blaik
Lara
Kathy
Michael
Dominique
Max
Gary
00Kerry
Jack
Nikhil
Trish
Julie
Thomas
Ashley
Emily
Nicholas
Thomas
Charlie
Clay
David
00Tom
Erica
CJ
McLean
Rachael
Wiley
Tracey
Jessica
Jennifer
Matt
Jason
Mick
Geoff
Meredith
Michelle
Bob
billy
avelino
chip
tim
Kim
i
scott

thomas
vecchio
Alger
Appelman
Berry
Brown
Cheshire
Cimo
Coleman
Darden
Delrosario
Doolittle
Franco
Gentry
Gravitz
Ives
M
M
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McGill
Perry
Puglise
Ramsay
Reed
Reilly
Rojas
Scott
Sedberry
Stewart
Travis
Withers
Wolfe
eldredge

suz
Julie
Brett
Max
Chip
Sydney
Rob
Laura
Heather
Tanya
Leeanne
Cedric
Crystal
Lauren
Michael
Nora
Charlotte
Charlotte
Charlotte
Maria
Simona
Kimberly
Chloe
John
Greg
Pearl
Rebecca
George
Mark
Michael
Meg
Jordan
laura

SAFMC Sept. 2024 Council Meeting

Attendee Report: (9/1724)

Report Generated:

09/20/2024 09:44 AM EDT

Webinar ID

504-848-323

Actual Start Date/Time

09/17/2024 07:44 AM EDT

Staff Details

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Yes

Interest Rating

Not applicable for staff

Attendee Details

Last Name

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Bianchi

Bissette

Bradshaw

Brouwer

Bunting

Byrd

Cermak

Christmas-Svajdlenka

Cimo

Clarke

Clinton

Cox

Curtis

Dancy

Darden

DeVictor

Degan

Delrosario

DiJohnson

Dukes

Emory

Finch

Flowers

Foss

Gentner

Gentry

Glazier

First Name

Bailey

Alan

Jesse

Christopher

Myra

Matthew

Julia

Bridget

Anna-Mai

Laura

Lora

Haley

Jack

Judd

Kiley

Tanya

Rick

Jacqui

Leeanne

Alex

Amy

Meaghan

Margaret

Jared

Kristin

BRAD

Lauren

Edward

Gooding	Elizabeth
Gore	Karla
Green	Matthew
Grist	Joseph
Guyas	Martha
Gwin	Earl
Hadley	John
Harrison	Alana
Helies	Frank
Helmey	Judy
Hollensead	Lisa
Horton	Christopher
Hull	Jimmy
KLASNICK	KELLY
Keppler	Blaik
Kerns	Toni
Kittle	Christine
Klibansky	Lara
Knowlton	Kathy
Larkin	Michael
Lazarre	Dominique
Lee	Max
M Borland	Gary
Malinowski	Richard
Marhefka	00Kerry
Masi	Michelle
Matter	Vivian
McGirl	Maria
McGovern	Jack
Mehta	Nikhil
Mendez Ferrer	Natasha
Moore	Jeff
Murphey	Trish
Neer	Julie
Newman	Thomas
Oliver	Ashley
Ostroff	Jenny
Ott	Emily
Package-Ward	Christina
Phillips	Charlie
Ramsay	Chloe
Records	David
Roller	00Tom
Rule	Erica

SCHLICK	CJ
Salmon	Brandi
Scott	Rebecca
Sedberry	George
Seward	McLean
Silvas	Rachael
Sinkus	Wiley
Smart	Tracey
Smit-Brunello	Monica
Sramek	Mark
Stemle	Adam
Stephen	Jessica
Stephens	Haley
Travis	Michael
Walia	Matt
Walsh	Mick
Walsh	Jason
Walter	John
Wamer III	David
White	Geoff
Whitten	Meredith
Wiegand	Christina
Williams	Erik
Willis	Michelle
Withers	Meg
Zales	Bob
broussard	billy
colby	barrett
collier	chip
gloeckner	david
griner	tim
iverson	Kim
I	i
oden	jeff
sandorf	scott
thomas	suz
vecchio	Julie
Alger	Brett
Appelman	Max
Berry	Chip
Brown	Sydney
Caraballo	Leysha
Cheshire	Rob
Coleman	Heather

Doolittle
Franco
Franke
Glazier
Gravitz
Hogan
Ives
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Patterson
Pease
Perry
Porch
Puglise
Reed
Reilly
Reinhardt
Rojas
Stewart
Waldo
Wolfe
carvalho
eldredge

Cedric
Crystal
Emilie
Edward
Michael
LeAnn
Nora
Charlotte
Charlotte
Charlotte
Nicholas
Thomas
Simona
Clay
Kimberly
John
Greg
James
Pearl
Mark
Jennifer
Jordan
avelino
laura