

**SOUTH ATLANTIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL**

**COUNCIL SESSION II**

**Lumina Holiday Inn  
Wrightsville Beach, North Carolina**

**December 5-6, 2024**

**Council Members**

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Gary Borland  
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Tom Roller  
Robert Spottswood, Jr.  
Andy Strelcheck

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Emily Ott  
Dr. Mike Shmidtke  
Rachael Silvas  
Nicholas Smillie  
Suzanna Thomas  
Greyson Webb  
Christina Wiegand  
Meg Withers

**Attendees and Invited Participants**

Monica Smit-Brunello  
Dr. Marcel Reichert  
Sonny Gwin  
Dr. John Walter  
Kathy Knowlton

Rick DeVictor  
Shepard Grimes  
Scott Baker  
John Sanchez  
Kristin Foss

**Observers and Participants**

Other observers and participants attached.

The Council Session II of the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council convened at the Lumina Holiday Inn, Wrightsville Beach, North Carolina, on Thursday, December 5, 2024, and was called to order by Chairman Trish Murphey.

MS. MURPHEY: All right. I guess we can go ahead and get started. I know we're a little behind, but I think we can push through and finish up today. For one thing, we definitely have to let Scott Baker do his outreach and communication report, because he drove all the way here for today, and so we need to at least let him do his thing, and so let's not forget that, but I think we can push through pretty quick. Right now, I've got Andy and John are going to do agency reports for the Regional Office and the Science Center. Andy, do you want to go ahead and take over?

MR. STRELCHECK: Sure. I will keep my report brief. I guess a few things of note, and so, since the last council meeting, we've had two hurricanes, as you all know. It's been quite an impact, obviously, for my regional office. I had many employees that had homes flooded, or damaged from the storm, and certainly our larger fishing community has been heavily impacted, especially on the Gulf coast, but also impacts on the east coast.

We now, right now, we are currently without an office, because we have mold, and remediation happening, and so fun times for us, but, in terms of other things to note, we've been working on our permit system. I've given you updates periodically. I think, the last update, we were talking with you about the permit snapshot, which is to give the council the data that you need to move forward with amendments.

We're at about 90 percent completion, and so it's still taking longer than I would have liked, but we've made some substantial progress, and that will also help with the long-term fix of the system, and we've been able to replicate the historical data for permit counts and other information, and so we are making some good headway there, and then, soon, we'll be announcing a closure of commercial cobia. That's something that we got the request from Atlantic States, and so be on the lookout for that. Otherwise, I don't know if Jenny Lee is online or not. I don't have anything specific to cover with the protected resources update, and so I'll just stop there and leave it at that. It's been a long day.

MS. MURPHEY: Does anybody have any questions? Andy, I just want to say, you know, we're all thinking of you guys, your employees, and having to rebuild after Helene, and I just want to also recognize Florida. Thank you so much for sending your swift water folks up to North Carolina, and so it's been hard for everyone, and so thanks, and we're all thinking of you guys. Well, next is John.

DR. WALTER: Thanks. I'll give the Southeast Center report. I think many of you know we've experienced some problems with our infrastructure, with our building in Beaufort, our Building Number 2 that housed our age and growth, our SEFIS trap video survey crew, as well as a lot of our NOS partners, particularly their harmful algal bloom research, and so that building has been condemned.

We had to work really hard to get all of our stuff, and equipment, and personal effects out of it, but we're no longer able to use that building, and so that's going to put us in a bit of a setback, in terms of our capacity, particularly for ageing, until we find a new place temporarily, and then until we eventually solve the problem, find a new building, and probably rebuild, but that's going to

take some time to find the funding, and it's going to take the time it takes to rebuild, which could be a while, so I just wanted to give a shoutout to our staff there, our NOS partners, who really pitched in to try to get stuff out, and to be safe, because the building was deemed unsafe, which getting in there was not a safe thing, to get in there, but they got stuff out. That is just where we are with that.

On the positive, we've got a new vessel that's going to substantially increase our capacity to do a lot of our surveys, both in the Gulf and the South Atlantic. It's a 150-foot vessel, ninety-eight gross tons. We're outfitting it now for research. It was originally a Gulf oil and gas tender, and we'll outfit it, and the benefits of it is it's going to be able to do a lot of work close around structures. It'll be able to get around oil and gas and offshore wind structures because that's what it's designed to do, with dynamic positioning, so that's a great boost to our capacity.

On the offshore wind front, we've been quite busy. There is a Central Atlantic 2 offshore wind energy area that spans from New York down to the South Carolina and North Carolina border. That's going to potentially substantially affect this region, and we've been doing the marine spatial planning, to find the best locations to site offshore wind.

Some of the key things we're considering are the commercial fisheries in the region, the key species and trust resources in the region, and the migratory corridors for a lot of the animals that need to cross the key biogeographic divides that the capes are, and so that's something that we're in close collaboration with our NCCOS partners on the marine spatial planning, and in conversations with BOEM on how to best find space in the ocean for all of the competing trust resources.

Then, in terms of something that I wanted to comment on, and I think Andy brought up how we have rerun the SEDAR 73 stock assessment model, in what we would call an update lite, and it doesn't include all of the data that would go into a stock assessment, in terms of we don't have all the updated age comp, but it's the landings, the indices, and some of the age comp we had available, and that was an exceptional circumstance.

Exceptional because it was to support an exceptional, and should be quite rare, circumstance of a secretarial amendment, but we did that because we did not want to embark upon that lightly. We felt that having the most current, best available data was something that was owed to the people who would be affected by that, and that's why we motivated the resources to make that happen.

Then what that did do, and I think it was aptly noted, is that demonstrated that we do have the capacity to do this, and, in fact, that is something that we're proposing in our revisions to the SEDAR process, is that we do incorporate and use these update lites in some manner outside of SEDAR, done by the center, according to the specifications of a previous model, but that allows us to bring models up to the most current data pretty quickly, which I think would actually address one of the key concerns that our models are out of date. It does require some trust that we're going to do that according to the specifications, and it also requires us to do that outside of the full SEDAR process, because it needs to be done relatively quickly.

As we further embark upon those SEDAR revisions, which we have been working with the council staff to develop that process, working through the SEDAR Steering Committee, and we see that as an essential and critical need for this region to be able to improve the assessment and management advice to the council.

What we've been doing has not always worked. It's been too slow. It's often not been the right tool for the job, we find, and what we want to do is right-size the assessment to the management need. That's finding the right tool for the job. In some cases, particularly for the key stocks, we're talking about those are the ones that are the squeakiest wheels that are going to get the most attention.

For other stocks, it may indeed be that a simpler, more rapid, and easier to implement tool is the right one for the job. We'll be able to do further analyses to identify the right tool for the job, and that's something that our Sustainable Fisheries Division Director Shannon Cass-Calay has been presenting to the SEDAR Steering Committee, and our staff are working, but I will say don't just trust what we say.

We will show that this works, and we're going to work on showing, and not just telling, and we're pretty convinced that having more up-to-date models is going to be better than projections that make five-year assumptions, and I think that's going to be pretty straightforward to show, that that's a better process for it, even if it doesn't have every single piece of data. All right.

Now, risk. I wanted to comment a bit on risk, because I commend the council for the ABC control rule that puts risk determinations firmly within the purview of the council. That is your call to make. How close to the overfishing limit do you want to fish, which is essentially what the P\* does. It produces the buffer between the ABC and the OFL.

However, the concern I have is that we are talking about risk with SPR. That is not a conversation about risk. SPR is the proxy for the fishing mortality rate that would produce MSY. In a perfect world, and perfect modeling context, that would be estimated within the stock assessment model, and so there would not be even discussion, or decision, about the SPR proxy. It just happens that, in situations where we can't estimate it in the model, we have to employ the most appropriate proxy. How do we determine the most appropriate proxy?

That's based on what we've estimated for other stocks, and we' found that it's usually higher than 30, SPR 30, and, when the life history, and other biological parameters of that stock, would suggest that it's closer to FSPR 40 or sometimes above, that's how we determine that appropriateness, and what I would like the conversation to be is that's a scientific determination.

If the council would like to deviate from their own SSC's recommendation, then the case would have to be made on a scientific argument. Otherwise, the Science Center, when asked to then certify the entire assessment and management package as BSIA, we would be unlikely to certify that black sea bass BSIA using FSPR 30.

I've heard the concerns and the desire to have runs using both of those. We'll do those. It will slow things down, because it will be a duplicate set of projections. I noted that, but I think the key thing here is putting risk decisions in the right place. The ABC control rule is that right place.

I would recommend looking closely at the exercise that was just done, to ensure that those risk ratings are achieving that risk level according to how closely you're fishing to the overfishing limit, and, if it turns out that going through that process is putting too much precaution, or too less precaution, and I think, when Judd put that up there, I was looking very closely at what that was

doing, because it's translating to the P\* directly, and that's the thing to look at. Is it doing what you want, in terms of your risk tolerance as a council?

So, with that, I would like to finish by saying that we are very concerned about people who have been affected by the hurricanes. It seems like it's hit every part of our region, it seems like. We know you're still going through things in North Carolina. I know that many of our staff are still going through things in Florida, and so be safe, and have a wonderful holiday season, and we look to have a productive 2025. Thank you.

MS. MURPHEY: Thank you, John. Does anybody have any questions for John? Okay. Seeing, no questions -- Okay, Andy.

MR. STRELCHECK: Not a question for John. I just wanted to go back to the protected resources report, and so Shep reminded me, and one thing to note is we are working on a recovery plan for giant manta ray. We also have notice of initiation of a five-year review, but we may be developing a proposed rule, a 4d rule, for protections for giant manta ray, and so I just wanted to note that, because we do have a major giant manta ray nursery ground abundance area, especially off of Florida, and so any sort of proposed regulations, we'll want you to be aware of, and will bring forward for comment, and input, at such time that they're available, and so I just wanted to flag that as something new that was in our protected resources report.

MS. MURPHEY: Thank you, Andy. Charlie.

MR. PHILLIPS: Andy, speaking of protected resources, do we have any idea of when they're going to decide on the speed limit rule, or if they're going to decide on it?

MR. STRELCHECK: I have no update for you, and so I have no information.

MS. MURPHEY: Okay. Thank you, guys, for your updates. Next on the agenda is Scott Baker. He's going to go through the Outreach and Communications Advisory Panel report, and thanks for rushing up here.

MR. BAKER: Thank you, Madam Chair and council members. Normally, I wouldn't have a long drive today, because I live in Wilmington, but I was in a meeting in Raleigh, and so I had to come back home. Anyway, my name is Scott Baker. I'm the AP chair of the Outreach and Communications Advisory Panel. I'm just going to give a brief report about what we discussed at our annual October meeting.

In general, we generally start these meetings by having kind of a round robin about what interesting things people want to share. I'll highlight a couple of those, and then we just kind of go through our typical kind of standard updates, council activities proposed, and existing and planned future activities, like the mackerel port meetings and stakeholder meetings, and so I'll go through each of those, briefly.

Some of our AP members share some really interesting things. Christina, from the Caribbean Council, was there, and she gave a lot of updates about some great stuff that the Caribbean Council is doing, including a really neat video. I don't think I have the link to it, but, of course, a Spanish-speaking video about the big fish initiative, but it also deals with barotrauma, using descending

devices, things like that. It was very well done. They've got a lot of things going on, particularly with underutilized species as well.

Emily, from the Gulf Council was not able to attend our meeting. Like has already been discussed here today, it was on the fringe of hurricane, and so we had decreased attendance, but we still had a good discussion.

Of course, just like you've probably already heard this week, we've talked a lot about the outreach initiatives, with the best fishing practices, that type of activity, including update from our Sea Grant regional reef fish extension person, Greyson Webb.

We also heard -- You know, again, DMF talked a little bit about the upcoming required recreational angler reporting requirement at the state level, and, also, I'm sure you know, also the South Atlantic Red Snapper Research Program -- That has been extended until fall of 2026. That initiative, administratively, is led by South Carolina Sea Grant, and, of course, most of the work is happening at a variety of partners, you know, around the region, including NC State and the University of Florida and others.

So just some general things that the AP, you know, talked about, in relation to some of these activities related to the SAFMC Release, the fellowship, and best fishing practices was, you know, people are continually hearing a lot of, you know, talk about shark depredation and how that's impacting their fishing experience.

I know there was some research, maybe a couple years now, from Brendan Runde, out of NC State, looking at how at least descending devices were helping to prevent depredation, or at least it wasn't occurring as much as people thought it was, and so there was an emphasis on using more -- You know, at least descending devices is a good excuse to help to avoid, or minimize, shark depredation.

We talked about -- There was a couple members that brought up about how, you know, there's these requirements for, you know, best fishing practices, and for snapper grouper fishing, where, you know, some of the required materials are not necessarily easy to get to, or get access to, like descending devices, some of the appropriate-sized circle hooks, you know, the dip nets, you know, things like that, and so there was an emphasis to try to, you know, re-engage these tackle shops, to ensure, or at least make sure, that they are actually have these items for sale, so that people actually have access to them, so they can't use that as an excuse for not having those materials.

Again, we kind of talked a little about the best fishing practices, and the MVP program, and how some of that content materials could be used with any private recreational permit education requirements, should that come to fruition in some capacity.

Of course, a general theme of our discussion, which it kind of always has been, has been the need for really in-person communication, when we have the bandwidth to do that. It's always like beneficial, and always good things come from that. It's also, of course, very limiting. Everybody is busy, and everybody has different priorities, but what we've learned, and I'm sure you've heard about this with the citizen science presentations, like people really do respond to that in-person connection. They really want to hear from people. They really feel engaged by being approached and listened to, particularly with some of these very contentious issues.

Just a little bit about the citizen science program. I know that you all probably talked about it in depth and we just -- We had some feedback about how to enhance FISHstory, and I think one of those was maybe partnering with some additional venues, like natural history museums, aquariums, the American Zoo Aquarium Association, or AZA. A lot of those groups are like non-profits. They have large bases of clients, and members and, of course, those people are already engaged in this type of field, and so they might be willing to serve as experts. Also, they might have some collections.

Also, there was talk about, you know, sharing the need for this with some of our academic partners, like the American Fisheries Society, and different students, and so, again, kind of like professional citizen scientists, at least those people who are already engaged, because they're interested in fish.

Kind of going back to -- We talked about the citizen science portal, how, you know, input was really important from fishermen, giving them the voice, giving them an option to share ideas, and, you know, collectively, we kind of thought that piggybacking on this shark depredation concept, if there was a way to incorporate that into a citizen science project, if there was a way to create something meaningful from that.

There was, of course, the issue with not really knowing the scale and scope of management in regard to HMS, and so there's some gray area there on what actually could be done. Again, meeting expectations of what these people who are proposing like shark depredation type ideas, like making sure that we won't necessarily be able to solve their problems, and so just, again, managing expectations, and I think that's a big part of what the council does, what fishery scientists do, and so it's just a big -- It's something to always keep in the back of your mind.

From a broader perspective, we talked -- We heard from Nick about the digital communications, and we heard a lot of good stuff about the website and social media, a lot of the trends, a lot of things that have been tracked over the last couple of years, and we're seeing definitely ticks up in different, you know, meeting dates, fishery openings, things like that. It's -- You can definitely see the spikes in activity.

One of the things that came out was we actually have quite a few women on the AP, and the need for more content including women AP members and scientists within the social messaging for the council, and so, in other words, capturing the spirit of representing women and others that traditionally are not probably represented in a lot of our messaging.

There was general support for a regulations FAQ, and we were asked about that, and, of course, a lot of people seem to come to the website for regulations, whether it's through the council website itself or through, you know, the Fish Rules app. We had some very positive feedback for the What It Means To Me project.

We watched a couple of videos, and I think we watched the one with Mark, and the great thing about these videos, I think, is there's ability to like shorten and reuse some of these really engaging materials, to broadcast or share the message, you know, because people get tired of just reading bullets, and news releases, and things, and they really like to hear a story, and something that relates to them, and so any way that we can kind of package this information in a way that's

engaging, and gets people on the hook for what they need to know, and what actions they can take. So, again, it was very positive, and the AP really liked that.

We had a brief discussion about the habitat blueprint, and we kind of just reiterated some of our previous recommendations, and we had positive feedback on the website updates. One of the things that we collectively discussed was knowing that the council is very limited in actually what they can do for this, and so trying to paint that as a picture, with the FAQ, or at least talk about some of the habitat issues in general, and then there was also discussion about -- Because so much research happens at the academic level for fisheries habitat, perhaps attending some of these primary literature conferences to hear about some of the new things going on.

I think there's two more bullets. We talked about the port meetings, and we really liked where Christina is taking that. We heard some updates, as you all did, about everything. One of our recommendations was, given the recordings of all the meetings, just try to do some exploratory sentiment analysis, and you kind of get a feel for people feeling this way, or that way, particularly given that some of the meetings were almost all recreational, and some were almost all commercial, and see if people were saying the same thing.

We talked about the stakeholder meetings, and we had a lot of thoughts about this, and, generally, we thought it was very good, a very good thing to go through. There's a bunch of different bullets here, but one of the things was maybe if we could rename these to something other than meetings, and everything gets named a meeting. It's not really a workshop, and we don't know what it would be, but something other than a meeting.

Market the opportunity to speak with council members, and I think that's the main draw here, to be able to speak with people outside of the box, or outside of the formal meeting format, even though it technically is a formal meeting.

One thing that we do, in the extension a lot, is we try to do pre-surveys, you know, to better understand our expectations, and so, when we do a workshop or something, we love to get people to just fill out a very brief thing, to tell us something, and then hit them again before they leave, to see if we actually moved the needle anywhere, and you might be able to do that with different things other than filling out a formal survey.

We thought that perhaps using more -- Don't use the structured breakout groups, or at least have unstructured time before and after the structured time, because a lot of people who are not familiar with meetings are going to come to something like that, they're going to probably feel like they're in a cage, and they're going to feel like I want to get whatever I came here to say off my chest, right away, and then, once they do that, they might be more open to being -- To listening to what others say and things like that.

We kind of felt that, if there was an opportunity, if there was a willingness of the council members, to be directly on the invite side of these types of activities, and, in other words, being the social media feed, being a short video, something that's imploring people to attend, and that may come off better as having the council staff, or NOAA Fisheries, or someone else say please come to this meeting, because, ultimately, the council members want the public to come to this, so they can engage with them. With that, that concludes my report, and I'll be happy to take any questions. Thank you.



MS. MURPHEY: Thank you, Scott. Does anybody have any questions for Scott? Okay. Seeing none, well, thank you so much, Scott, and last, but not least, we have Marcel, who can finish his SSC report. I'm sure he's psyched about that.

DR. REICHERT: I'll try to be brief, and I think we can be out of here by 5:00. There were a couple of items that the SSC discussed. One of the things we went through for the first time was the ABC control rule and stock risk ratings, and so this was the first time we were applying our new ABC control rule.

We mostly discussed the Category 1 stocks, but there is a need for us to start discussing Category 2 to 4, especially with the blueline tilefish stock assessment review coming up. Some members felt that the management risk and scientific uncertainty were actually more intertwined in the new ABC control rule, and felt that it may be difficult to isolate scientific uncertainty from the management risk, and, during the meeting, it was clarified how exactly the scientific assessment uncertainty was included in the ABC control, and I think that clarified some of these issues, for at least some of the SSC members.

We discussed some other methods for characterizing uncertainty that can be used in the new ABC control rule, and, although there is an opportunity, or there's a way, to make adjustments to the  $P^*$ , we felt it's very important that there is consistency in cases we do make  $P^*$  adjustments to the stock ratings. We had a lot of discussion about that, and we felt it may be useful to compare the performance of the new ABC control rule with the old ABC control rule, to have an idea for performance and consistency.

In terms of stock risk ratings, you guys talked about this earlier, and so I'll go through this quickly. Again, it was the first time that the SSC, but also the council, applied the stock risk ratings. We discussed that perhaps it's possible to consider a recruitment attribute, although we realized that the language is in the FMP, and so I'm not sure how possible that is.

There's some language in the SSC report relative to clarifying some of the language in the stock rating risk table. As an example, for the desirability in the recreational fishery, people would like to fish for red snapper, but the regulations may prevent it, and so how to address that in the stock rating, and you've seen that in your report, the SSC's stock risk ratings.

We talked a little bit about the SPR proxies. I'm not sure how much detail I should provide, because I think it was mentioned that the council may get a presentation on that. Erik Williams gave us a presentation on the SPR proxies, and so I will go through this quickly and just highlight some things that we discussed.

As was mentioned earlier, for the stocks that we've been dealing with, many SPR values were based on assumptions that were made a long time ago, and, in the literature in the 1990s, an SPR range of 20 to 40 percent was usually mentioned, but that actually changed to SPR in the 40 to 60 percent range in the literature since 2000, and Erik mentioned that there is a paper that looked at a large number of species in the database, and the mean SPR was 47 percent, and then, nationwide, most SPR proxies are currently in the 30 to 50 percent range.

Then, also, it was mentioned that the NOAA technical guidance on SPR, that's consistent with National Standard 1, recommends an SPR in the 30 to 60 percent range, with possibly 40 to 45 as a default for most stocks, and so, given the literature, and the guidance that was provided during the SSC meeting, the current recommendation by the SSC is to use an SPR, a minimum SPR, of 40 percent as an appropriate proxy, and that was not just based on the literature and the guidance that was provided during the SSC meeting, but we felt that the SPR represents probably the -- Or perhaps the lowest bound of the recommended range.

As was mentioned, for scamp and mutton snapper, there were some recent stock assessments, and, in those stock assessments the standing stock biomass at MSY was based on the stock-recruit relationship, and so we didn't need proxies. However, if you look at the equivalent SPRs, they were 52 percent for scamp and 40 percent for mutton snapper.

MS. MURPHEY: Sorry. I think Kerry has a question.

MS. MARHEFKA: Yes, and I want to ask you a question about this SPR proxy, and so, if there's more slides on this, but I just -- At the end of your discussion of this, I just have a question for you.

DR. REICHERT: I have a few more bullet points about the SPR and so -- It was also mentioned that there's a paper by Zhou, from 2020, which was kind of counterintuitive, that faster-growing, low-survival, and short-lived species actually have a higher SPR.

Some of the recommendations the SSC had was to investigate why, in the Pacific Fisheries Management Council, higher SPR proxies are used. For instance, they were mentioning an SPR of 50 percent, and that may provide some additional guidance on the factors why that may warrant a higher SPR for some of our stocks. We also were wondering, in cases when the recruitment is crashing, if the SPR calculation will hold.

Then Eril mentioned that paper by Erik Williams and Kyle Shertzer from 2003 that found a direct relationship between the shape of the SPR F curve and the steepness of the stock-recruitment relationship. In other words, the productivity of a stock and the stock-recruit relationship should be re-evaluated at each stock assessment, and I believe that is my last slide on that, and so, Kerry.

MS. MARHEFKA: Thanks Marcel, and I'm not -- Just so that Dr. Walter doesn't freak out down there, I'm not trying to wade into the science of it all, but I am trying to get an understanding, because it has real implications, obviously. It seems kind of like what's to stop -- I mean, if 40 is great, 50 is amazing, 60 is even better. I mean, what's -- Where is -- Is there ever an upper bound of how high an ideal SPR number would be, or are we looking towards -- I understand there's life histories involved, right, and like you're going to want a different SPR for different life histories.

That much I do understand, but, in that case, I think it's hard not to be concerned that there's going to be some paper someday that's like 80 percent SPR for snowy grouper is amazing, and so I just worry -- That's kind of where, having been here so long, and watched the number creep from 20 to 30 to 40, and, again, we need to do it, if that's what's right for that species, but where does it stop?

DR. REICHERT: I find it difficult to answer that question, because that's not something the SSC discussed, and so it's difficult for me, at this point to give an SSC standpoint, and John may be able to address some of that. I wouldn't call it creep. I would call it based on accumulated knowledge, and based on life history, and based on experiences. I think the overall conclusion, if you look at the literature review, and that's basically what Erik -- I believe what Erik Williams presented to us.

Right now, if you look at the literature -- But it's a range. As I mentioned in my presentation, an SPR of 40 percent is more appropriate, for a vast array of species, than an SPR 30. As I also mentioned, that paper from 2020 indicated that there may be some species in which that is not the case. There may be species where the SPR may be a little higher, or a little lower, and I think, unfortunately, in a lot of these cases, you don't have that comparison, because you cannot estimate. You use proxy for a reason.

That's why I mentioned those two stock assessments of scamp, and I think it was mutton, where you can actually do the comparison, and they were kind of in that 40 percent, or 40 percent-plus, range. I'm not sure if that answers your question, but --

MR. PHILLIPS: Just for FYI, and I'm curious, and we just got through golden tile. We seem to be hitting pretty much where we need to hit on golden tile, and it seems to have been that way for the last couple of assessments. What would have been, or is, the SPR for golden tile?

DR. REICHERT: I do not know that, off the top of my head, but that's a good question, and I think that is something that could potentially be -- Chip.

DR. COLLIER: The value on the books is 30 right now, but, if you look at the stock assessment, it ended up indicating that right around 40 percent was what was coming out as the recommendation.

DR. REICHERT: Can I ask -- So, in the previous stock assessment, it was that we had a proxy, and, in the current one, it was estimated, and so, based on the current one, it would be the SPR 40, just to make sure I understand what you're saying.

DR. COLLIER: The MSY value that's coming out of the current stock assessment, they did the SPR curve in relation to it, and it indicated right around 40 percent was where the MSY is coming out.

DR. REICHERT: Thank you.

DR. WALTER: I'm not trying to be argumentative. Maybe I'll just try to get some clarity here. Part of the reason why you might be seeing creep is some of the things we're learning about these animals are -- We're learning that the maximum age might be older, as we sample more, that they live longer, and it's kind of akin to, if you found out that your old-growth forest took even longer to grow, you couldn't log it as often.

Now, the key distinction there, for golden tilefish, is that the MSY was estimated in the model. That's the goal, is that we're able to estimate it, and that's then -- We don't need to invoke a proxy,

and so, in that case, it's coming out of the stock assessment. It's not a decision that needs to be made. We don't have to borrow a proxy from somewhere. Everything is working.

I think that to the point that we -- Kerry's point of is there just creep of it, and where does the creep stop, and I think there's a really valid point there to make, in the sense that, quite often, we seem to be having to invoke proxies more often than we had in the past, and so what's going on there? Well, a lot of the things that might be going on is what we're calling non-stationarity, where things may be changing. Our ability to estimate those reference points is due to an assumption of things being constant over a certain time period.

Quite often, that is going to get challenged, and I think we're going to get challenged by that even more in the future, as things change more rapidly, and that's a valid area of exploration, as to what to do in those situations, and can we rely on long-term reference points, when things might be non-stationary? The SSC has been really dealing -- Trying to deal with this as best we can. I think that's going to be the challenge, moving forward for us, is what do we do about a stock that might not be able to return to a long-term potential, and so that's an active area of research.

I think, in terms of where we're going to probably be going, is how we better manage through non-stationarity, and, right now, I think that's -- We don't have the answer right away, right now, but there's certainly technical guidance coming forward, a national standard on how to deal with non-stationarity, to do something like a deferred BMSY approach, where we might not be able to actually estimate it.

We might have to say, what can we do when we don't know that, and we can manage for a fishing mortality rate that doesn't overfish. There's a lot of options there, and I think those are the things that, in particular, the national SSC meeting that was talking, and specifically focused on non-stationarity, and I think those are key things to keep in mind as really management bodies like this confront a non-stationary future. Thanks.

MS. MURPHEY: Thank you, John. I'm going to go ahead and turn it back over to Marcel, please.

DR. REICHERT: Thank you, John. That was a nice clarification there. We also talked about the mutton snapper and yellowtail snapper SSC review. You guys talked about that, and so I will skip that. John mentioned the Scientific Coordination Committee, the eighth annual meeting. I went to that meeting. I have to say that I really enjoyed that, not only the topic, ABC control rules and social and economic issues in a changing environment, and we did talk about the non-stationary. I think, the non-stationary reference point, that's one of the things I think the SSC will continue to discuss in the future.

I also enjoyed the interactions with other SSC members, and to see how other SSCs function, and sometimes it's entirely different from the way our SSC functions, and so I really enjoyed that meeting. We did receive, at the SSC, a report, and the report of the SSC meeting, I think, will be available early next year.

We discussed three actionable items that was important for the meeting, to not just have a discussion, but actually come up with something that could be used in the various regions. We currently have three actionable items, and we'll continue that discussion, and I assume that, at some point, we'll provide a report to the council on those actionable items.

We received an update from the Science Center on the precision threshold workshop. There's a review scheduled, I believe, in early 2025, and there's probably going to be some SSC involvement in that review. We recommended, for test species, species with high PSEs, and low sample sizes, such as tilefish species and snowy grouper, but we also said that maybe black sea bass, and one or more unassessed stocks, would be good to use as test species for that precision threshold.

Then one of our last items was the -- At every meeting, we talk about the SSC working groups. There was no workgroup activity or updates. We will need to select chairs, and to add some members to those working groups, and we'll try to do that regularly, to see if the working groups are still relevant.

One of the things we talked about is a subgroup for a joint review of blueline tilefish that you guys talked about earlier, and I believe that will be happening in early 2025, and I think that's going to be done via webinar. That completes my overview report from items that we didn't discuss earlier, and so thank you very much.

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

MS. DUKES: Thank you, Marcel. I appreciate that presentation, and I also appreciated the SSC's discussions about struggling to have that full understanding of the outputs that are going to apply for the new versus the old ABC control rule, and I would support the exercise to compare those with previous assessments, and so what would next steps be like to see that happening for us? I think it would be more and I'm not sure of the process of that question, and so --

DR. REICHERT: Judd, do you --

DR. CURTIS: Thanks, Amy. That was some discussion at the SSC as well, and I think kind of the resolution was then kind of more of a direction to staff, from the SSC, to start looking at the application of the old ABC control rule, with the stock assessments that have gone through the process already, and then going through with the new risk ratings that you all have developed, and see how they compare, and so staff will be working on that for the SSC in April, and then, eventually, we'll present it to the council, if it's requested.

MS. MURPHEY: Do we have any other questions for Marcel? Okay. Myra.

MS. BROUWER: Thank you, Trish. This is for either Andy, or John Walter, and I'm not sure. I wasn't here when you guys gave the agency updates, and I believe we had requested an update on where we are on progress of the commercial e-logbook amendment, and maybe as far as not the rulemaking, but, you know, all the work that needs to go in the background to implement it.

MR. STRELCHECK: Hold on a minute while we draw straws to see who is going to comment. Anyone have a coin?

DR. WALTER: All right. Thank you for asking. I know there's been a lot of desire to see these electronic logbooks move forward. I think most of our fishermen would love to be able to use that, and not use paper, for the most part, because I think it'll be faster, and more efficient, and so, unfortunately, the original goal of implementing by June 2025 is likely not going to happen, due

to delays in fixing some of the issues with the permit database system, and so that's going to likely push back operational implementation into later in 2025, if not 2026.

Once we get that system fixed, then we will be able to move forward with it, and, up until that time, we'll be working on improving the database, technical specifications for it, and one of the things that I think is important is a lot of people have asked how can they get involved, either can they get involved early, or volunteer to be some of the initial people involved in it, and so our lead on that is Sidney Alhale, at the Science Center.

If people are interested in volunteering, if and when we can become operational, and we do already have some overlap with GARFO permits, but, if people in this region want to get involved, they can reach out to Sidney Alhale at our Science Center, and so then there's also a question of will there be overlap between paper and electronic. Once electronic goes fully implemented, then it will be electronic only, and so we certainly want people to ensure that they've got ways to be able to submit those electronically, but, again, like we said, it's not going to be until later in 2025, if not, more likely, into 2026.

MS. DUKES: Thank you.

MS. MURPHEY: Thanks, John. Well, guys, we actually did all right, and we've caught back up. I will adjourn for today, but, you guys, we are coming in at eight in the morning, for a closed session to review our executive director, and so be there at eight o'clock.

(Whereupon, the meeting recessed on December 5, 2024.)

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DECEMBER 6, 2024

FRIDAY MORNING SESSION

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The Council Session II of the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council reconvened at the Lumina Holiday Inn, Wrightsville Beach, North Carolina, on Friday, December 6, 2024, and was called to order by Chairman Trish Murphey.

MS. MURPHEY: All right. Good morning, everyone. We're on our last day of our meeting, and we'll be going through committee reports, but, first, I want to turn it over to Kerry Marhefka.

MS. MARHEFKA: Yes, and I just wanted to take a minute. I know many people in this room knew Jody Gay, who was a council member from North Carolina from 1995 to 2001. That coincided, personally, for me, at the time when I was staff. He was a commercial fisherman, and, also, he did recreational fishing, and charter fishing, and he ended up starting what I'm told is a very successful fishing lure business called Blue Water Candy Lures. I don't know if any of you have seen it.

For me, he personally made a big impression. He sort of was one of the first fishermen that I would have experienced being part of this process, and he laid the foundation for how you participate in this process, for me, as a fisherman, and I learned a lot about it, and it made me want to sit in this role, because of him and, of course, someone like Ben Hartig, but Jody passed away earlier. He was married to his awesome, funny, hilarious wife, Terri, for forty-three years.

They were a very sweet couple. I just didn't want this moment to pass without acknowledging the time and the work he put into this council, because, when he was a council member, he was a very good council member. He was a very dedicated council member.

He did a lot of good, for a lot of fishermen and really, you know, for the fishery in North Carolina, and I just wanted us to take a minute to acknowledge his passing, and acknowledge his time on the council, and so I know there might be one or two other people who wanted to say something, but, you know, if anyone knows Terri, I hope that word is spread to her that this body is thinking of her and Jesse at this time, and we appreciate what Jody gave to this council, and so I will not -- I'll hand it back over to you, Trish, to call on people who might want to say something.

MS. MURPHEY: Thank you, Kerry. Is there anyone else who would like to say something? Charlie.

MR. PHILLIPS: Thank you, Madam Chair, and, yes, I remember Jody, too. He was a really good guy, you know, and he didn't get bent out of shape about stuff. He was the kind of person, and had the kind of personality and experience, that we seek to find for council members, and so, yes, he was a very good example of what we should be.

MS. MURPHEY: Thank you, Charlie. John.

MR. SANCHEZ: Thank you, Madam Chair. I had the pleasure of serving with Jody Gay in the 1990s on this council, and he's one of the special things that makes this process great. When you're a member of public just coming into this, it's overwhelming, and it's intimidating. Then you meet someone like Jody, who befriends you right away, and that's one of the beauties of this process, is you get to meet people that you otherwise might not meet, being from Miami, Florida, all the way to North Carolina.

We developed a great friendship, and he was that kind of person that, after a long day on the council, getting it absolutely handed to you, he would make you smile, with that mischievous cat-that-ate-the-canary grin that he had. He was a dear friend, and I regret not having kept up with them. Everybody gets busy, with their life, and their pursuits, and so, everybody here, if there's someone that impacts your life in a beautiful way, please pick up the phone and call them, or else you end up speaking to them where it doesn't make a difference.

My heart goes with him, and he wouldn't miss an opportunity to remind me that, Sanchez, you're fishing in a place called Holiday Isle, Key West. I'm in Cape Fear, Frying Pan Shoals, and, a few times we were up here at a meeting, I would go to his house, and we would have dinner with Terri and his family, and Jody Gay happened to live on Friendly Lane, if you can believe that, and that came in handy once as we were checking into -- When we used to have meetings at the Pier House.

I was checking in on my buddy, if he had checked in, and I'm at the front desk, and I'm saying, has Mr. Gay checked in, and the clerk in Key West is looking at me like, oh, aren't you funny, aren't you special, and I said, look, check it out, and he lives on Friendly Lane. The guy was shaking his head, and, about that time, Jody walked up behind me, and he goes, Sanchez, what are you stirring up? I'm going to miss him. I love him, and I know I'll see him again, because birds of a feather have a way of ending up on the same tree branch. Until then, Jody.

MS. MURPHEY: Thanks, John, and, on behalf of the council, we do send our condolences to his family, Terri and Jesse, and so thank you, Kerry, for sharing that. All right, and so I think we are going to move on to our committee reports, and we'll start with the Executive Committee. Jessica will be handling that.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thank you, Trish. This is the Executive Committee summary report from the September 30<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Executive Committee that was held via webinar. Let me wait until staff gets this pulled up. All right. The South Atlantic Council's Executive Committee met via webinar on September 30<sup>th</sup> of 2024, and the committee approved the meeting agenda and minutes of the prior meeting.

The committee first went into closed session, to discuss personnel considerations, and then went into open session and did a budget review. Kelly Klasnick provided an overview of the 2024 budget, with expenditures through August 2024, and a proposed draft budget for 2025. Expenditures during 2024 are on track with the budget expectations at this point in the calendar year, and final 2024 expenditures are expected to fall at, or slightly below, the 2024 budget.

No funding allocation information is available for 2025 at this time. As in prior years, the 2025 budget is based on assuming status quo funding levels from 2024, and the draft 2025 council budget is slightly below the 2024 budget, due to a reduction in contract expenses. Additional contractual activities, supporting projects such as the snapper grouper MSE and an SMZ evaluation, were approved for 2024, supported by surplus funds incurred during the COVID travel reduction.

Costs of supporting core council activities and staff obligations do not exceed expected funding for 2025, and the committee approved the draft 2025 budget. The budget will be revised and brought back before the committee if 2025 funding is slightly different than assumed.

The committee discussed the transition to a new administrative grant. Council operating funds are provided through NOAA Fisheries on multiyear grants, and these grants previously covered five years, with an allowance for a one-year no-cost extension. The current grant period, or current grant, began in 2020, and it ends in 2024. Under a new budget time period interpretation, future administrative grants will be based on a four-year planning window, while retaining and essentially building in the one-year no-cost extension opportunity. This results in all the funds for a grant being expended within a total of five years, and the next grant period will be January 1, 2025 through December 31, 2028.

Grant documents have been submitted to NOAA Fisheries for approval, and the expanded workplan, which was Attachment 3b, lists the projects to be completed during the next grant period. Documentation of activities eligible for funding under the no-cost extension is now underway and will be submitted to NMFS by October 30, 2024.



Then we looked at the workplan review and activity schedule, and Kelly reviewed the 2025 activity schedule and workplan. The activity schedule detailed planning meetings and related expenses and provides the foundation for developing the budget. As with recent prior years, the activity schedule includes the full range of council meeting activities, and the council workplan was also reviewed, highlighting the long-term planning activities through 2028. The council has a full workload planned for 2025, and into 2026, with few opportunities to add new items until several current projects are complete.

**Then the committee made the following motion to approve the draft 2025 operational budget, as presented and modified, and, on behalf of the committee, I so move. Any discussion? Any objection?** All right. **The motion carries.** That concludes my report, Madam Chair.

MS. MURPHEY: Thank you, Jessica. Andy.

MR. STRELCHECK: I wasn't here for the committee. I was just asking for clarification. In the last line above the workplan review, it says documentation of activities eligible for funding under the no-cost extension is now underway and will be submitted to NMFS by October 30, 2024, and so that has already passed, right, and so it was submitted to NMFS as of --

MR. CARMICHAEL: At this point, yes, it was submitted, but this was done after the committee, and so we were in between.

MS. MURPHEY: Any other questions? All right, and we'll move into the Full Council Closed Session. The council met in closed session on Monday, December 2, 2024, and discussed the following items.

The advisory panel policy edits were approved to the council's advisory panel policy, to better define the role of liaisons appointed to advisory panels. The council also discussed options for conducting law enforcement background checks for AP applicants. The current process is conducted through NOAA Fisheries Office of Law Enforcement and only evaluates federal fishery violations. The council did not make any changes in the application or background check process at this time. Further discussion will be held at the March 2025 meeting, including a review of eligibility criteria used by the states for state advisory panel members.

We also reviewed applications. The council reviewed applicants for open seats for the For-Hire Reporting, Law Enforcement, Mackerel Cobia, Snapper Grouper, Shrimp, and Spiny Lobster Advisory Panels, and provided -- We provide the following draft motions as recommendations for consideration by the council during open session. Right now, I have a motion on the table. Would anybody like to make this motion for the For-Hire? Tom

**MR. ROLLER: I move that we appoint Kevin DeZern, Mark Phelps, James Skinner, Richard Stoughton, and Melissa Leone to the For-Hire Reporting Advisory Panel.**

MS. MURPHEY: Do I have a second? Amy's a second. Any discussion? **Any objections? Seeing none, motion approved.** We have a motion, another motion, for representation of Dauphin Wahoo. Who would like to care to make that motion? Carolyn.

DR. BELCHER: I would like to make the motion that we appoint Adam Nowalski as the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council representative and Brian Bacon as the New England Fishery Management Council representative on the For-Hire Reporting AP. Also, appoint Brian Bacon as the New England Fishery Management Council representative on the Dolphin Wahoo AP.

MS. MURPHEY: Do I have a second? Jessica. Any discussion? **Any objections? Motion approved.** Next, a motion for the Law Enforcement AP. Jessica.

MS. MCCAWLEY: **I move that we appoint Rob Beaton to the Law Enforcement AP.**

MS. MURPHEY: A second? Carolyn. Any discussion? **Any objections? Motion approved.** We have a motion for the Mackerel Cobia AP. We've got Tom.

MR. ROLLER: **I move that we reappoint William Jones and John Mallette to the Mackerel Cobia AP.**

MS. MURPHEY: A second? Carolyn. Any discussion? **Any objections? Motion approved.** Another motion for Mackerel Cobia AP. Tom.

MR. ROLLER: **I move that we appoint Michael Oppegaard, Melissa Leon, and Steve Saunders to the Mackerel Cobia AP.**

MS. MURPHEY: A second? Carolyn. Any discussion? **Any objections? Motion approved.** Then a motion to add a seat. Carolyn.

DR. BELCHER: **I move that we add a seat to the Mackerel Cobia AP and appoint Sanford Carter.**

MS. MURPHEY: Do I have a second? Charlie. Any discussion? **Any objections? Motion approved.** For our Snapper Grouper AP, do I have a motion? Jimmy.

MR. HULL: **I move that we reappoint Paul Nelson and Randy McKinley to the Snapper Grouper AP.**

MS. MURPHEY: Do I have a second? Carolyn. Any discussion? **Any objections? Motion approved.** Another motion for Snapper Grouper AP. Carolyn.

DR. BELCHER: **I move that we appoint K.P. Scott from North Carolina, Jeff Marinko from Georgia, and Jon Braun from Georgia to the Snapper Grouper AP.**

MS. MURPHEY: Do I have a second? Amy. Any discussion? **Any objections? Motion approved.** Do I have a motion for the Shrimp AP? Amy.

MS. DUKES: Thank you, Madam Chair. **I move to appoint Brian Jones to the Shrimp AP.**

MS. MURPHEY: Do I have a second? Carolyn. Any discussion? **Any objections? Motion approved.** We have a motion for Spiny Lobster. Would anybody like -- Jessica.

MS. MCCAWLEY: **I move to appoint Casey Butler, John Cramer, Cindy Garb, and Christopher Oetjen to the Spiny Lobster AP.**

MS. MURPHEY: Do I have a second? Carolyn. Any discussion? **Any objections? Motion approved.** This is for the SEDAR Pool. Carolyn.

DR. BELCHER: **I move that we appoint Andy Bill to the SEDAR Pool.**

MS. MURPHEY: Do I have a second? Amy. Any discussion? **Any objections? Motion approved.** Citizen Science. Amy.

MS. DUKES: **I move to appoint David Moss to the Citizen Science Projects AP.**

MS. MURPHEY: Carolyn seconds. Any discussion? **Any objection? Motion approved.** Okay. We have a motion for Outreach and Communication. Anybody care to make that motion? Carolyn.

DR. BELCHER: **I move that we make the motion that we remove Steve Daughtry from the Outreach and Communications AP, due to lack of attendance, and advertise the open seat for consideration at the June 2025 council meeting.**

MS. MURPHEY: Do I have a second? Amy. Any discussion? **Any objections? Motion approved.** All right. Thanks, everyone. We'll move into Law Enforcement Officer of the Year. The council discussed the selection process of the Law Enforcement Officer of the Year and provided the following suggestions, to consider changing the name of the award to the Law Enforcement Award of Excellence and do not require that it be awarded annually.

Instead, the award would be made in years when an officer, or a team, are to be acknowledged for going above and beyond their duty in enforcing fisheries regulations. Also, to discuss proposed changes with the Law Enforcement AP and to explore creating a rubric to select nominees and then direction to staff.

We'll schedule a closed session of the Full Council for the March 2025 meeting, to further consider handling of background checks and outcomes. We'll contact state agencies to obtain language used for establishing eligibility to serve as advisors, or in other appointed roles, prior to the March 2025 meeting. We'll have paper copies of the advisory panel application form available at stakeholder meetings, for those interested in applying, and to send notification letters to appointees, and email notifications to those not selected, by December 2024. We'll conduct an orientation for new AP members before the March 2025 South Atlantic Council meeting and convene the Law Enforcement AP in spring of 2025, and that concludes our closed session.

I will move on to our Full Council open session. We had reports from Dr. Cisco Werner, NOAA Fisheries Director of Scientific Programs and Chief Science Advisor. He addressed the council and provided an update on data collection considerations between the Northeast Fisheries Science Center and the Southeast Center, surveys and assessments in the South Atlantic, and Fisheries Integrated Modeling System, or FIMS. Dr. Werner also updated the council on the Climate and Ecosystem Fisheries Initiative, which is the CEFI, and how the council's involvement is envisioned.

We had agency representatives from the NOAA Office of Law Enforcement and the U.S. Coast Guard provide reports to the council on enforcement efforts. State agency representatives briefed the council on state activities, including an update for the red snapper exempted fishing permit projects currently underway in east Florida.

We had a presentation on the SERFS and SEAMAP. Dr. Tracey Smart, Coastal Research Section Manager with South Carolina Marine Resources Research Institute, presented abundance indices based on trap, video, and trawl surveys for several snapper grouper species, mackerel species, and shrimp species.

We also had an update on the Highly Migratory Species electronic reporting. Staff from HMS of NOAA Fisheries briefed the council on the proposed rule, published on September 6, on Atlantic HMS electronic reporting requirements. The proposed changes aim to streamline and modernize reporting through electronic reporting and consolidation of reporting deadlines, expand electronic logbook reporting to additional commercial and charter/headboat vessel owners, and collect additional information from dealers through existing electronic reporting mechanisms.

Salient points of the discussion were HMS would use existing platforms, such as eTRIPS and VESL, to require e-reporting. eTRIPS is the only reporting app that is considered to meet all the one-stop reporting requirements for the various programs, and VESL anticipates having HMS data elements in the app as soon as early next year. HMS has been working with SERO and ACCSP for a long time to integrate their logbooks, with the common goal of having a combined logbook program, and any implementation would be done in concert.

None of the existing applications are set up to select a subsample of trips to request info. HMS does not set a specific percentage rate for selection. They select which vessels are required to submit costs and earnings data at the beginning of the year.

Most fishermen have been supportive of the proposed rule. Subsampling across different programs will be tricky and contingent on various entities to conduct outreach. HMS sends out certified letters to permit holders that are selected to the survey. Alignment of requirements is important, and all programs need to work towards that goal. HMS is still working out the timing of implementation, but it is anticipated at the beginning of 2026. Not sure if implementation would be all at once, in pieces, or maybe just go back out to public comment.

HMS does not have the resources to implement a validation survey on their own and would need to piggyback on other regional partners. One validation survey that fits everyone's needs would be ideal, and comments of the proposed rule are due on January 6, 2025.

Our direction to staff is to draft a letter to HMS emphasizing the four main concerns cited by the Gulf Council, which was validation, consistency in reporting, including non-HMS species and reporting of economic data, and ensuring the letter emphasizes the need for data validation and avoiding duplicative reporting.

Then we began discussion on the Southeast For-Hire Integrated Electronic Reporting, or SEFHIER, that improvement amendment. Feedback and recommendations from the Social and Economic Panel on ways to improve the SEFHIER program were presented to the council,

followed by a presentation on utilization of the for-hire electronic vessel trip reports in the Mid-Atlantic region.

Dr. Jessica Stephen, with SERO, provided a detailed presentation addressing items the council requested in September and clarified aspects of the existing program in the South Atlantic and how it would be conducted, and how it was conducted in the Gulf of Mexico, while it was operational.

Salient points of the discussion were council members expressed confusion regarding the original intent of the SEFHIER program and asked for clarification on whether the intent was to supplement the MRIP for-hire survey or replace it once SEFHIER was certified. There was a general sentiment that data had been collected through SEFHIER for a number of years, yet there have been no attempts to use the data.

Fishermen who report are increasingly frustrated that they are taking the time to submit data to the program, yet compliance is low, and data are not considered usable. Additionally, council members expressed a desire, and commitment to fishermen, to either work to improve the program, so the data can be used in some fashion, or in the program. While low compliance has been cited by NMFS as a barrier to utilizing the information collected, NOAA GC reminded the council that a limited-entry program cannot be implemented only to improve compliance. The council does not want to overpromise and underdeliver. In Florida, the State Reef Fish Survey is a supplement to MRIP, and it is not replacing MRIP off of Florida.

The council staff presented an overview of draft actions and alternatives and requested feedback from the council, and the following guidance was provided. Draft Action 1, which is reporting frequency, for scoping, provided a range of times, up to twenty-four or forty-hours, for reporting and request more information on what would be an appropriate timeframe, and this included Table 1 in scoping materials, so stakeholders are informed as to what is being considered in other programs.

Draft Action 2 was trip notification. This was to clarify what is meant by other for-hire activity, and, also, add a subalternative to Alternative 2 that would include any time a vessel leaves a dock. Draft 3 was about approved landing locations, to make sure there is allowance for a Plan B, in case the vessel is not able to return to a pre-specified location, for unexpected reasons, such as mechanical failure.

Draft Action 5, which is reporting on economic data, for scoping, to include examples of how the data could be used, such as a disaster declaration, and also gather more information on the did-not fish reports and whether the current requirements need to be changed. Where did the thirty-day notice originate, and what is the rationale?

Council members discussed whether to convene the For-Hire Reporting Advisory Panel before the amendment for scoping, or vice versa. It was noted that feedback from the For-Hire AP could be considered scoping. Also, provide an update and request feedback from the Law Enforcement AP, and, during scoping for this amendment, ask how people feel about limited entry for the for-hire industry in the South Atlantic, and also ask stakeholders for their recommendations to improve and ease compliance with for-hire reporting requirements.

We have a staff recommendation to convene the For-Hire Reporting AP and the Law Enforcement AP before the March 25, 2025 meeting and to review feedback and consider approving the amendment for public scoping at the March 2025 meetings. Does anybody want to talk about moving forward to the AP first or going straight to scoping? Jessica.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Yes, and it seems like we should go to the AP first, although, I mean, I think that you could do this either way. You could go to scoping, and then the AP could look at where we are thus far, anything from the council, as well as what came from the public, or you could get input from the AP, and then that could come back to us, and we could kind of clean it up a little bit, and then go to scoping, after the next meeting, and so I think you could really do either one, but we haven't met the AP at all. I would like them to weigh-in.

MS. MURPHEY: Thank you, Jessica. I've got Tom.

MR. ROLLER: Thank you, Madam Chair. I'm kind of leaning to send this out to scoping and the AP at the same time. I think that we can consider all of those comments, and we can also convene that AP again. Also, just to remind everybody, with where the Gulf Council is as well, as with HMS, and their reporting, we're just going to continually fall behind in that process, and so -- Or it's not really falling behind, but, you know, they're way ahead of us in some of this reporting stuff, and so I wouldn't mind sending it out to scoping now and getting more feedback.

MS. MURPHEY: Andy.

MR. STRELCHECK: I mean, I like the idea of having the AP as part of the scoping process, right? We're not at the point where we're refining in detail the alternatives. We really want to get their early input to the process, like we would with the public. We're going to convene the AP after this time period, to really refine the program going forward, and so, if we could do all this kind of at once, and then come back to March meeting, I think that would be ideal.

MS. MURPHEY: Tom.

MR. ROLLER: Can I bring up another possible discussion point that we didn't talk about in this discussion?

MS. MURPHEY: Sure.

MR. ROLLER: One of the things that I had meant to mention was the idea -- When I look at my experience in North Carolina, the enforcing of this permit can be kind of difficult, right, because I don't know who has it and who doesn't. I was wondering if we could consider like some sort of like permit decal to be considered, at least for discussion, whether it be to the Law Enforcement AP or to the AP to look at.

MS. MURPHEY: Can we add that to the Law Enforcement AP? Okay, and, just to go back, and let me make sure. So we will be doing the AP before the March meeting, and then scoping simultaneously, and is everybody in agreement with that? I do want to remember, you know, we did a point this AP, and it has never met yet, and so, you know, where do they fit in the process, and so is everybody good with that, or -- I'm seeing heads shaking. Do you want to say anything, Myra?

MS. BROUWER: Yes, and so, just to be clear, we would call the discussion that happens with these two APs part of the scoping process. My hesitation is we have to have Federal Register notices for each of these meetings, and then, when you're putting them all together, that's fine, but, if you want a separate public scoping meeting, with a separate comment period, and then two meetings of two separate APs, then we kind of run out of time. If you're okay with us -- When we talk to these APs, we say the council is in the process of scoping this, and we are undergoing scoping through this process, I think that would be fine.

MS. MURPHEY: So, if I'm getting this right here, and everything right, they'll basically be the first to scope, basically, and then followed by regular public scoping?

MS. BROUWER: Well, I guess that's what I'm trying to avoid, to have three separate, you know, periods where comment would be requested from the public, and the advisors, and so, if we could just put it all in one package, that would be a lot easier.

MS. MURPHEY: I guess I'm kind of confused. I mean, I guess, in my mind, and maybe because I tend to be a splitter, and not a lumpner, it just seems to me we would -- Especially since we took the extra time to get full representation on this AP, and it concerns me to not make use of the AP, to get their input, because they're going to give a wide input. I mean, you saw the prerequisites that we needed for that, and so it's up to you guys, but I do have a little bit of concern of mixing that. I guess I like a more clear process of their input first, and then going to council, or going to scoping, but that's me, and I will leave it back up to you, but the process is confusing to me.

MR. CARMICHAEL: Are we considering approving for scoping now, or are we still considering approving for scoping in March, as discussed here?

DR. BELCHER: Just to John's point, I almost -- I kind of have Trish's concerns, because it almost feels like, if you're using them as a scoping, you're not really giving them the opportunity to work as an AP body. It's just that we put you in a special group that you're -- So I kind of would rather not do scoping now. I would rather wait until March.

MR. CARMICHAEL: As we've heard from the agency quite often, scoping can be a broad process, and be done in a lot of ways, and so these can all be scoping, but there is, you know, a bit of an expectation, I feel like, that's just because of practice, that we have this bit of formal scoping, where we have meetings, and we take input, and you approve that document.

I think having this AP meet between now and March, and review this document, and have the opportunity to give you input, before you formally say, okay, here are the things we are scoping, it does sort of show them that they are in at the very beginning, and that certainly is part of scoping, and it could be something that you include in what you do when you say, okay, here's the formal scoping document, and this is what we're looking at, and do that in March.

I think we can still have the meeting of these guys before, and we certainly would have a meeting of these guys after, to see what do you make of the things that came out of scoping, you know, which would happen maybe between the March and June meeting. You know, I feel like this AP can meet without us approving for scoping now, and it tells them it's a bit more of an open slate.

MS. MURPHEY: Amy.

MS. DUKES: Thank you. I agree. These are our subject matter experts, and we are creating an AP for them to come to the table, to have that active voice, to provide us some of that guidance. I like the idea of having the two APs meet, specifically that For-Hire Reporting AP, on the heels of waiting to populate that AP at this meeting fully, allow them to have their input, allow law enforcement to have their input, and then for it to come back to this council in March for consideration of scoping then.

MS. MURPHEY: I've got Andy.

MR. STRELCHECK: I think of scoping, I think, a lot differently than how the council likes to run scoping, and I view that we can still get valuable input from the AP. We can still get valuable input from the public. We don't have to wait three months to get the AP's discussion, and then go out for another three months to do scoping meetings, right, and so can't we get it all collectively at one time, and then, as we build the amendment, we're going to go back to the AP, specifically for refining those recommendations, but we're very early in the process, and so we want to, obviously, have as broad of a range of discussion, with both our AP members, who are the experts, as well as the public.

MS. MURPHEY: Thank you, Andy. Carolyn.

DR. BELCHER: I kind of -- I do get what you're saying, but I think the thing, for me, is it's been the timing. We were trying to stand this up like two meetings ago, and it was getting the rolling roster filled, and that's the only reason why it hasn't done -- That we haven't convened the AP before now, and so I really don't want to mix it, because I don't -- I just don't want to send a mixed message to the AP, you know, that it seems like, okay, well, we're putting you in that little group, so you all can have your conversations, but, meanwhile, public comment is also getting that same bite at the apple, early in the process, and so I would rather have them have their time to kind of ruminate on it, if we're not under the gun to jump on it for scoping now. What does it hurt to wait until March?

MS. MURPHEY: Any other comment? So I've heard two -- Do we need to put this to a motion, or no?

MR. CARMICHAEL: You have a recommendation there, and so, unless you wanted to modify that, but you don't need a motion for that, and we don't think it's -- When it's approved for scoping it's necessarily going to change the endpoint timeline all that much, but it may help us spread out some of the activities a little bit, because we already talked about the first quarter being busy, and we lose a bit anyway, with the first of the year and stuff, and what happens between now and, you know, when people come back to work after the new year, and things could be tight, and there's going to be some controversial public hearings going on at the same time.

MS. MURPHEY: Jimmy.

MR. HULL: Thank you. I think we should support the staff recommendation that's written here. I think that's appropriate, what we should do.



MS. MURPHEY: Okay. Overall, are we going to -- Is this council going to support the staff recommendation, and we will send to -- We will approve for scoping in March. I see most heads shaking. Well, it looks like, for the most part, the majority of the heads were shaking yes, and so we will just stick with the staff recommendation. Thank you. Andy.

MR. STRELCHECK: Before we go into direction to staff, I want to just touch upon a few things, if that's okay. There was the mention of a decal. Interestingly, we do decal stickers in the Gulf of Mexico, but that's -- Because, one, enforcement wants them, and, two, it's a limited-entry system, and so I just wanted to acknowledge that.

There was also quite a bit of discussion, during the council meeting, or the committee meeting, earlier in the week, about the kind of initial intent of SEFHIER, and so my team did pull up some information from the rulemaking, and I just wanted to kind of emphasize this, given the confusion.

In the proposed rule, we said, if NMFS implements the electronic reporting requirements described in this proposed rule, the MRIP survey of charter vessels would continue until the proposed electronic reporting program described in the for-hire reporting amendment is certified by NMFS, and then the electronic reporting program replaces the MRIP survey of charter vessels, right, and so there was a clear intent, in terms of replacement.

Then we had a comment in the proposed rule as well that we addressed, and it said, in the short-term, the information reported through the electronic reporting program would be used to validate minimum estimates of for-hire fishing effort for the for-hire survey conducted by MRIP. It goes on for a few other comments, but then it did say that the Science Center has suggested that additional steps may be needed to improve the program before it can be certified.

These steps could include a requirement for fishermen to inform NMFS when they are leaving on a trip and to report their catch before it's offloaded from their fishing vessel, and then, once certified, the data collection through this program would replace the MRIP survey, and so I think the intent is clear. I just wanted to make sure that that was captured, since there was some confusion during our committee discussion.

MS. MURPHEY: Thank you, Andy.

MR. CARMICHAEL: I think part of that is, you know, saying replace MRIP, and that applies to federally-licensed for-hire vessels, and I think that's the part that is -- You know, there's a lack of clarity there, because MRIP is such a complex program that covers so many things.

When we come around to this again, and maybe, within the document, we should make a clear statement that this applies to the federally-licensed for-hire person, because, if you're a state-licensed-only for-hire person, you're not in that universe of people, and MRIP is not going to be replaced for you. MRIP will still be conducting much of the survey that it does just for the state-licensed vessels, and I think there's quite a few of them, in some cases, particularly when you get into the charters and stuff, and so that's probably something I think staff can certainly work on.

MS. MURPHEY: All right. Thanks, John. You want to jump into this discussion?

MR. CARMICHAEL: Do you, Amy? Amy had raised some questions about what could be looked at for SEFHIER, to try and understand, you know, maybe what's going on there and help us guide our decision process on the changes.

MS. DUKES: Thanks, John, and, yes, just to kind of piggyback on that, I think some of these data evaluations are necessary for this discussion and the process that we're going to take perhaps to change SEFHIER, and this list was put together just to sort of provide to the service some ideas of the data evaluations that we would like to see back from the SEFHIER data, if possible, and you did specifically talk about, in the final rule, it did have that information reported through that electronic reporting program be used to validate those minimum estimates for for-hire effort.

I'll piggyback a little bit on what John said. It doesn't specifically say offshore, and it doesn't specifically say efforts of federal waters, and I worry about the nightmare that it's going to create, down the road, with that replacement idea, because you still have private mode, and you still have shore mode, and you still have federally-permitted vessels operating in state waters, where you are collecting that data through SEFHIER because you -- Regardless of where your trip is taken, you do have to report, and so I'm just trying to figure out how that would be separated, and pieced out, and it's definitely something that's in my mind, and so I'll let you take a look at this list.

MR. STRELCHECK: Well, so go back to the intent. What are we trying to accomplish with these data evaluations? I guess where would this be used, and how would it be used?

MS. DUKES: So we're still uncertain as to the utility of the data that's already been collected and provided by our constituents, and I think understanding that data, and how it has utility, is really important. I want to make sure that we are building momentum with our fishermen, that have been doing this reporting system for so long, and it would just be nice to understand the data that has been provided thus far, or at least have some -- We've never even seen the data, that I'm aware of.

MR. STRELCHECK: Well, I don't think that's true at all, and I recall my team giving one, or more, presentations to this council, within the last probably couple of years, providing at least some components of the information that are listed up there, and we spent a lot of time talking to you about, obviously, the compliance information, or lack of compliance, that we had with the program, right, and so I just -- I don't -- I want to make sure that, if we're going to go down a path of doing a lot of analytical work, that there's utility in doing that, and how it ultimately can be used.

Obviously, if it helps to build a better program, and some of the changes we're striving for with the amendment, right, I'm onboard with that, but this seems to be more, I guess, the effort right now of is the data useful in the first place.

MS. DUKES: To that point, you are correct. We have received several presentations from your staff, but they have been primarily focused on compliance, and the fact that, because compliance is low, the data is not useful, but we haven't necessarily seen the data, and, if I am wrong in that, and I will go back and review some of those previous presentations, but I do not recall actually seeing sort of some of these numbers, like specifically looking at those deepwater species and looking at what was presented from the charter boat SEFHIER mode, compared to that that was in MRIP. Things like that I think would be helpful to see.

MS. MURPHEY: I'll let John jump in here.

MR. CARMICHAEL: Yes, and some of this is from points that have been made by fishermen and others, and then there was a lot of discussion of the compliance issue at the SEP, and they -- You know, they said it's worth looking at the data, because just simple compliance rates don't necessarily tell you how good you're doing. There may be some things in there that are useful, even though the compliance is fairly low, particularly as we know it will be quite a few years before we do have this as its own standalone program as well.

You know, there may be some things we could look at, which I think is what gets at some of the species information, and I would assume like the first couple of things about reporting characteristics would be fairly straightforward, just based on what we've already seen from the agency giving us kind of a big picture of that. This just gets a little bit finer-scale view on it, and maybe we get a little bit of an understanding of maybe some places where reporting is good, and places where reporting is bad, and that helps us understand our efforts to get reporting good across the board.

MR. STRELCHECK: All right, and then so I guess a couple of thoughts here. One would then be kind of the timeframe that you would be looking for this information, and the audience, right, and so is it the council? Is it the AP as well? Some of it probably can be readily summarized. Others might take time, and so I would like at least some discretion with regard to the -- You know, the amount of work it would take to provide this, and have an idea of when.

There's also, I think, concerns, and, you know, John, the center could talk about this as well, about we want to be transparent. We want to share data, but, when we have problems with major biases, or compliance issues, sharing that data may not be the best path, right, and so I'm not saying that we can't provide probably a lot of this data, but providing numbers, for the sake of providing numbers, for people to compare against, without any context in terms of the data that's not provided, or missing, is obviously --

It can be very challenging, and they can be misused, or improperly used, and so I would want to, I think, also make sure we're talking to the statisticians, analysts, everyone that, if we're going to provide this, it's also going to come along with all of the necessary caveats, or we would have to come back and kind of say, hey, we looked into this, and this is why we can't provide it, and the reasons why.

MS. MURPHEY: John.

MR. CARMICHAEL: Yes, and I think that's all definitely understood, and well put, and I think discretion is a big part of this. I feel like maybe the first couple, that are pretty straightforward, and in line with what you presented, maybe we could easily have for March. Getting into the more catch information I anticipate would be a bigger lift, and may take some more thought to tease all of that out. I think, in putting this together with the staff and stuff, trying to avoid any sort of like absolute catch magnitude information, because of those concerns about the compliance rate and potential bias and such, for sure.

MS. MURPHEY: All right. Thank you, John. Is that okay, Andy? All right. I got some thumbs-up from Andy. Thanks. All right. Thank you. John.

DR. WALTER: If I could just get a clarification on the previous one, and sorry to come back to it, but the catch to discard ratio with MRIP wouldn't be the best comparison, because MRIP is also self-reported, but, if there are for-hire observers onboard, that would be the probably best comparison, and we should have some for-hire observer coverage, and so if there was an intent to --

MR. CARMICHAEL: I think that could fall within the license to, hey, we have this, which would be better to definitely explore that.

DR. WALTER: Okay.

MS. MURPHEY: Thank you, John and John. All right. We're going to move into the allocations for spadefish and jacks. In September of 2024, the council reviewed current sector allocations and other relevant information for Atlantic spadefish and the three species that make up the jacks complex, in accordance with the council's allocation review policy. Council staff developed a summary allocation review report, based on the council's discussion, and these reports will serve as documentation of the allocation review until these species are up for review at a future date. The council approved the following motions.

The motion was to approve the allocations review report for Atlantic spadefish. I don't have to do that, do I? Okay. So we had two motions that were to accept -- To approve both allocation review reports for the spadefish and the jacks.

We then had a headboat vessel limits report. In June of 2024, the council requested a report to be prepared to examine headboat vessel limits for South Atlantic-managed species for discussion at the December 2024 meeting. The impetus behind this request came from discussions regarding recent modifications to the vessel limits for gag and black grouper and Snapper Grouper Amendment 53 and Regulatory Amendment 36.

Additionally, the council received public comment indicating that vessel limits are highly impactful to the headboat component of the for-hire industry, and so the council requested the following information to be added to the report for review in the March 2025 meeting.

MS. BROUWER: I'm sorry, and I think that's supposed to say the June 2025 meeting, but we can go back, and, if you need to discuss whether you want this in March or June, we can talk about that.

MS. MURPHEY: Is June still okay with everybody? I think this is okay. Okay. June, yes. This will be for review in the June 2025 meeting, and so there's additional information on effort, such as capacity of vessels, or size of vessels, depth fishing, potentially minimum or maximum, minimum number of anglers for a trip, number of trips by months, and may need to aggregate the trip type in the last six to eight years. We'll analyze the catch and discards for red snapper, shallow-water grouper, black sea bass, white grunt, yellowtail snapper, and vermilion snapper, and also look at the impact of closed season on different species and maps of locations for headboats and for all for-hire vessels.

We also heard about the Council Coordination Committee from John. Council staff summarized the discussions that took place during the October 2024 CCC meeting in Washington. The executive director also briefed the council on staff activities since the September 2024 meeting, and we also heard on the stakeholder engagement meetings.

Council staff has worked to develop a plan for holding stakeholder engagement meetings along the South Atlantic Coast, meeting with fishermen in their communities. The goal of these meetings is to build relationships with fishery stakeholders by engaging them in an informal setting that allows for two-way conversations. Building and maintaining relationships and momentum for participation in the management process requires consistent interaction with stakeholders over time, and so staff intend for these types of meetings to become a regular part of the council's engagement efforts.

Staff presented an updated planning document for the meetings, including options for timing of the 2025 round of meetings, and the council provided the feedback on the proposed meeting structures and topics.

Council members supported the use of a sticky wall to gather feedback during the meetings. Attendees at similar meetings, such as snapper grouper visioning, responded positively to the use of sticky walls, and attendees that aren't comfortable speaking up during a breakout group may be more comfortable sharing their thoughts and ideas in writing.

The council recommended conducting the topical discussions before the sticky wall activity. Having small breakout groups first would help attendees become comfortable having these discussions with each other and council members, and it may also help bring out questions and discussion topics for the sticky wall activity. We suggested holding mocks of these meetings with staff, as well as advisory panel meetings in the spring, and this will help in determining the best order for the different meeting activities, and the topic of releases is more appropriate for topical discussion, and move the trip satisfaction to the informal information session.

The council noted the importance of having a fisheries management 101 table to provide information on the management process, as well as miscellaneous tables for stakeholders to bring up concerns that the meeting may not explicitly address, and it would also include those paper advisory panel applications at the fisheries management table.

The council also provided feedback on meeting timing and planned outreach efforts, and the council would like to conduct the first round of stakeholder engagement meetings late in the fall quarter of 2025, which is October and November, for two states, and the beginning of the winter quarter of 2026, January and February, for the other two states, and council members felt comfortable conducting outreach for these meetings by reaching out to their communities and encouraging fishermen to attend.

It will be important to schedule these meetings as far in advance as possible, so council members can incorporate them in their schedules, and, when conducting the outreach and encouraging attendance, it may be beneficial to focus on specific examples of where public input directly influenced a management decision.

In the past, the fireside chats at council meetings did a lot to show stakeholders that council members are accessible, and incorporating them back into the council meeting agendas could help improve relationships between stakeholders and the council. We have timings and tasks, and a draft motion for direction to staff, and would someone like to make that motion? Tom.

MR. ROLLER: Do you need me to read the whole thing? **I move that we make the following timing, motion, and direct staff to do the following: submit a comment letter to HMS covering the proposed for-hire reporting requirements prior to the January 6, 2025, comment deadline; convene the For-Hire Reporting and Law Enforcement APs to provide input on the SEFHIER improvement amendment; prepare the amendment for approval for public scoping at the March 2025 meeting; prepare the requested information on the headboat fishery for review at the June 2025 meeting; work to plan the first round of stakeholder engagement meetings late in the fall quarter 2025 in October and November for two states and the beginning of the winter 2026 January and February for the two other states; request that the Southeast Regional Office provide the following permit related information: South Atlantic-permitted snapper grouper, coastal migratory pelagics, dolphin wahoo for for-hire vessels from 2020 through 2024 (addresses needs for SEFHIER and limited-entry amendments); include home ports of vessels and the number of vessels that would and would not be affected by the new control dates of December 5 and December 8, 2023; rock-shrimp-permitted vessels from 2019 through 2023 (addresses needs for Coral 11 and Shrimp 12) and all permit-related information necessary for social and economic sections of the Coral 11 and Shrimp 12 Amendment.**

MS. MURPHEY: Do I have a second for that? I've got Kerry. Any discussion? **Any objections?** Okay. **So moved.** Then that concludes my report on open council one. Andy.

MR. STRELCHECK: I just wanted to comment on the fireside chat, and so I had some sidebar conversations with several council members, and I certainly support that, and I'm open to kind of re-initiating those. I think we took those down in part because we were kind of getting the same questions asked over and over again, but I think there's value in doing those periodically, and we just need to be kind of thoughtful and strategic. We may, you know, want to think about renaming it, as well as maybe having some topical discussions, right, that we could you know have focus on, going forward, but I'm onboard with, obviously, supporting this.

MS. MURPHEY: Thank you, Andy. Tim.

MR. GRINER: Thank you for that, Andy, and, you know, I also want to just kind of reiterate the importance of the council members role in this outreach and trying to gather attendance for this. I think we heard yesterday, from Scott Baker, that, you know, that's a very important thing, and hopefully, as we move through this, you know, council members will do -- They will get involved, and really put some effort into that, and I don't know if staff can -- You know, as we're putting this together, can maybe put some bullet points to help council members have some thoughts on how to go about doing that, or if they need help doing that, but I think that's a very important part of this, is for council members to reach out to their community, and their fishermen friends, and circle, and get a lot of participation in this from the people that need to participate. Thank you.

MS. MURPHEY: Thank you, Tim. Anything else? Then I'm going to hand it over to Kerry for Dolphin Wahoo.

MS. MARHEFKA: Thanks. The Dolphin Wahoo committee met on Tuesday, December 3<sup>rd</sup>. The dolphin -- We worked on the dolphin management strategy evaluation. We got an update. The NOAA Southeast Fishery Science Center is conducting a management strategy evaluation for the Atlantic dolphin fishery.

The goal of this project is to develop an index-based management procedure that may provide catch level and management advice that best achieves the multiple management objectives for the fishery. The Science Center staff updated the council on progress of the dolphin MSE and recent stakeholder working group meetings. It was noted that the MSE timeline would include several feedback sessions from the council and the SSC through 2025, and early 2026, to refine the MSE modeling results.

The committee discussed the MSE timeline and the timing of changes to dolphin management through Reg Amendment 3 or a potential future amendment. Modifications to the minimum size limit, recreational retention limits, and reducing for-hire captain and crew bag limits for dolphin, which are what are included right now in Reg Amendment 3. This amendment includes measures that would extend the applicable range of the twenty-inch fork length minimum size limit for dolphin, modify rec retention limits for dolphin and remove captain and crew bag limits for dolphin.

At the June 2023 meeting, the council passed a motion to, quote, delay development of the amendment until the dolphin MSE results are available, or until the December 2024 council meeting, whichever is earlier. This guidance was reiterated at the December 2023 meeting.

Council staff reviewed the committee's guidance on draft actions and requested guidance on the timeline for developing Reg Amendment 3. With the final results of the dolphin MSE not likely available for review by the committee until early 2026, the committee discussed how to proceed with Reg Amendment 3, offering the following comments. First, to direct staff to work on developing Reg Amendment 3 with the existing actions and range of alternatives, and it's working towards developing that amendment that could be approved for public hearings at the December 2025 meeting. Also, using the dolphin MSE modeling results to inform committee decisions on the actions in that amendment.

The proposed action plan is that the MSE would be used to compare the performance of current status quo management with the management actions, as proposed in Reg Amendment 3, and applied to the base MSE operating model. This may help narrow the set of reference OMs.

Alternate static management actions should include geographic range of the twenty-inch minimum Florida commercial and recreational dolphin and modification of the daily recreational bag and vessel limits or modify the daily recreational captain and crew bag limits. This work is to be presented for the SSC review in April 2025 and then to us at the June 2025 council meeting, to inform Amendment 3 actions. We'll work to continue in parallel for the MSE to develop a full empirical management procedure. A detailed plan will be provided to the MSE technical team.

**We had no other items under Other Business, and I present the following timing and tasks motion on behalf of the committee, that we continue to work on Regulatory Amendment 3 for next review at the June 2025 meeting. Also, that we direct the IPT to conduct analysis**

**and prepare the amendment to consider for approval for public hearings at the December 2025 meeting, and, on behalf of the committee, I so move.** I guess any discussion on that? Any comments? Jessica.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Well, I guess it's not really on the motion itself. I just -- The people -- Can you scroll up a little bit, to the paragraph? The people that are working on the MSE, are they going to bring the items from Reg Amendment 3 into the MSE? I'm just a little -- I'm still a little confused, and I'm sorry.

MS. MARHEFKA: Here comes John.

MR. HADLEY: Thank you, and I'll look to John Walter as well for this, but I think the intent is for the MSE modeling team to use the actions and alternatives in Regulatory Amendment 3, with the idea that those initial results would be presented to the council at the June 2023 meeting, and so it's kind of that hybrid approach that we discussed, where the MSE is moving along and the council use that to help inform decisions in Reg 3.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Okay. I'm good. Thank you so much for the clarification.

MS. MARHEFKA: Any other discussion on the motion? **Any objection to the motion? Seeing none the motion carries.** That concludes my report, Madam Chair.

MS. MURPHEY: Thank you, Kerry. Would folks like to take a break? I'm seeing heads shake, and so we'll take -- Why don't we do fifteen minutes, so, if folks need to check out, they've got a little time to do so.

(Whereupon, a recess was taken.)

MS. MURPHEY: Okay, everybody. We're going to go ahead and get started, and I'll let Kerry go ahead and do the Citizen Science Committee.

MS. MARHEFKA: Okay. Thanks, Madam Chair. Also on Tuesday afternoon of December 3, 2024 was the Citizen Science Committee. Let's see. We heard about the citizen science initial program evaluation. Staff provided background information on the initial CitSci program evaluation efforts.

These efforts include working with researchers to collect baseline levels of knowledge about confidence in and trust in the citizen science process of collecting data to inform fisheries management. Rick Bonney presented findings from an online survey of scientists and managers, and Jennifer Sweeney-Tookes presented findings from her research team's interviews with fishermen.

Staff shared efforts of the citizen science program -- Shared the efforts that the CitSci program is currently doing to help address the researchers key findings, and they shared recommendations from the CitSci Operations AP on future efforts that can be used to refine the CitSci program, based on these research findings.



The council thanked the researchers for their work and noted that their findings will be very useful both to the CitSci program and to the council more broadly. They recommended that researchers present their finding to the Outreach and Communications AP and the CitSci Projects AP. The council is supportive of the CitSci program continuing the activities that it's currently doing to help address the researchers' key findings.

They supported the CitSci Ops AP recommendations on future efforts to refine the CitSci program. Council members noted the importance of continued investment for outreach initiatives and fishing communities, for example CitSci BFP outreach and stakeholder engagement meetings, as they are critical to helping address many of the researchers' key findings. The council provided guidance to prioritize future activities that help address the following researcher findings. Quote, federal fisheries management is a black box, end quote. Quote, fishermen deeply distrust management, end quote. Quote, fishermen are skeptical of science used by management, and fishermen do not feel valued or heard, end quote.

They recognize the citizen science program has limited resources, and so they suggested staff strategize and consult with advisors on how the recommended activities can be combined to help address them more efficiently. Council members acknowledged that working to address the trust issues identified through this research cannot be done by the citizen science program alone. There are larger issues that require work on a much broader scale from the council in the wider fisheries community.

Due to time constraints, the council wasn't able to review the program planning document, which provides an overview of CitSci activities. Please, everyone, go look at that, if you haven't, that have occurred under each of the program's goals and objectives and provides recommendations for future activities. Council members were encouraged to review this information and provide any feedback to council staff.

We had a great update that staff shared that the council, as we talked about earlier today too, signed an MOU with the with ASMFC, which will help expand and enhance opportunities for the CitSci program. We were not able -- We ran out of time and were not able to get an update on all of the CitSci amazing activities they're doing, and so, again, please go and look.

I would just like to say Meg was here, and Meg has done a lot of really hard work, and, because we had to rush, we didn't get time to sort of see her hard work, and acknowledge it, and, Julia, I trust that you will take back that this body is incredibly appreciative, and running out of time is not a reflection of that, as it is just our crazy schedule, and so please let Meg know. Big love.

Under Other Business, the council directed staff to change the name of the citizen science advisory groups from committees to advisory panels, to prevent confusion with council committees. I have no motions, and, with that, I conclude my committee report.

MS. MURPHEY: All right. Thank you, Kerry. Does anybody have any questions for Kerry? All right. I guess it's my turn to do SEDAR. All right, and so the SEDAR Committee approved the meeting agenda and the September 2024 minutes, and we discussed changes in the SEDAR process.

The NOAA Fisheries Southeast Fisheries Science Center has proposed four changes to the assessment process. One is to eliminate the research track approach, two is to eliminate assessment nomenclature and scheduled slots, three is to identify and prioritize key stocks, and four is to assess remaining stocks with less-intensive approaches.

The committee was not opposed to these changes, but they needed more details on how everything would work together in order to get more throughput in the stock assessment process. There is a need to demonstrate how the update models, or interim assessments, can lead to providing sufficient information for managing these stocks and reduce time between updating catch recommendations. The committee requested the Science Center look into past assessments, to see if an interim analysis approach would have been successful in developing catch level recommendations. The tools to conduct interim analysis should be part of the terms of reference and review for future stock assessments.

The committee expressed concern with the broadening of the tools that can be used to develop catch level stock assessments. The committee requested more details on how and when the different assessment types could be used to provide catch level recommendations and describing stock status. The SEDAR Steering Committee scope may need to be changed so that they provide guidance on how the different approaches can be coordinated to address needs of the different cooperators.

We also discussed key stocks. The Science Center drafted a preliminary list of fourteen stocks that could be regularly updated, with a proposed update schedule for every six years and an update model at approximately three years. Staff went through potential key stock species, described available information and frequency of assessments, depending on the number of assessments and stock status.

Concerns were raised by the committee regarding the extensive number of species in the snapper grouper complex and the significant workload required for assessing these species. It was noted that there are limited resources available to assess all species within the complex and data bottlenecks that would prevent for all stocks -- From all stocks from being assessed.

The committee struggled selecting key stocks, due to uncertainty surrounding which stocks would qualify for an interim approach and which would require assessment outside the SEDAR process. This uncertainty led to concerns about the number of key stocks to include in the final list, and, as the result, the committee requested that staff develop a revised list for their consideration at the upcoming Full Council II, and so I think that is where we are. Chip, I think, emailed you guys his, I think, three scenarios to consider, that he'll go through, and I've got Jessica with her hand up.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Yes, and, I mean, I don't mind looking at the scenarios, but I'm just not sure that we're going to be able to solve this today, and maybe we need to think about discussing this in the SEDAR Committee, or some committee, at the March council meeting. I mean, I think the key stocks discussion is very important.

I want to get it right, but it's hard to -- Of course, we would love everything to be assessed with the Cadillac of assessments, and I understand that that's not possible, but it's hard to make decisions about how to order these species when we can't see what long-term datasets would be available and what the Science Center is thinking for which species would get interim analysis, et cetera,

and so I don't know that we're going to have enough information today for me to feel comfortable selecting key stocks. I might like to see some additional information at the next meeting.

MS. MURPHEY: Thank you, Jessica. Charlie.

MR. PHILLIPS: Thank you, Madam Chair. Yes, I agree, and, plus, we might need some more information, and maybe have also have a discussion with the SSC, if we start doing some of these assessment lites, on what they need as a bare minimum, so they can give some recommendations for, you know, catch, and so we probably need to have -- You know, flesh this discussion out a little bit more. Thank you.

MS. MURPHEY: Chip.

DR. COLLIER: So the SSC does have a workgroup on data-limited species, which many of the snapper grouper would likely fall into that. In this revised document -- In the previous document, we had information on landings, information on number of age samples that are available, different pieces like that. In this new one, we also went into whether or not there was an index of abundance that was available as being presented through that SEAFish viewer, and so that that provides age-based information.

If you have ages, you also have lengths, and we have landings for these species, and so those are some key components that could be considered for many of the species, and whether or not we have an index, but you're absolutely right that thinking about these in a more comprehensive list, but I need more guidance to know what to bring to you. I've brought to you the landings, brought to you the indices, brought the number of age structures. What other pieces of information? To me, that's -- Those are the key parts of a stock assessment, and so I need more guidance on how to help you all make a decision.

MS. MURPHEY: Jessica.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Yes, and so, I mean, I just got this today. I haven't really had a chance to dive into it. I guess I would ask if there's a way that I could look at the information that Chip provided and then maybe get back to him between now and the next council meeting, so that I can look at this a little bit more digested and figure out what's missing that would help us make a determination, because like so, in looking through this document, I see like seven key stocks that staff are recommending, and I appreciate this document, but some of these I don't know that I would put in the key stock, because it's my understanding that they might have -- Or be a candidate for an interim analysis, you know, like a more frequent, less rigorous analysis that would get us the same information, but I haven't really had a chance to dive into this, I guess is what I would say, and so I think I'd still like a little bit more time on this.

I mean I hate to be a pest. I know we talked about it twice, but I think that this is a really important discussion. To me, this is the science that drives the council's management decisions, and I want us to get it right, and I want us to go into this with all the information about what the likelihood is for these different types of assessments, and I still don't see, on here, you know, the ones that FWC is doing and how that meshes with this process, and so just I still have some concerns, but I need to think through, in looking at this, what type of table would be needed that could help me make

some of these decisions, but I'm still concerned that we're having to pick out key stocks in the first place, and I'm just saying.

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

MR. HULL: Thank you, Madam Chair. I think we need to get information from the SSC as to what stocks they think are good candidates for interim analysis, and so then we can say, okay, now we can start to organize this better and say this they're going to accept this, and they've recommended this one, because they're the ones that are going to have to tell us. We may say this one is good, and that's good, but, ultimately, they may not like it, and not approve it for management, and so they need to tell us which ones are actually acceptable for us to choose for, you know, interim analysis or they've got to be full operational assessments.

MS. MURPHEY: Thank you, Jimmy. Chip.

DR. COLLIER: One thing that I haven't pointed out is I heard loud and clear that you guys feel like we need assessments on all species, and making a limited approach is a struggle, right, and you have to manage all of these down to the pound, according to the ACL management. That makes it challenging, and we need assessment approaches, or information, in order to develop good recommendations, and so that's loud and clear, and now trying to get down to the aged-based assessments, which ones are going to be most appropriate for that.

Then we need to be clear on the difference between a data-limited approach and then a -- I'm sorry, and I'm forgetting the term right now, but -- Interim analyses, and so those are those are different. Interim analyses are associated with a stock assessment. It's the analysis that's in between them, and then a data-limited approach would be an approach that you use to manage a species that has less information, or you just don't have an age-based stock assessment for it.

MS. MURPHEY: I've got Jessica.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Yes, and so I guess another thing is it seems like, at the March meeting, we're also going to be diving into what species should remain in the fishery management unit, and so it seems like these two discussions go hand-in-hand when you're thinking about what type of data is available, or we anticipate it being available to do an interim analysis, et cetera.

I believe that that's maybe one of the ten criteria when you're looking at federal management, about what information is available, and so I just think that discussion goes hand-in-hand with this discussion, in thinking about what's really needed, and what's realistic, that we could obtain, so that we can make some management decisions about some of those species, but so it also seems premature to try to pick this out, and finalize this today, until we dive into that discussion.

I guess that another thing, for me, is we talked about this Mid-Atlantic presentation about this whole recreational reform, and how some species that have high recreational catches, and a way to look at things where you're not just looking at MRIP, and you're looking at a model that's bringing in all these other items.

I guess I think about all these things together, which is why I had been thinking that the SEDAR Steering Committee maybe has a broader charge in thinking about, you know, everything that can

be done, instead of only focusing on what can get an age-based stock assessment, that there might be these assessment lite, or data-limited assessment, or interim analysis that could be conducted, but I'm having trouble visualizing, you know, what is available for each species, and so I feel like I need to dive into this a little bit more, plus I would like it to be informed by some of the things that we're talking about seeing at March.

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

MR. PHILLIPS: Thank you, Madam Chair. Jessica, when you're talking about -- Or all of us, really, talking about taking some species out of the -- Or off of our list, are you thinking about -- I'm thinking that, right now, we're trying to figure out what key species are, and so are you thinking maybe move something like red porgy to an ecosystem, or are you just looking at things like tomtrate, or something like that, that we're not going to assess anyway?

MS. MCCAWLEY: Well, I think that some of that's going to come out when staff brings back a document about what should stay in the FMU, and what could come out of it, and I think that red porgy wouldn't necessarily be a candidate, based on its status, but there could be some other species that could be candidates, but I would like to have all those discussions at the same time and then use some of that information to help inform this discussion as well.

MS. MURPHEY: Okay. John, then Andy.

DR. WALTER: Thanks, and so I'll try to simplify it a bit, in terms of I think we can really complicate this, or we can say key stocks are the ones that are keeping you up at night, that blow up your cellphones, that you can't ignore, that you feel you want more rapid and more -- The most complete advice on, and that's probably not all twelve, and it's probably not fourteen, and it's certainly not all fifty stocks in the snapper grouper complex. It could probably be boiled down to a couple.

The Gulf Council, when asked which stocks are the ones you hear the most concerns about, and how often you want management advice, settled down with six stocks every three years. That was pretty straightforward. We could work with that. It doesn't mean the other ones aren't going to get some sort of treatment, because remember an annual catch limit is actually a pretty blunt force tool.

It doesn't always require the most complicated thing to be able to derive a catch limit, and we've seen that you can do that with an empirical management procedure. You can do that with an index, and you modify the previous year's catch, and set it for two years, and so there's a lot of options, and I think what we can -- I certainly would say you don't need to make a decision right now.

What we can do, and part of the process of the SEDAR improvements, is to take some of this information and then provide a more fleshed-out proposal as to which stocks would be good candidates for which different treatment, and I think that, if we could just hear -- I'm seeing thumbs-up around the table, and we'll take that also to the SSC, because I think that they've got a lot to weigh-in here, but we've been thinking a lot about this, and about which stocks would be good candidates.

It would be good just to hear if there are sort of candidate key stocks, the ones that are just not ignorable, and, you know, you could probably, on like one hand, list those, but I know it's hard to sometimes to do that, because somebody says, well, what about this one, and what about this one, but we can kind of reduce the, you know, the pressure here, and we don't need that right now. Thanks.

MS. MURPHEY: Andy, did you want to speak?

MR. STRELCHECK: Yes, and, just to add to what John was saying, I don't fully agree that it's just the stocks that keep us up at night, right, and it's those that are economically valuable, and it's those that, obviously, are super important to our stakeholders, and you could argue all fifty-five are, but there are certainly some that are going to, obviously, rise to the top more than others.

With that said, in terms of the direction of staff, it's not just SSC recommendations, as John pointed out, and it's really the Science Center working with the SSC on recommendations, for not only candidate stocks, but those stocks that might be able to utilize interim or other more simplistic approaches.

Then I haven't seen the presentation that Jessica and I guess John Carmichael and others saw with the Mid-Atlantic reform project. I know it's related, but I'm not sure it's so related to deciding what the key stocks are and what goes into our assessment process. I feel like it's more of like that's an outcome of the process, right, and so I don't want this to be it -- I think that's important, for us to get that information about the Mid-Atlantic reform, but make the distinction that it shouldn't be the basis for our decision making on key stocks.

MS. MURPHEY: Jessica.

MS. MCCAWLEY: I appreciate what John Walter said, but I guess my thing is I feel like we already had a conversation, earlier this week, and we couldn't agree on how to narrow it down, or what to narrow it down to, and we said we needed some more information, and so I like what Chip added here about -- I would like the Science Center to tell us, like you're saying, John, what type of information, what type of tool, could be used to give information, and how frequently do you think you could do it, before we respond with, yes, this looks great, or, no, we really want Species X to be in this whole age-based assessment approach, and we really want an assessment this frequently, et cetera.

I guess I would just caution us from going back to that same discussion we had earlier this week. I'm trying to make a point that I don't know that we have everything we need to have a robust durable decision today on this topic.

MS. MURPHEY: Thank you, Jessica. Anybody -- Chip, did you have anything to add?

DR. COLLIER: Well, I mean, I agree with Jessica, but I just want to point out one of the things - - The way I was looking at -- A different way to look at key stocks is how the council has requested stock assessments in the past, right, and so some of them were quite frequent, and I viewed that as that is what was keeping the council up at night in the past. They were requesting these stock assessments on a frequent basis, and that's a lot of what went into that list of seven. I didn't go into landings all that much, just because I did not feel that -- If there's an issue with the stock, yes, that

kept up the council in the past, but it could also have led to constraining that stock, and so it's not fair to look at landings over time, because there might be heavy management on it, whereas another one might not have some management that's going in place.

Christina did a great job putting together all the information from fishery performance reports and indicating whether or not there's community dependence on that. If you're hearing community dependence for a species, I think that's extremely important it, and that could have great impacts into a community, and, yes, it might not be the entire coast, but it could be very important, and so we're trying to put together as much information as possible that you guys can really synthesize.

It's a challenging topic to figure out what's best. Everybody has a different version of what's best, and so that's why we're struggling here, and Jessica is absolutely right that we probably can't get it done today.

MS. MURPHEY: I am getting a sense, around the room, that folks are not comfortable with trying to come up with this list now, and it looks like, to me, the direction to staff is I think it would probably benefit us to have staff, and the Science Center and the SSC, work together to kind of help us hone that list down, and I guess folks are just a little -- After the vermilion interim analysis not going well, I think everybody is just a little gun-shy so, and I think that's probably also why the idea of going back to the old assessments, and trying interim, and see how that works. If everybody is comfortable holding off on making these decisions today, we can -- Do we want to shoot for March, or --

DR. COLLIER: The SSC is not going to meet until April, and so it would probably be June. We do have a SEDAR Committee scheduled. We usually do March and September, but, as this is going on, we might need more frequent meetings, as Myra is likely to hit me, or John Hadley, for adding more meetings, but these are things that probably needed to get discussed.

The other thing I would recommend, for that SSC and Southeast Fisheries Science recommendation, is maybe adding the SEP in there as well, just given that they're there -- They might be -- They might have some ways to look at this data a little bit differently, in order to guide some recommendations on candidate stocks.

MS. MURPHEY: So, if everyone is good at postponing going to this discussion, and this list, until we have that information, and I appreciate John for offering the Science Center to help out with this, and I'll just go ahead and read direction to staff and move on.

The direction to staff, based off that discussion, is to bring additional information to the June 2025 committee meeting and additional information to consider would be discussions regarding species that need to remain under federal management, information on the Mid-Atlantic project on recreational reform, and then the SSC, SEP, and the Science Center recommendations on candidate stocks and those that might benefit from interim or other approaches. That concludes the SEDAR report, and now I'm going to hand it over to, last, but not least, Snapper Grouper and Jessica.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. thank you, ma'am, and so the Snapper Grouper Committee met earlier this week and approved the minutes from the September 2024 meeting and the agenda for this meeting. We received updates about amendments that have been approved by the council and are under development to be submitted for secretarial review, and the Southeast Regional Office

updated the council on potential actions and timing for the secretarial amendment being developed to end overfishing of red snapper.

Potential actions and other details are outlined in the Fishery Bulletin that was released on December 5. An updated stock assessment of red snapper, with data through 2023, is being developed by the Southeast Fisheries Science Center to provide scientific advice for the secretarial amendment. This stock assessment report will be available within the timing of amendment development, and a more detailed update on the secretarial amendment will be presented at the March 2025 council meeting, and in-person public hearings are being scheduled by NOAA Fisheries around February 2025. Specific times and locations of the public hearings will be announced at a later date.

Then we got into the AP report for topics that weren't on the council -- On the Snapper Grouper Committee agenda, and so the AP met October 15 through 17 and discussed topics pertaining to the snapper grouper fishery, and the AP chair presented some of those discussions.

One of the items was notification from an AP member who holds a golden tilefish longline endorsement that this user group is considering a proposal of a catch share program for that component of the fishery. The council directed staff to gather information about the process for establishing an ITQ fishery under the current Magnuson-Stevens act, the reauthorization of 2007.

Then we got into black sea bass, which is Amendment 56. The AP and the SSC chairs presented discussions about black sea bass from their respective October 2024 meetings. The AP discussed potential fishery behavior responses to recreational management actions under consideration through Amendment 56, and the SSC reviewed additional assessment projections of black sea bass catch levels.

The SSC recommended against management use of the currently available set of catch projections and instead recommended the development of an enhanced projection approach that updates several assessment inputs through 2023 and reruns the assessment model to provide catch projections for 2026 and future years.

Staff presented an overview of the current amendment timeline and decision points necessary for developing the assessment response. The committee provided the following direction to staff: request projections from the Science Center consistent with the SSC's recommendation to be available for the SSC to review in April 2025 and the council to review in June 2025. The SSC would apply the new ABC control rule. The stock risk rating for black sea bass will need to be evaluated. I'm not sure why this is highlighted, Mike. The very top one.

DR. SCHMIDTKE: So, with the new updated assessment projection method for black sea bass that the Science Center would run, the old control rule was applied, the ABC control rule, and we have not gone through the stock risk ratings for black sea bass yet, through with the AP and the SSC, and so we would need to evaluate an update in the stock risk rating, to see if the P\* would change from the old control rule.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Oka. We added in spring 2025. Okay. I'm going to keep going. All right, and so then we talked about conducting scoping meetings. I guess staff has suggested -- Are these via webinar, because that's I think how we've been doing a number of these scoping meetings, and



I'll go over the following actions, and then maybe folks can say whether they're okay with doing the scoping via webinar or not, and so reduce catch levels, revise status determination criteria, discuss sector allocation percentages, accountability measures, change fishing year start date, reopening nearshore areas to on-demand black sea bass pots, recreational management measures, including discard-reducing measures like single hook rigs, close nearshore areas for black sea bass retention that coincide with the spawning season, recreational bag limit reduction, recreational size limit reduction, recreational seasonal retention closure, and, with the currently considered actions, implementation would be tentatively expected for late 2026, and, in the absence of catch levels available for review during scoping meetings, note recent landings discard removals and other data that are indicating a strong decline in the black sea bass stock, and then request a presentation to the council at the March meeting, we think, and there's a question-mark here, describing various levels of SPR-based proxies for maximum sustainable yield and rationale for different levels.

This presentation, I think we were talking about the one maybe that the SSC got, and so if folks could comment on -- Are we okay with conducting the scoping via webinar, and are we wanting this SPR-based proxies for MSY presentation at the March meeting? Andy.

MR. STRELCHECK: My personal perspective is we're getting too prescriptive with staff, and I would yield to Myra and John to decide how we want to do the scoping meetings. If they want to choose webinars, great, right, and, if they want to go in person, great. It's up to them, their budget, right, and so I don't know if other people feel that way, but I think, for future conversations around the council table, just to be able to know that staff is empowered to make those decisions would be great.

The other thing, with the request for the presentation at the council meeting, I agree we need to have that conversation. I guess the other mechanism I was thinking of is the monthly seminar series, and so would it be better to do it at that time, and encourage participation, versus taking time away from the council meeting, and so just a suggestion.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thanks for that suggestion. I can't make the upcoming webinars, based on my schedule, and so I would prefer to do it at the council meeting, but that's just me. Myra, do you feel like you have what you need, or do other council members want to weigh-in here on scoping via webinar? Okay. All right. Then staff can decide how they want to scope this. Go ahead, Amy.

MS. DUKES: Just out of curiosity -- I do also agree that Erik Williams' SPR presentation should be provided to the council. It potentially could wait until the June meeting, and be in tandem with the results of what's happening with the update assessment, as well as the SSC's recommendations. From a timing standpoint, it might make more sense, for our understanding, and just a suggestion.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Trish.

MS. MURPHEY: I'm good with putting that off till June if everyone else is.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Okay. Trish said she's good with putting it off till June if other folks are. Tim.

MR. GRINER: Yes, and I guess I'm fine with putting it off to June, but, you know, it's an important thing, and part of me thinks that it would be better to have that conversation in March, so that the council has time to digest it and understand what comes back to them in June, or what -- You know, I don't know. Either way, I guess I'm fine.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Mike.

DR. SCHMIDTKE: So just reminding you of the timing of this amendment, just kind of when we're receiving information and are going to be able to put things together. The council would not have a draft amendment that you could potentially consider for public hearings until September of next year, and so you would be seeing the catch levels in June, and then we would need that quarter for the IPT to take those catch levels, get them into the draft amendment, develop the effects analyses, and so the earliest you could get a draft amendment would be September of 2025, and so if you -- If, knowing that timing, you wanted to have that presentation happen in June, the same time as when you get the catch levels, then you could provide some direction, at that point, that could go into the rationale.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Okay. Charlie had his hand up.

MR. PHILLIPS: Thank you, and I kind of agree with Tim. I would rather see this sooner rather than later, so I can kind of be digesting it, and especially if I get a chance to go to the SSC meeting in April, and then things might make a little more sense. They might be able to train me yet, and so, the sooner I see it, I think the better it helps me and kind of like you know internalize it.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Okay and so are we keeping it June, or are we changing it? What if we said March or June, and then we see how packed the agenda is, et cetera? Okay. At either the March or the June meeting. Okay. Mike.

DR. SCHMIDTKE: If you all end up, as you have your conversations, deciding that a seminar would be a better route for it, even for those who are not able to make the seminar, all seminars are recorded and kept on the council website, for people that happen to miss that, that you can go back, and you can watch that presentation on your own time, ahead of the council meeting, and so, if that's the route you choose, then there is that avenue for you.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Chip.

DR. COLLIER: Going the seminar route, I'm a little bit nervous about it. Just based on who attends, and, you know, it's usually low attendance from the council members, and it's usually low attendance from advisory panel members, and a few SSC members will show up, and so it might not be the best vehicle, but there's also, like Mike said, the ability to watch it later. I don't know how many people do that. I do know it's -- I don't know who does that. I can see it is very few people, less than usually twenty, that will go back and view some of these, unless you're Laurilee, the rock star, and over 600 people went and watched that one. I also want to point out that we already do have people scheduled for February, January and February, and so the next open slot currently is April.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. I think we're good here. We've had good discussion. I'm going to move on to the next part of the committee report. We also discuss management strategy evaluation

for the snapper grouper fishery. The MSE explores long-term management strategies for the South Atlantic snapper grouper fishery. The AP and SSC chairs presented comments and recommendations for management strategies that should be considered in future simulations. Staff from Blue Matter Science presented several potential management strategies for black sea bass, gag, and red snapper, and requested input from the council to refine the current suite of broad management strategies into implementable actions that should be further explored.

The committee provided the following guidance for development of future model iterations: identify implementable management strategies (specific management decisions), effort reduction and sector caps, recalculation of reference points, specific management options like aggregate bag limit and recreational fleet response to management actions and made reference to the Sean Powers paper, which was in the Gulf, that was about spreading out effort when the Gulf red snapper season was lengthened. Seasonal closures, including things such as weekend-only fishing, additional species, species interactions and life history variations, key uncertainties, or things like fleet dynamics, spatial management options, state waters versus federal water management varying, future recruitment patterns, like regime shifts, compliance rates and angler satisfaction, start year of the assessment, with the data being old, management objectives, maximize days-at-sea, ensure for-hire fishery remains economically viable.

All right. Then the council went into assessment review and response planning discussion for ongoing assessments. Three upcoming stock assessments straddle the jurisdictional boundary between the South Atlantic and another region. Mutton snapper and yellowtail snapper have shared jurisdiction with the Gulf of Mexico and blueline with the Mid-Atlantic, with each of the three species analytically treated as a single stock.

As such, the review of stock assessments for these species need to be conducted jointly with the council's respective SSCs to provide catch level recommendations for the entire stock. A subgroup approach, consisting of representatives from each council's SSC, was proposed for the stock assessment review of these three species, and council staff provided details on this subgroup approach and logistics and timing of these assessment reviews.

The council agreed with and approved the proposed approach and the list of participants for the assessment review, and the council was also presented with the proposal for the joint management approach with the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council for yellowtail snapper and mutton snapper following the joint review of the assessments.

The proposed approach was to complete a joint South Atlantic Fishery Management Council/Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council amendment to establish the OFL and ABC for the single stock of mutton snapper and a single stock of yellowtail snapper and review jurisdictional allocations for both species and modify, if necessary.

The Gulf Council would be the administrative lead for this amendment. The South Atlantic would then complete a follow-up amendment to the South Atlantic Snapper Grouper FMP to establish the South Atlantic ABC and ACL for mutton and yellowtail, establish the South Atlantic sector allocations and sector ACLs for each stock, and introduce any management and accountability measures to manage the fisheries. The committee supported moving forward with the SSC review and management plans, as outlined by staff.

Stock risk ratings for golden tilefish, blueline tilefish, red snapper, mutton snapper, and yellowtail snapper, under the ABC control rule, the council incorporates an evaluation of how much risk of overfishing it would be willing to accept based on biological, fishery, and environmental factors affecting each stock.

The committee reviewed recommended scores from the AP and the SSC and related information for golden tilefish, blueline, red snapper, mutton, and yellowtail, and the committee developed stock risk ratings for use in application of the ABC control rule to each of these species and rated each of these stocks as high risk.

All right. Then the council moved into the private recreational permit and education requirements, Amendment 46. Amendment 46 considers establishing a private recreational permit and education requirement for the South Atlantic snapper grouper fishery. The amendment was recently reviewed by the Snapper Grouper Private Angler AP, at their November 2024 meeting, and the committee was provided with summary AP feedback and then provided the following comments and direction to staff.

For the purpose and need statements, direct staff to adapt the statements to include planning for potential reporting and expansion to other FMPs in the future and further emphasize the intent to survey permit holders and enhance data collection. Action 2, species covered by the permit, add an alternative that would cover key stocks, or whatever we come up with from SEDAR, and key stocks would be identified by the council at a future date. During discussion of this action, the committee provided direction to council staff to review the snapper grouper complex to determine what species are in need of federal conservation and management and change the fishery management unit.

Actions 3 and 4, the education requirement, the IPT suggested edits to the alternatives. Those are listed there in the committee report. Action 5, the IPT suggested edits under Action 5, but, also, we directed staff to add an allowance that would accommodate the existing Florida State Reef Fish Survey, either exempt Florida or grandfather the existing program in to allow an exemption from a federal permit and education requirement, make sure that future state programs can be exempted from federal permit and education requirements, carry through “equivalent” or “comparable” in the wording of subalternatives, rather than “same”, and gather feedback on whether Florida, which has an angler-based permit, could be provided an exemption from the federal requirement if the federal permit is vessel-based. All right, and then we moved into the golden tilefish stock assessment. Sorry. Andy has his hand up.

MR. STRELCHECK: I just wanted to go back to Action 2, and so it references key stocks, and see the SEDAR Committee report, and I thought the discussion was broader than that, that we weren't going to necessarily just limit it to the key stocks to identify as potentially important for assessment, and that it could be a broader range that would be included under the permit. Am I mistaken?

MS. MCCAWLEY: Well, there might have already been an action that had that in there like that, and so -- Also, to me, that's why “key stocks” was in quotation marks, because we weren't sure, and now we're not making a decision at this meeting, and so we don't know what that looks like, and so I don't know that we knew what to call that thing. Go ahead, Andy.

MR. STRELCHECK: Yes, and I think that's my point, is that we're using the same terminology, but I don't necessarily think it means the same things, in this context, and so I just wanted to make sure everyone is on the same page about that.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Maybe it's like key stock plus, or something, and I don't -- I don't know. Key stocks and friends, and I don't know. Okay. We tried to -- We captured the key stocks and their friends. Okay.

All right. I'm going to move back to the golden tilefish stock assessment. SEDAR 89 included data through 2022 and indicated that the golden tilefish stock in the South Atlantic is not overfished, and overfishing is not occurring. The Southeast Fisheries Science Center staff presented the assessment results to the committee, and the SSC chair presented the SSC's comments on the assessment and recommendations for the overfishing limit and the ABC. Council staff presented the fishery overview, showing recent golden tilefish landings and other pertinent data, and the committee passed the following motion and gave the following direction.

**Motion Number 1 is initiate an amendment to incorporate SEDAR 89 catch levels for golden tilefish. On behalf of the committee, I so move. Any discussion? Any objections? All right. That motion carries.**

Then there are some other bullet points there. In the amendment, include consideration of the following actions: allocation discussion, which would include, if we're not going to change allocation, the rationale for not changing allocation, and consult the SSC if golden tilefish would be a candidate for carryover or phase-in under the ABC control rule.

Staff reviewed the requirements of the ABC control rule for carryover and phase-in provisions. Golden tilefish are not eligible for phase-in, because the recommended ABC is not less than 80 percent of the current ABC, and so neither golden tilefish sector is currently eligible for carryover, because the AMs do not include post-season reductions to the ACL if an overage occurs. If the AMs were changed to include such reductions in response to overages, the stock would meet eligibility requirements defined in the ABC control rule. Based on that, I'm hoping that that can come back in the amendment, the changes for the accountability measures. Okay. I see staff nodding yes. Modify the recreational season start date, which is currently January 1, and consider revision of accountability measures, and we just discussed one of the ways to do that.

All right. Next up, the commercial subcommittee report. In November of this year, the Snapper Grouper Commercial Subcommittee met via webinar. Staff summarized the meeting for the committee, and the subcommittee reviewed commercial information from the 2015 snapper grouper vision blueprint, and the subcommittee concluded that additional and updated information is necessary to prioritize commercial management issues that need to be addressed.

The subcommittee directed staff to compile this information, as available, for the subcommittee's next meeting, which is to be held in person prior to or during the March 2025 council meeting, and staff will follow-up with subcommittee members to schedule a specific meeting time and location.

Then the committee went into Other Business, first discussing the Return 'Em Right expansion. Following the 2010 Deepwater Horizon oil spill, the Open Ocean Trustee Council created the Gulf Spill Restoration Project Portal to accept restoration project ideas from the public. The submitted

project ideas have been narrowed down to ten projects that are being recommended for implementation.

One of the recommended projects would expand the Return ‘Em Right program, which works to advance the use of best fishing practices, into the South Atlantic and Caribbean regions, as well as to other species, including highly migratory species, coastal migratory pelagic species, and other species, such as flounders, drums, and seatrout.

The committee supported drafting a comment letter expressing support for the expansion of the program to the South Atlantic region, and, additionally, the committee requested the letter strongly emphasize the importance of collaborating with and supporting already established programs in the region, specifically the council's best fishing practices initiative and citizen science program and relevant state and regional agencies.

**The committee made Motion Number 2, which was to submit comments on the Return ‘Em Right species and area expansion project proposed in the Open Ocean Trustee Implementation Group Draft Restoration Plan 4. On behalf of the committee, I so move. Any discussion of this motion? Any objection to the motion? All right. Seeing none, that motion carries.**

All right. Then we have, there at the bottom, a lengthy timing and tasks draft motion there, if someone would like to make that motion. Okay. Kerry.

**MS. MARHEFKA: Direct staff to do the following: conduct scoping meetings for Amendment 56 prior to the March 2025 council meeting; request black sea bass productions from the Science Center, consistent with the SSC's recommendations, which would include base runs based on 30 percent SPR and 40 percent SPR MSY proxies; request a presentation on the Mid-Atlantic Council's recreational fishery reform process; request a presentation to the council, at the March or June 2025 meeting, describing the various levels of SPR-based proxies for MSY and rationale for different levels; coordinate with the Mid-Atlantic Council for blueline tilefish and the Gulf Council for yellowtail snapper and mutton snapper to conduct SSC reviews of the assessments and develop management responses; request further development of the snapper grouper MSE, per the guidance listed above; continue work on Amendment 46 for review at the March 2025 meeting and prepare the amendment for approval for public hearings; compile information to review the snapper grouper fishery management unit to evaluate which species are in need of federal conservation and management; prepare a document for the golden tilefish amendment to be considered for scoping at the March 2025 council meeting; convene the Snapper Grouper Commercial Subcommittee in-person prior to the March 2025 council meeting; submit comments on the proposed Return ‘Em Right species and area expansion project.**

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. Is there a second?

MS. MARHEFKA: On behalf of the committee, I so move.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Well, the committee didn't make it. You're just making it brand new.

MS. MARHEFKA: Sorry. Never mind.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Is there a second? It's seconded by Amy, and so a couple of things under discussion, if you can scroll up a little bit. Myra added, in that first yellow box, what we just discussed about March or June 2025, and then there's a question-mark on the prepare the amendment for approval for public hearing.

That's Amendment 46, and so I guess we can -- I think it's too early for public hearings on that now. I feel like we need a little bit more work on it. I thought that what this was meeting is that, in March, we would decide if we want to approve for public hearing, at that time, and that's how I was reading that. Okay. More discussion on this motion? Is there more discussion, or concerns, or are we missing anything here? Andy.

MR. STRELCHECK: I had mentioned engaging the Office of Science and Technology with regard to how the surveying maybe, you know, work and, you know, whether it could just be for effort or if there's ways of integrating like actual reporting by anglers, and so I wanted to find out if that's something you wanted the Fisheries Service to kind of pursue and come back with. We could, obviously, talk about timing of that and whether it would be appropriate for March.

MS. MCCAWLEY: So what was it again? Sorry, and I was looking at something else in the report.

MR. STRELCHECK: So there was some discussion, during the meeting, about, you know, interest in reporting as well, right, and how reporting could or could not be integrated into this, either in the near-term or long-term, but also then just how the survey would work with regard to kind of narrowing the universe of participants, right, and so, if there's more clarity, or information, surrounding the actual survey methodologies, then we can certainly involve Science and Technology and either set up a presentation or bring back more information at a future council meeting.

MS. MCCAWLEY: So are you thinking -- I get it now, and thanks for that explanation. You're thinking that you would have that ready for March, or are you thinking just March or June, or some other future council meeting, as the council continues to discuss 46?

MR. STRELCHECK: I would want to talk to Science and Technology, because we would be relying on, obviously, their work, but, yes, and so at a future meeting, and we can leave it open-ended, if the council is good with that.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Okay. Sounds good. I see people nodding yes. Anything else? Myra.

MS. BROUWER: Just to clarify, on Amendment 46, you said you want to consider the amendment for approval for public hearings in March, but I imagine that doesn't mean you want to see a public hearing document, and just making sure. Thank you.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. Anything else on this modified timing and tasks motion? All right. Any more discussion? **Any objection?** All right. **That motion carries.** Is there any other business to come before Snapper Grouper? All right. I don't see any additional hands. Madam Chair, that concludes my report.

MS. MURPHEY: All right. Thank you, Jessica, and so I guess we will move into the workplan, and that's John Hadley coming up.

MR. HADLEY: All right. So, while I get this uploaded, there's a revised version of the workplan, capturing some of the changes that were made this week. It's on the webpage, and so if you want -- I know this is a fairly large spreadsheet, and so, if you want to follow along on your own device, it is on the on the webpage for this this meeting.

I'll kind of run down the list here a little bit. If you look, there's the there's a kind of this more purple shading, over to the far left, and you can see that -- I tried to flag what moved this week, to help with that discussion, but I'll kind of run down the list here, and start with the FMP amendments and get into the other the other council activities.

Just kind of the -- You know, just to frame the discussion here, and kind of get the wheels turning, as far as scheduling, and March is looking pretty full, but it but it's very -- You know, it's currently within the realm of, you know, getting through everything in a week-long meeting. The latter half of 2025 gets pretty jammed up, and so, you know, that's either a discussion we can have, as far as council scheduling at this meeting, or, you know, that's something that we would have to have in March, but, from June 2025 onward is pretty full, but, in the short-term, the March 2025 meeting is very doable.

I'll run down the FMP amendments here and just go over what has sort of changed this week. Starting at the top there, move back the MSE-related long-term, kind of overhaul of the snapper grouper fishery, if you will, that large amendment that we've had at the very top of the workplan for a while. You know, it seems like there's some more input that's desired from the MSE, and so that that is working towards that amendment, but actual work on that amendment probably wouldn't happen until the latter part of next year, and so move that back a little bit, and so change that timeline.

We noted that the Amendment 56 for black sea bass, the assessment response, that is basically looking like a full amendment, if you will, kind of with the typical timeline, and so we kind of updated that, and noted that in there, moving towards public hearings in September.

Moving down the list, move the golden tilefish assessment response amendment up into the underway workplan, since that looks like it will be moving forward and moving towards approval for scoping. The length of that really depends on the contents of that amendment. If it ends up being a catch level recommendation update, and maybe a few other tweaks, this timeline probably could be shortened, but, right now, that's built out as a typical amendment, if you will, as far as from a timing perspective.

Moving down, we added Dolphin Wahoo Regulatory Amendment 3 to the workplan, and we moved that for next review at the June meeting, which is consistent with what the committee -- With what was in the committee report, and then, at the bottom, the SEFHIER revisions amendment, move that for potential approval at the March, upcoming March, 2025 meeting.

Looking down the workplan, this is where there were several changes to the kind of other activities that don't necessarily fall under a fishery management plan amendment, but I'll highlight the Snapper grouper Subcommittee feedback. We just added a meeting in on there for March, since



that meet that subcommittee may be meeting in conjunction, and not necessarily at the same time, but in conjunction with the March meeting, and so I wanted to account for that timing.

Looking at the headboat vessel limit discussion, it seems like there will be a follow-up to that discussion, and we added that for June. The snapper grouper MSE results, we added a follow-up to that discussion for March. The council research and monitoring plan, that will be discussed at the June meeting, and so accounting for that, and then, moving down towards the bottom, the stakeholder engagement meetings discussion, we added timing for that, at least, at the very least, at the March 2026 meeting, since that's the new timing for those meetings to be held.

Then certainly last, but not least, at the bottom, the dolphin MSE feedback, and that was discussed during the Dolphin Wahoo Committee. We kind of accounted for that discussion in June, during discussion of Regulatory Amendment 3, and so that's further up in the document, and that's why you see a zero there, but there are um spaces on the council's workplan so that can be addressed, as was outlined in the presentation from the Science Center.

With that, just moving down to the bottom, there are the sort of placeholder items for upcoming unknown, either assessment responses or items that the council has mentioned that you want to keep in the bullpen, if you will, and keep under consideration, but there's not necessarily definite timing just yet.

With that, sort of the take-home there, as I alluded to before, March is looking -- You know, this bottom line here, and March is looking good. It's looking -- You know, it's a full agenda, but it's not overly full. The latter part of 2025, and into early 2026, is pretty full, and so, if there's any -- You know, if there's any ideas on what could be moved around, we can certainly talk about that, now but, you know, it's either talk about it now or talk about it in March on what you may want to move around for the latter part of 2025. Thank you.

MS. MURPHEY: Kerry.

MS. MARHEFKA: Sadly, I'm not speaking to make the case better, and I'm speaking to make it worse, and I'm going to need you all to try to help me figure out how. It's incredibly important to me that what comes out of the commercial sub working subgroup is not just some ideas that don't get acted on.

I personally fully anticipate some sort of modification to the two-for-one, whether it's completely repealing it or setting the criteria for when it is to be repealed, and I'm very nervous, based on all that red at the bottom, that what's going to happen is we're going to get three meetings of that workgroup in, and we're going to get some ideas, and then not have space to do the work, and I would like to point out that there's a lot of work being done for other sectors, and this has been asked for for a really, really long time, and I'm sorry.

I know everything on here deserves to be on here, and I don't know how to make the problem better, but I have to speak up and say we're going to have to look at slotting that in there. I think there's going to be an amendment that comes out of there in another, if I had to guess, two meetings, but that's me. That's me speaking on behalf of me, by the way, and not on other subcommittee members.

MS. MURPHEY: Jessica.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Yes, and I don't disagree with what Kerry is saying. I think that the intent was that this subcommittee would meet and bring back something, or a couple somethings, that would need some action. At this point, we don't know if it would be a framework, if it would need a full plan amendment, and I'm not sure, but yes, and I don't know how to add it in either, but I agree, and I think the intent was that something would come out of that that required council action.

MS. MURPHEY: Let me get John, and then I'll get you, Charlie.

MR. HADLEY: Myra just reminded me the examining the species in the snapper grouper FMU, and that would be another one, if you wanted to -- It would take an amendment, and so that's another one that, you know, we can work on, but, in that discussion, I mean, there's time to have that discussion on the March agenda, based on the workplan, and that can that can certainly be fit in, but it's just that amendment that would take place after that, and we've got to carve out a chunk of time for it. Thank you.

MS. MURPHEY: Charlie.

MR. PHILLIPS: I just mostly wanted to say ditto. I agree totally with what Kerry and Jessica said. You know, I don't want to just do an exercise because we did an exercise.

MS. MURPHEY: No, and I appreciate that. Andy.

MR. STRELCHECK: I guess two things. First, a clarification, and so, at the top, we have the MSE kind of long-term approach for red snapper, and that wouldn't start until September, but, down, below we talk -- We're going to have at least, you know, some time set aside for the snapper grouper MSE results, and so what is that relative to what we saw at this meeting?

MR. HADLEY: I might ask Chip to help discuss that, but I think what that would be, while he's coming up to the table, is that would be a follow-up to what the council asked for towards the end of the MSE discussion, so it's kind of the next iteration, but I'll hand it over to Chip.

MS. MURPHEY: Go ahead, Chip.

DR. COLLIER: I was going to ask for the question to be repeated. Just I heard "MSE", and it perked my ears, but I didn't hear the full question.

MR. STRELCHECK: For the March -- So we have the long-term red snapper response MSE, which would start in September, and what would be discussed in March that was different than what we discussed here this week?

DR. COLLIER: So I think what we need to discuss for the MSE is really narrowing down on some management measures. If you looked at what John had presented for the dolphin MSE, there were very clear management measures that were potentially going in places, where it was like specific size limit regulations, and specific bag limit regulations that would be going in place, associated with a management procedure, and I think that would be very beneficial to get to for the snapper grouper MSE, is getting clear direction on what to include.

If the council would like to include a season, what is that season? Is it April to October, or is it a different season than that? We need some -- As opposed to us going through the gamut of what might work, we need to get down to, you know, what are some actual management actions that the council is willing to consider, and then we can take it to the AP, maybe in April, to get their input, to find it to really fine-tune all these things, but we need clear direction on what the council is willing to consider.

MS. MURPHEY: Go ahead, Andy.

MR. STRELCHECK: So, in response to that, so it's not so much the results as the next steps, right? Okay. Then I think I'm okay with that. The one concern I have, right, is we have the secretarial action then coinciding with that, at the same meeting, right, and so it could be thrown off course, and maybe it helps with the discussion, and so just kind of a word of caution there. I don't know how that interaction would go.

The other item I guess I'll mention is I find the liaison agency staff reports valuable, but we do spend a good amount of time at each meeting, you know, going through those. Is that something we could do every other meeting, or, you know, if we're looking for time on the agenda for additional discussion, I think it's probably value added to maybe do that a little less often, but still get those updates periodically.

MS. MURPHEY: Thanks for that suggestion. I'm seeing folks shaking their head that they are in agreement with that. Tim.

MR. GRINER: Yes, and I'm not sure -- Are you -- Andy, are you saying just the presentation part or -- You know, they're in our briefing material, and we just read them on our own, and not present them, or -- I mean, I'm fine with doing that, always.

MS. MURPHEY: Andy, do you want to --

MR. STRELCHECK: Yes, and, I mean. I was thinking just more every other meeting, you know, just a little less frequently, but get, you know, a six-month update, rather than a three-month update.

MS. MURPHEY: I've got Jessica.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Well, so just a question on that. Would that include the updates from the Mid-Atlantic and the Gulf Council? Are we switching that to every other meeting, or can we still get the Mid-Atlantic and the Gulf Council updates at every meeting?

MR. STRELCHECK: No, and I think that's a good point. I mean, there's certainly probably ones that we would want to get at every meeting and others that maybe we could alternate.

MS. MURPHEY: Is everybody was alternating? Go ahead, John.

MR. CARMICHAEL: The other thing we can look at is like golden tilefish, and we talked about doing the expedited framework, or whatever the heck it is called, and, if we can do that, and wrap

it up in like three meetings, and not have to have any of those boxes be orange, and let them be yellow, then that's a big time savings, and I think the same could potentially go for, at least as far as the time per meeting, on the yellowtail and mutton assessment response.

The Gulf is leading, and so that's going to add to the time window, and maybe we can skip some meetings, as we navigate the two councils, but maybe, at each meeting, it takes less time for you all's discussion, because, you know, in that case, in the yellowtail and mutton, you notice we have another amendment on the heels, to do the management changes, and so if we can have, you know, the restraint to just deal with the critical things, and the same with golden tilefish.

If we can just deal with the ABC change and say, if we want to look at bigger pictures in this fishery, then that's going to come when we look at maybe commercial, or maybe when we look at blueline, because that's where it makes more sense to take that comprehensive look.

Then you have the time, I think, Kerry, to really, you know, spend your orange blocks on things like that, where you're really taking a big change, and a big look at a fisher, and doing things more substantial. It's just so important that we get these basic catch level changes done quicker and more efficiently.

MS. MURPHEY: Just a suggestion, and would fitting in the -- If we make changes to the management unit, fit that that in that particular amendment?

MS. MCCAWLEY: No, I didn't think so.

MS. MURPHEY: Okay. All right. Never mind. Kerry.

MS. MARHEFKA: Just to that, John, yes, I agree completely. I wasn't laughing at you, as much as I know our proclivity for hanging Christmas ornaments on the tree, and so I would request that this -- That that statement is sort of pulled out and put in as a reminder, as we start the golden tile response, the next time we talk about it, so that we all remember that our marching orders are to do that, and that we have a plan going forward, because I'm afraid we're going to forget, and we're just very good, myself included, at going, well, while we're in here, let's do this, and so help us help us stay on track is what I'm saying, please.

MR. CARMICHAEL: That's exactly what I was thinking as we we're doing that, and, you know, maybe -- We've got to do a purpose and need, and the purpose and need is to respond to the stock assessment, oh, and then there's another sentence that says, by the way, we understand there's other issues in this fishery, and the council intends to work on these here, and maybe that makes people feel better about it.

MS. MURPHEY: Anybody have any other suggestions? Did we get rid of any red? No? Amy, do you have something?

MS. DUKES: Low-hanging fruit, but, looking at June, I think we should probably think about having that SPR presentation in March.

MS. MURPHEY: Did you all catch that, possibly the SPR in March? That doesn't turn March red, does it? It doesn't turn March red, does it? Anybody have any other suggestions? John, or Myra, or John, any other -- Okay. go ahead, Myra.

MS. BROUWER: Would you want to continue getting reports from law enforcement at every meeting? If you are considering maybe doing state activities every six months, would you want to do the same for the Coast Guard and NOAA OLE?

MS. MCCAWLEY: I think six is fine on that, but that's just my opinion, six months.

MS. MURPHEY: Is everybody good with that, too? Okay. That will help. Any other suggestions, thoughts, discussion on the workplan? Do you all have what you need? Okay. Well, next is the meeting schedule for 2025, and I'll hand that over to John, to John Carmichael.

MR. CARMICHAEL: I think the bird's-eye view shows you a lot of what you really need to see. There's a lot coming. We've just come through an incredibly busy six months, really. Since the September meeting, there was so much that went on, with -- It's normally busy anyway, because of advisory panel meetings and SSC meetings and such, and CCC meetings, and we had mackerel stakeholder meetings thrown in there, and interspersed throughout the whole year, and so I don't need to tell you all what a what a busy time it's been.

As we go into 2025, as you can see, it's already starting out to be quite busy, and so I think some of the things we talked about here, about managing some of these extra meetings that are coming on, and scopings, and APs, et cetera, has been helpful, because there's not a whole lot of time, and, you know, as we all know in the back of our minds, there's some public hearings coming up that we're all going to want to sit in on, and listen to, and we expect to get a lot of a lot of interest in, and so it's a tight schedule for sure, but we'll continue to keep this up-to-date and try to give you as much advance notice as we can of what's coming up, and I think we also point out, down at the bottom, that you have your longer look at council meetings that are coming up, so to help you in planning your schedule and such.

We know where the meetings are, and all that, and then, as we fill in on 2026, you know, I would like to -- When we get locations and stuff, we'll go ahead and start penciling that in as well. We kind of know the weeks, but getting the locations will be helpful, and admin is probably working on that now, as I talk.

MS. MURPHEY: All right. Any questions for John? Okay. The last item on the agenda, does anybody have any other business they would like to bring up before we adjourn? All right. Well, if nobody has any other business, the December South Atlantic Fishery Management Council meeting is adjourned.

(Whereupon, the meeting adjourned on December 6, 2024.)

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Certified By: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Transcribed By  
Amanda Thomas  
January 31, 2025

SOUTH ATLANTIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

Full Council II

Thur  
12/5

2024 - 2025 COUNCIL MEMBERS

Voting

- ✓ Trish Murphey, **Chair**  
NC Division of Marine Fisheries  
P.O. Box 769  
3441 Arendell Street  
Morehead City, NC 28557  
(242) 808-8011 (O); (252) 241-9310 (c)  
[Trish.Murphey@deq.nc.gov](mailto:Trish.Murphey@deq.nc.gov)
- ✓ Jessica McCawley, **Vice Chair**  
Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission  
620 South Meridian St  
Tallahassee, FL 32399  
(850) 487-0554  
[Jessica.mccawley@myfwc.com](mailto:Jessica.mccawley@myfwc.com)
- ✓ Dr. Carolyn Belcher  
GA DNR - Coastal Resources Division  
One Conservation Way, Suite 300  
Brunswick, GA 31520  
(912) 264-7218  
[Carolyn.belcher@dnr.ga.gov](mailto:Carolyn.belcher@dnr.ga.gov)
- ✓ Amy W. Dukes  
SCDNR-Marine Resources Division  
P.O. Box 12559  
217 Ft. Johnson Road  
Charleston, SC 29422  
(843) 953-9365  
[DukesA@dnr.sc.gov](mailto:DukesA@dnr.sc.gov)
- ✓ Gary Borland  
422 Highwater Court  
Chapin, SC 29036  
(561) 290-9274 (cell)  
[GborlandSAFMC@gmail.com](mailto:GborlandSAFMC@gmail.com)
- ✓ Tim Griner  
4446 Woodlark Lane  
Charlotte, NC 28211  
(980) 722-0918  
[timgrinersafmc@gmail.com](mailto:timgrinersafmc@gmail.com)
- Judy Helmey  
✓ 124 Palmetto Drive  
Savannah, GA 31410  
(912) 897-4921  
[JudyHelmey@gmail.com](mailto:JudyHelmey@gmail.com)
- ✓ James G. Hull, Jr.  
111 West Granada Blvd  
Ormond Beach, FL 32174  
(386) 547-1254  
[JHull.safmc@gmail.com](mailto:JHull.safmc@gmail.com)
- ✓ Kerry Marhefka  
347 Plantation View Lane  
Mt. Pleasant, SC 29464  
(843) 452-7352  
[KerryOMarhefka@gmail.com](mailto:KerryOMarhefka@gmail.com)
- ✓ Charlie Phillips  
1418 Sapelo Avenue N.E.  
Townsend, GA 31331  
(912) 832-4423  
[Ga\\_capt@yahoo.com](mailto:Ga_capt@yahoo.com)
- ✓ Tom Roller  
807 Deerfield Drive  
Beaufort, NC 28516  
(252) 728-7907 (ph); (919) 423-6310 (c)  
[tomrollersafmc@gmail.com](mailto:tomrollersafmc@gmail.com)
- Robert Spottswood, Jr.  
[robert@spottswood.com](mailto:robert@spottswood.com)  
(305) 294-6100  
Assistant:  
Carina Primus-Gomez  
[Cprimus-gomez@spottswood.com](mailto:Cprimus-gomez@spottswood.com)
- ✓ Andy Strelcheck  
Acting Regional Administrator  
NOAA Fisheries, Southeast Region  
263 13th Avenue South  
St. Petersburg, FL 33701  
(727) 551-5702  
[Andy.strelcheck@noaa.gov](mailto:Andy.strelcheck@noaa.gov)

Rick DeVictor  
Dr. John Walter  
Dr. Mareel Reichart  
John Sanchez  
Sonny Gwinn  
Monica Smit-Brunello  
Shep Grimes  
Scott Baker

SOUTH ATLANTIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL  
2024 COUNCIL MEMBERS (continued)

Full Council II  
Thur 12/5

**Non-Voting**

Robert Beal Executive Director  
Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission  
1050 N. Highland St. Suite 200 A-N  
Arlington, VA 22201  
(703)842-0740  
rbeal@asmfc.org

LT Tom Pease  
Seventh Coast Guard District  
909 SE 1st Ave.  
Miami, FL 33131  
(305) 415-6781(ph)  
[Thomas.a.pease@uscg.mil](mailto:Thomas.a.pease@uscg.mil)

Deirdre Warner-Kramer  
Office of Marine Conservation OES/OMC  
2201 C Street, N.W. Department of State, Room 5806  
Washington, DC 20520  
(202)647-3228  
Warner-KramerDM@state.gov

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service  
Representative  
TBD



Full Council  
II  
Thur 12/5

SOUTH ATLANTIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL  
**COUNCIL STAFF**

**Executive Director**

✓ John Carmichael  
[john.carmichael@safmc.net](mailto:john.carmichael@safmc.net)  
843-302-8435

**Deputy Director - Science**

✓ Dr. Chip Collier  
[chip.collier@safmc.net](mailto:chip.collier@safmc.net)  
843-302-8444

**Deputy Director - Management**

✓ Myra Brouwer  
[myra.brouwer@safmc.net](mailto:myra.brouwer@safmc.net)  
843-302-8436

**Citizen Science Program Manager**

✓ Julia Byrd  
[julia.byrd@safmc.net](mailto:julia.byrd@safmc.net)  
843-302-8439

**BFP Outreach Specialist**

web Ashley Oliver [Ashley.Oliver@safmc.net](mailto:Ashley.Oliver@safmc.net)  
843-225-8135

**Admin. Secretary/Travel Coordinator**

✓ Rachael Silvas  
[Rachael.silvas@safmc.net](mailto:Rachael.silvas@safmc.net)  
843-571-4370

**Fishery Scientist II**

✓ Dr. Mike Schmidtke  
[mike.schmidtke@safmc.net](mailto:mike.schmidtke@safmc.net)  
843-302-8433

**Quantitative Fishery Scientist**

✓ Dr. Judd Curtis  
[Judd.curtis@safmc.net](mailto:Judd.curtis@safmc.net)  
843-302-8441

**Communication and Digital Media Specialist**

✓ Nicholas Smillie  
[Nick.Smillie@safmc.net](mailto:Nick.Smillie@safmc.net)  
843-302-8443

**Fishery Economist & FMP Coordinator**

✓ John Hadley  
[john.hadley@safmc.net](mailto:john.hadley@safmc.net)  
843-302-8432

**Staff Accountant**

✓ Suzanna Thomas  
[suzanna.thomas@safmc.net](mailto:suzanna.thomas@safmc.net)  
843-571-4368

**Habitat and Ecosystem Scientist**

web Kathleen Howington  
[kathleen.howington@safmc.net](mailto:kathleen.howington@safmc.net)  
843-725-7580

**Fishery Social Scientist**

✓ Christina Wiegand [christina.wiegand@safmc.net](mailto:christina.wiegand@safmc.net)  
843-302-8437

**Fishery Scientist I**

web Allie Iberle  
[Allie.iberle@safmc.net](mailto:Allie.iberle@safmc.net)  
843-225-8135

**Citizen Science Project Manager**

web Meg Withers  
[Meg.withers@safmc.net](mailto:Meg.withers@safmc.net)  
843-725-7577

**Public Information Officer**

✓ Kim Iverson [kim.iverson@safmc.net](mailto:kim.iverson@safmc.net)  
843-224-7258

**SEDAR**

**SEDAR Program Manager**

Dr. Julie Neer  
[Julie.neer@safmc.net](mailto:Julie.neer@safmc.net)  
843-302-8438

**Administrative Officer**

web Kelly Klasnick [kelly.klasnick@safmc.net](mailto:kelly.klasnick@safmc.net)  
843-763-1050

**SEDAR Coordinator**

Emily Ott [Emily.Ott@safmc.net](mailto:Emily.Ott@safmc.net)  
937-479-6171

## 2024 - 2025 COUNCIL MEMBERS

**Voting**

- ✓ Trish Murphey, **Chair**  
NC Division of Marine Fisheries  
P.O. Box 769  
3441 Arendell Street  
Morehead City, NC 28557  
(242) 808-8011 (O); (252) 241-9310 (c)  
[Trish.Murphey@deq.nc.gov](mailto:Trish.Murphey@deq.nc.gov)
- ✓ Jessica McCawley, **Vice Chair**  
Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission  
620 South Meridian St  
Tallahassee, FL 32399  
(850) 487-0554  
[Jessica.mccawley@myfwc.com](mailto:Jessica.mccawley@myfwc.com)
- ✓ Dr. Carolyn Belcher  
GA DNR - Coastal Resources Division  
One Conservation Way, Suite 300  
Brunswick, GA 31520  
(912) 264-7218  
[Carolyn.belcher@dnr.ga.gov](mailto:Carolyn.belcher@dnr.ga.gov)
- ✓ Amy W. Dukes  
SCDNR-Marine Resources Division  
P.O. Box 12559  
217 Ft. Johnson Road  
Charleston, SC 29422  
(843) 953-9365  
[DukesA@dnr.sc.gov](mailto:DukesA@dnr.sc.gov)
- ✓ Gary Borland  
422 Highwater Court  
Chapin, SC 29036  
(561) 290-9274 (cell)  
[GborlandSAFMC@gmail.com](mailto:GborlandSAFMC@gmail.com)
- ✓ Tim Griner  
4446 Woodlark Lane  
Charlotte, NC 28211  
(980) 722-0918  
[timgrinersafmc@gmail.com](mailto:timgrinersafmc@gmail.com)
- ✓ Judy Helmey  
124 Palmetto Drive  
Savannah, GA 31410  
(912) 897-4921  
[JudyHelmey@gmail.com](mailto:JudyHelmey@gmail.com)
- ✓ James G. Hull, Jr.  
111 West Granada Blvd  
Ormond Beach, FL 32174  
(386) 547-1254  
[JHull.safmc@gmail.com](mailto:JHull.safmc@gmail.com)
- ✓ Kerry Marhefka  
347 Plantation View Lane  
Mt. Pleasant, SC 29464  
(843) 452-7352  
[KerryOMarhefka@gmail.com](mailto:KerryOMarhefka@gmail.com)
- ✓ Charlie Phillips  
1418 Sapelo Avenue N.E.  
Townsend, GA 31331  
(912) 832-4423  
[Ga\\_capt@yahoo.com](mailto:Ga_capt@yahoo.com)
- Tom Roller  
807 Deerfield Drive  
Beaufort, NC 28516  
(252) 728-7907 (ph); (919) 423-6310 (c)  
[tomrollersafmc@gmail.com](mailto:tomrollersafmc@gmail.com)
- Robert Spottswood, Jr.  
*w/b* [robert@spottswood.com](mailto:robert@spottswood.com)  
(305) 294-6100  
Assistant:  
Carina Primus-Gomez  
[Cprimus-gomez@spottswood.com](mailto:Cprimus-gomez@spottswood.com)
- ✓ Andy Strelcheck  
Acting Regional Administrator  
NOAA Fisheries, Southeast Region  
263 13th Avenue South  
St. Petersburg, FL 33701  
(727) 551-5702  
[Andy.strelcheck@noaa.gov](mailto:Andy.strelcheck@noaa.gov)

*Kathy Knowlton*

*Shep Grimes  
Monica Smit-Brunello  
Rick DeVictor  
John Sanchez  
Joe Grist  
Sonny Gwinn  
Dr. John Walter  
Kristin Foss*

SOUTH ATLANTIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL  
**2024 COUNCIL MEMBERS (continued)**

Full Council II  
Fr: 12/6

**Non-Voting**

Robert Beal Executive Director  
Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission  
1050 N. Highland St. Suite 200 A-N  
Arlington, VA 22201  
(703)842-0740  
rbeal@asmfc.org

LT Tom Pease  
Seventh Coast Guard District  
909 SE 1st Ave.  
Miami, FL 33131  
(305) 415-6781(ph)  
[Thomas.a.pease@uscg.mil](mailto:Thomas.a.pease@uscg.mil)

Deirdre Warner-Kramer  
Office of Marine Conservation OES/OMC  
2201 C Street, N.W. Department of State, Room 5806  
Washington, DC 20520  
(202)647-3228  
Warner-KramerDM@state.gov

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service  
Representative  
TBD

SOUTH ATLANTIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL  
**COUNCIL STAFF**

**Executive Director**

John Carmichael ✓  
[john.carmichael@safmc.net](mailto:john.carmichael@safmc.net)  
843-302-8435

**Deputy Director - Science**

✓ Dr. Chip Collier  
[chip.collier@safmc.net](mailto:chip.collier@safmc.net)  
843-302-8444

**Deputy Director - Management**

✓ Myra Brouwer  
[myra.brouwer@safmc.net](mailto:myra.brouwer@safmc.net)  
843-302-8436

**Citizen Science Program Manager**

✓ Julia Byrd  
[julia.byrd@safmc.net](mailto:julia.byrd@safmc.net)  
843-302-8439

*w/b* **BFP Outreach Specialist**

Ashley Oliver [Ashley.Oliver@safmc.net](mailto:Ashley.Oliver@safmc.net)  
843-225-8135

**Admin. Secretary/Travel Coordinator**

✓ Rachael Silvas  
[Rachael.silvas@safmc.net](mailto:Rachael.silvas@safmc.net)  
843-571-4370

**Fishery Scientist II**

✓ Dr. Mike Schmidtke  
[mike.schmidtke@safmc.net](mailto:mike.schmidtke@safmc.net)  
843-302-8433

**Quantitative Fishery Scientist**

✓ Dr. Judd Curtis  
[Judd.curtis@safmc.net](mailto:Judd.curtis@safmc.net)  
843-302-8441

**Communication and Digital Media Specialist**

✓ Nicholas Smillie  
[Nick.Smillie@safmc.net](mailto:Nick.Smillie@safmc.net)  
843-302-8443

**Fishery Economist & FMP Coordinator**

✓ John Hadley  
[john.hadley@safmc.net](mailto:john.hadley@safmc.net)  
843-302-8432

**Staff Accountant**

✓ Suzanna Thomas  
[suzanna.thomas@safmc.net](mailto:suzanna.thomas@safmc.net)  
843-571-4368

**Habitat and Ecosystem Scientist**

*w/b* Kathleen Howington  
[kathleen.howington@safmc.net](mailto:kathleen.howington@safmc.net)  
843-725-7580

**Fishery Social Scientist**

✓ Christina Wiegand [christina.wiegand@safmc.net](mailto:christina.wiegand@safmc.net)  
843-302-8437

**Fishery Scientist I**

Allie Iberle  
[Allie.iberle@safmc.net](mailto:Allie.iberle@safmc.net)  
843-225-8135

**Citizen Science Project Manager**

*w/b* Meg Withers  
[Meg.withers@safmc.net](mailto:Meg.withers@safmc.net)  
843-725-7577

**Public Information Officer**

✓ Kim Iverson [kim.iverson@safmc.net](mailto:kim.iverson@safmc.net)  
843-224-7258

**SEDAR**

**SEDAR Program Manager**

Dr. Julie Neer  
[Julie.neer@safmc.net](mailto:Julie.neer@safmc.net)  
843-302-8438

**Administrative Officer**

*w/b* Kelly Klasnick [kelly.klasnick@safmc.net](mailto:kelly.klasnick@safmc.net)  
843-763-1050

**SEDAR Coordinator**

*w/b* Emily Ott [Emily.Ott@safmc.net](mailto:Emily.Ott@safmc.net)  
937-479-6171

# SAFMC Dec. 2024 Council Meeting

## Attendee Report: (12/2/24 - 12/6/24)

Report Generated:

12/09/2024 09:41 AM EST

**Webinar ID**

887-478-187

**Actual Start Date/Time**

12/05/2024 07:14 AM EST

## Staff Details

**Attended**

Yes

**Interest Rating**

Not applicable for staff

## Attendee Details

**Last Name**

**First Name**

Adam

Bailey

Aines

Alex

Alhale

Sydney

Allen

Shanae

Barile

Peter

Barrows

Katline

Bauer

Tracey

Bianchi

Alan

Bonura

Vincent

Brouwer

Myra

Bubley

Walter

Byrd

Julia

Calay

Shannon

Cermak

Bridget

Clinton

Haley

DeVictor

Rick

Dobbs

Jeffrey

Dover

Miles

Dukes

Amy

Dyar

Ben

Feller

Skip

Finch

Margaret

Floyd

Brad

Foor

Brandon

Foss

Kristin

Gentner

BRAD

Glazier

Edward

Green

Matthew

Guyas	Martha
Gwin	earl sonny
Hadley	John
Harrison	Alana
Helies	Frank
Helmey	Judy
Hemilright	Dewey
Hiers	Homer
Horton	Chris
Howington	Kathleen
Huber	Jeanette
Hull	Jimmy
Iberle	Allie
Iverson	Kim
Kalinowsky	Chris
Kellison	Todd
Keppler	Blaik
Klasnick	01Kelly
Knowlton	Kathy
Kolmos	Kevin
Larkin	Michael
Leone	Melissa
Levy	Mara
M Borland	Gary
Mackesey	Brendan
Malinowski	Richard
Mallory	Ryan
Marhefka	00Kerry
Markwith	Anne
Martin	Rob
Masi	Michelle
Mehta	Nikhil
Mendez-Ferrer	Natasha
Meyers	S
Miller	Andrew
Mroch	Ray
Muffley	Brandon
Murphey	Trish
Neidig	Carole
Newman	Thomas
Oliver	Ashley
Ott	Emily
Paskiewicz	James
Pehl	Nicole

Perkinson	Matt
Phillips	Charlie
Poholek	Ariel
Potter	Caroline
Records	David
Reichert	Marcel
Rogers	Walt
Roller	00Tom
Runde	Brendan
SCHLICK	CJ
Sartwell	Tim
Sedberry	George
Seward	McLean
Shertzer	Kyle
Silvas	Rachael
Sinkus	Wiley
Smarrito	Mike
Smart	Tracey
Smillie	Nick
Solinger	Laura
Spanik	Kevin
Spottswood	Robert
Spurgin	Kali
Spurgin	Kali
Stephen	Jessica
Stephens	Haley
Stephens	Haley
Sweetman	CJ
Vecchio	Julie
Vincent	Matthew
Waldo	Jennifer
Walia	Matt
Walsh	Jason
Walter	John
Wamer	David
Webb	Greyson
White	Geoff
Whitten	Meredith
Wilke	Kate
Williams	Erik
Willingham	Darrin
Willis	Michelle
Withers	Meg
Zapf	Daniel

carvalho	avelino
griner	tim
hallett	fletcher
I	I
moss	david
murphy	allison
oden	jeff
sandorf	scott
thomas	suz
zales	bob
Atkinson	Seth
Aukeman	Trip
Baker	Scott
Beal	Bob
Berry	Chip
Beyea	Taylor
Blough	Heather
Bogdan	Jennifer
Bonney	Rick
Brennan	Ken
Bunting	Matthew
Carr	Matthew
Coffill-Rivera	Manuel
Cox	Jack
Cross	Tiffanie
Crosson	Scott
Curtis	Joe
Curtis	Judd
Cvach	Sarah
Damiano	Matt
Delrosario	Leeanne
Didden	Jason
Fitz-Gerald	Claire
Franco	Crystal
Gahm	Meghan
Gamboa-Salazar	Keilin
Garber	Chip
Garrett	Allison
Gore	Karla
Griner	00Tim
Grist	Joseph
Harker	John
Hollensead	Lisa
Hordyk	Adrian



Howell	Mary
Huynh	Quang
Keller	Christian
Kent	Russell
Kimmel	Courtney
Klibansky	Lara
Lam	Sarah
Law	Alexander
Lazarre	Dominique
Lee	Jennifer
Lee	Max
Lenox	Scott
Lock	Karolyn
Long	Stephen
MCCLAIR	GENINE
Mason	Gina
Mathews	Joe
Matter	Vivian
McWaters	Mark
Meehan	Sean
Miller	Shana
O'Malley	Rachel
Ostroff	Jenny
Package-Ward	Christina
Patten	Willow
Pelletier	Claire
Peterson	Cassidy
Poland	Stephen
Randall	Marianne
Reding	Brandon
Riley	Richard
Salmon	Brandi
Sartwell	Tim
Schlenker	Lela
Shane	Rob
Shervanick	Kara
Shipman	Thomas
Soltanoff	Carrie
Sramek	Mark
Stam	Geoff
Stancil	Mackenzie
Stemle	Adam
Vital	Victoria
Waldrep	Megan

Walsh  
Warren  
Weaver  
Werner  
Westcott  
Yandle  
collier  
gloeckner  
vara  
zales

Mick  
Camilla  
ALWTRT -- Sierra  
Cisco  
Lauren  
Tracy  
chip  
david  
mary  
bob

<b>Duration</b>	<b># Registered</b>
9 hours 52 minutes	214

<b>Last Name</b>	<b>First Name</b>
Council	South Atlantic

# SAFMC Dec. 2024 Council Meeting

## Attendee Report: (12/2/24 - 12/6/24)

Report Generated:

12/09/2024 09:42 AM EST

**Webinar ID**

887-478-187

**Actual Start Date/Time**

12/06/2024 08:43 AM EST

## Staff Details

**Attended**

Yes

**Interest Rating**

Not applicable for staff

## Attendee Details

**Last Name**

**First Name**

Barile

Peter

Bianchi

Alan

Bonura

Vincent

Brouwer

Myra

Bunting

Matthew

Byrd

Julia

Calay

Shannon

Cermak

Bridget

Clinton

Haley

Crosson

Scott

DeVictor

Rick

Dukes

Amy

Finch

Margaret

Foor

Brandon

Foss

Kristin

Gentry

Lauren

Glazier

Edward

Green

Matthew

Guyas

Martha

Hadley

John

Harrison

Alana

Helies

Frank

Helmey

Judy

Horton

Chris

Howington

Kathleen

Hull

Jimmy

Iberle

Allie

Iverson

Kim

Kalinowsky	Chris
Keppler	Blaik
Klasnick	01Kelly
Klibansky	Lara
Knowlton	Kathy
Lazarre	Dominique
Levy	Mara
M Borland	Gary
MCCLAIR	GENINE
Mackesey	Brendan
Marhefka	00Kerry
Markwith	Anne
Martin	Rob
Mehta	Nikhil
Mendez-Ferrer	Natasha
Muffley	Brandon
Murphey	Trish
Newman	Thomas
Oliver	Ashley
Ott	Emily
Paskiewicz	James
Phillips	Charlie
Poholek	Ariel
Records	David
Reichert	Marcel
Roller	00Tom
Runde	Brendan
Seward	McLean
Silvas	Rachael
Spottswood	Robert
Spurgin	Kali
Spurgin	Kali
Stephen	Jessica
Stephens	Haley
Sweetman	CJ
Vincent	Matthew
Waldo	Jennifer
Walia	Matt
Walter	John
Wamer	David
Webb	Greyson
White	Geoff
Willis	Michelle
Withers	Meg

carvalho	avelino
collier	chip
gloeckner	david
griner	tim
I	I
sandorf	scott
thomas	suz
vara	mary
zales	bob
Adam	Bailey
Aines	Alex
Alhale	Sydney
Allen	Shanae
Atkinson	Seth
Aukeman	Trip
Baker	Scott
Barrows	Katline
Bauer	Tracey
Beal	Bob
Berry	Chip
Beyea	Taylor
Blough	Heather
Bogdan	Jennifer
Bonney	Rick
Brennan	Ken
Bubley	Walter
Carr	Matthew
Cheshire	Rob
Coffill-Rivera	Manuel
Cox	Jack
Cross	Tiffanie
Curtis	Joe
Curtis	Judd
Cvach	Sarah
Damiano	Matt
Delrosario	Leeanne
Didden	Jason
Dobbs	Jeffrey
Dover	Miles
Dyar	Ben
Feller	Skip
Fitz-Gerald	Claire
Floyd	Brad
Franco	Crystal

Gahm	Meghan
Gamboa-Salazar	Keilin
Garber	Chip
Garrett	Allison
Gentner	BRAD
Gore	Karla
Griner	00Tim
Grist	Joseph
Gwin	earl sonny
Harker	John
Hemilright	Dewey
Hiers	Homer
Hollensead	Lisa
Hordyk	Adrian
Howell	Mary
Huber	Jeanette
Huynh	Quang
Keller	Christian
Kellison	Todd
Kent	Russell
Kimmel	Courtney
Kolmos	Kevin
Lam	Sarah
Larkin	Michael
Law	Alexander
Lee	Max
Lee	Jennifer
Lenox	Scott
Leone	Melissa
Lock	Karolyn
Long	Stephen
Malinowski	Richard
Mallory	Ryan
Masi	Michelle
Mason	Gina
Mathews	Joe
Matter	Vivian
McWaters	Mark
Meehan	Sean
Meyers	S
Miller	Shana
Miller	Andrew
Mroch	Ray
Neidig	Carole

O'Malley	Rachel
Ostroff	Jenny
Package-Ward	Christina
Patten	Willow
Pehl	Nicole
Pelletier	Claire
Perkinson	Matt
Peterson	Cassidy
Poland	Stephen
Potter	Caroline
Randall	Marianne
Reding	Brandon
Riley	Richard
Rogers	Walt
SCHLICK	CJ
Salmon	Brandi
Sartwell	Tim
Sartwell	Tim
Schlenker	Lela
Sedberry	George
Shane	Rob
Shertzer	Kyle
Shervanick	Kara
Shipman	Thomas
Sinkus	Wiley
Smarrito	Mike
Smart	Tracey
Smillie	Nick
Solinger	Laura
Soltanoff	Carrie
Spanik	Kevin
Sramek	Mark
Stam	Geoff
Stancil	Mackenzie
Stemle	Adam
Stephens	Haley
Vecchio	Julie
Vital	Victoria
Waldrep	Megan
Walsh	Mick
Walsh	Jason
Warren	Camilla
Weaver	ALWTRT -- Sierra
Werner	Cisco



Westcott  
Whitten  
Wilke  
Williams  
Willingham  
Yandle  
Zapf  
hallett  
moss  
murphy  
oden  
zales

Lauren  
Meredith  
Kate  
Erik  
Darrin  
Tracy  
Daniel  
fletcher  
david  
allison  
jeff  
bob

<b>Duration</b>	<b># Registered</b>
3 hours 10 minutes	216

<b>Last Name</b>	<b>First Name</b>
Council	South Atlantic