

SOUTH ATLANTIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

FULL COUNCIL SESSION II

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

June 13-14, 2024

Transcript

Council

Dr. Carolyn Belcher, Chair
Trish Murphey, Vice Chair
Amy Dukes
Gary Borland
Tim Griner
Judy Helmey
Kerry Marhefka

Jessica McCawley
Tom Roller
Robert Spottswood, Jr.
Andy Strelcheck
Laurilee Thompson
Spud Woodward

Council Staff

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

Kelly Klasnick
Dr. Julie Neer
Ashley Oliver
Rachael Silvas
Dr. Mike Schmidtke
Nick Smillie
Suzanna Thomas
Christina Wiegand

Attendees and Invited Participants

Kris Oleth
Shepherd Grimes
Dr. Kelsy Banks
Monica Smit-Brunello
Sonny Gwin
Guy DuBeck
Jennifer Lee
Dr. Clay Porch

Renne Riley
Nikhil Mehta
Sonny Gwin
Sarah Fangman
Dr. Michael Travis
Rick DeVictor
Ken Brennan
Becky Curtis

Observers and Participants

Other observers and participants attached.

The Full Council Session II of the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council convened at The Shores Resort & Spa, Daytona Beach Shores, Florida, on Thursday, June 13, 2024, and was called to order by Chairman Carolyn Belcher.

DR. BELCHER: Okay. I hope that everybody had a good lunch. We have a couple of things that we're going to reorganize, because we have folks here in-person, and we have a couple of time constraints on presentations out-of-house, and so what we're going to do is John and I have some housekeeping to do on the front, and we're going to go to the litigation brief, and what we're going to do is pick up with the offshore wind presentations first, and the HMS presentation after that, and then we'll come back into the queue the way that the agenda is currently written, and so just moving up the offshore wind presentations, followed by the HMS presentation, and then we'll come back in at the staff reports and work down from there, and so we're waiting on John to come forward.

MR. CARMICHAEL: As we know, we are saying goodbye to two of our members at this meeting, and so we wanted to take this moment, here in the meeting formally, and thank you for your service to the council and present you a nominal award, which we're allowed to do under the rules that we operate by, and so, Spud, if you would come forward, we would appreciate it. That's just because I had yours on top.

Spud, on behalf of the council, thank you for your service to the council, and all you've done in service to fisheries over the years, and Carolyn and I would like to present to you this plaque in appreciation.

MR. WOODWARD: Thank you. (*Applause*) It's been an honor.

MR. CARMICHAEL: Then Laurilee. Laurilee, thank you for your service to the council. We really appreciate it. You've been a part of this family for as long as I've been a part of it, and quite a bit longer, and so, you know, maybe a short term on the council, but you're definitely one of us, and always will be, it does seem, and we appreciate all the insight that you've brought for, you know, particularly that unique sector of the fishery with the deepwater shrimp, and as well as your commitment to habitat on so many levels, and we really appreciate that.

MS. THOMPSON: Thank you. (*Applause*) Thank you, all. It's been a blast. I've had a really good time, and I've enjoyed meeting you. I've had a long history of sitting back there in the audience, and it was fun to have a chance to sit up here, and I want to say that I think you have the best staff of all the years that I've been here, and what an impressive -- What an impressive group of people that you have the pleasure to be working with, and the council too. It's an awesome council, and so I've really enjoyed it. Thank you. (*Applause*)

MR. CARMICHAEL: Thank you. Thank you very much. Carolyn, I would open it up, if anybody else would like to make a comment.

DR. BELCHER: Comments? Andy.

MR. STRELCHECK: I have the pleasure of swearing-in new council members, and it's always impactful, obviously, when I do that, because I know you are making a huge commitment, right, and it is no easy task to sit on this council and make tough decisions and have to spend time away

from your family and friends, and your businesses, and so, on behalf of the Fisheries Service, I want to thank both of you for your service. We haven't necessarily always seen eye-to-eye, but, at the end of the day, I always love that we can, you know, talk afterward, sit at the bar and have a drink. I've learned so much from both of you, and your knowledge of the fisheries, your expertise and experience, and you will be missed, and I'm glad you guys will be staying at least a part of the process, in whatever form or fashion, and so don't be strangers. Thank you.

DR. BELCHER: Tim.

MR. GRINER: I just wanted to echo what Andy said. I really appreciate your willingness to share your knowledge and expertise, and it's helped me a lot. It's helped me formulate my ideas, and opinions, and increase my knowledge base on subjects that I really knew very little about, and, for that, I'm forever grateful. Thank you.

DR. BELCHER: Judy.

MS. HELMEY: Well, it's no secret that I'm going to lose my wingman over here, and I appreciate all the help you have given me, and I have learned some things, but still I have your phone number, and so I'm going to be calling, and, of course, I'm going to lose my driver. He used to drive everywhere, and so I guess this is terrible, but, anyway, I'm going to have to learn how to drive again, but I have your phone number too, and so thank you.

DR. BELCHER: Anyone else like to say anything? Okay. Again, thank you. Okay, and so, circling back to the agenda, I'm going to go ahead and ask Monica about the litigation brief.

MS. SMIT-BRUNELLO: I will be brief, and so the council has three active litigation cases, and I've already -- There's no change on two of them, the first red snapper case and then the snowy grouper case, and I explained, at the last council meeting, that at least the first red snapper case has been briefed, and is awaiting a decision from the judge, and then the snowy grouper case is kind of on hold, pending the judge's decision in the red snapper case, because there are some overlapping issues in both cases.

There is a new case that was filed on May 15, and so Tilman Gray, doing business as Avon Seafood and Slash Creek Waterworks, sued Secretary Raimondo and the National Marine Fisheries Service, alleging that inaction to end the overfishing of red snapper by the Secretary and the Fisheries Service violates the Magnuson Act and the Administrative Procedure Act. The plaintiffs allege that overfishing continues to occur because of excessive discard mortality in the recreational sector, and failing to prevent and account for this continues to harm the commercial sector, with low catch limits and short seasons, and so they're asking the judge for an order to require the defendants to prepare a fishery management plan amendment and regulations to stop overfishing, and, of course, they would ask for fees and costs. That just recently got filed, and I don't have any more to add on that.

DR. BELCHER: Thank you for that, Monica. Any questions for Monica at this point? Okay. The next item that we'll move on to is the offshore wind presentations, and the first one is the Special Initiative on Offshore Wind, and Kris Oleth will be talking with us, and so, Kris, if you'll come up front.

MS. OLETH: Good afternoon, everyone. Thank you so much for inviting us to talk about regional fisheries compensation and potential impacts from offshore wind development. My name is Kris Oleth, and I'm the director of an entity called The Special Initiative on Offshore Wind. We have been working at the behest of eleven Atlantic coast states, from Maine to North Carolina, over the past two to three years or so, to help develop a regional compensation scheme, or framework, for the potential impacts of offshore wind development on fishing, both commercial and recreational fishing.

Essentially, what's been happening with offshore wind development, and, you know, obviously a lot more is happening in the Northeast and Mid-Atlantic, is that each project, as they're developed, each offshore wind project, is figuring out its own compensation scheme. These compensation programs are required through the federal permitting process, that there should be some financial compensation for impacts to the fishing community, and so, to date, each program has been done on a project-by-project basis, and that's creating some inequities, lack of transparency, lack of efficiencies, and so the states came together with the idea of could we create, similar to the great work the councils do, a regional approach to compensation.

There are just a lot of things that we'll talk about in this presentation, about why the states find this to be advantageous, and so I'm here kind of on behalf of working with the eleven states, to share with you their program. We work as a convener and facilitator of the program.

Slow background on the Special Initiative on Offshore Wind, as I mentioned, we're working as a third party to convene the eleven states as a peer group in this network. We are foundation funded, and we typically work for -- You know, kind of at the behest of federal and state policy makers, to advance the responsible and sustainable development of offshore wind, and we're entering our eleventh year of work.

We're working along with a group called The Consensus Building Institute, or CBI, to bring together this group of states, in addition to the fishing community and the offshore wind developers, because an important tenet of this is that this program, that is being stood up on the east coast, is a voluntary program, and so it needs really strong buy-in from all the sectors who are working as part of it, and so that is something that both the Special Initiative on Offshore Wind and CBI have been doing, is convening, you know, members of the fishing community, the offshore wind developers, and the states together to work on this program, with the states in the lead.

As I mentioned, there are eleven states working on this program, and I will just give you a little background on how that all happened. Back on June 4 of 2021, and so nearly three years ago, nine Atlantic coast states sent a letter to the Biden administration, urging them to use their authority to encourage the agencies to work on compensatory mitigation in a regional way from offshore wind, not only on fisheries, but in a variety of different topics, and then kind of what happened behind the scenes was those nine states kind of called each other up and said, hey, were you thinking about fisheries mitigation, because we were thinking about fisheries mitigation, and how can we kind of operationalize this, and so the states went to BOEM and said, you know, you're the lead agency, and it would make a lot of sense for you to do this.

However, after some digging, we all uncovered that BOEM actually does not have the authority to establish or dispense funds in a compensatory way, and so the states kind of stood -- They, you

know, took the next step and said, you know, we'll do the Plan B, and the states will take the ownership of this program, and not to necessarily run it as the administrator, but to take the lead in standing it up, and we'll talk a little bit about how that's working.

We have been working with BOEM and NOAA as well, and, you know, consulting with them regularly as this program has been stood up, as well as members of the fishing community, as I mentioned, and the offshore wind developers, and, really, an important, you know, tenet of this program, particularly for you folks here in the South Atlantic, is this is not just for fishermen who either land or have home ports in the states listed here, and it is for any fisherman who has an impact from offshore wind on the east coast, and so anyone -- It's the idea anyhow, and the program is not yet established, but the idea of the states is to create a coastwide program that would make anyone, any fisherman on the east coast, eligible for participating.

As it's stated in the mission statement of the states, it is to establish a credible regional administrator for managing and distributing fisheries compensatory mitigation funds for offshore wind for the U.S. eastern seaboard, and one thing that is very important, that the states want everyone to understand, is that mitigation really should be the last resort in this type of program. Really avoiding impacts from offshore wind development, and that's typically done at the BOEM, you know, siting phase, and that's the best way to avoid impacts, is doing smart siting, is really the first line of defense.

Next is minimizing any impacts that can't be avoided, and then, finally, using mitigation to compensate from the impacts, and that's kind of laid out in that kind of classic NEPA hierarchy, but the states always just want it to be clear that this is not an opportunity for offshore wind developers to be writing a blank check and saying, all right, we've done our job, and it's really part of the entire process of that hierarchy.

Some of the states' objectives, really, are to create consistency across projects and offshore wind developers, and, you know, what we're seeing now is there are two programs underway, one for the South Fork Wind project that's built off the coast of New York and one off the coast of Massachusetts called Vineyard Wind, which is about halfway through construction, and so there are two operating funds out there in the world, and they are, I mean, arguably as different as two programs could be.

They have different eligibility requirements, application windows, criteria, compensability features, and so the idea is to create a regional fund that erases that and creates a consistent program, especially for the fishermen who are really suffering from administrative fatigue, you know, lack of resources to be able to apply to every one of these funds, and there could be as many as, you know, fifteen to twenty different specific funds, and so to have a regional fund would create that consistency.

Another thing is really to create that fairness for the fishing community on the east coast, regardless of whether or not their state has a compensation program in place, right, and so, you know, let's say it's down in North Carolina fishermen, and maybe North Carolina hasn't negotiated a project with an offshore wind developer for compensation, and that fisherman is fishing off the coast of Virginia, and there's no way for that fisherman to be compensated, and so there really needs to be fairness for all fishermen on the east coast, and the states feel that this is a way to help achieve some of that fairness.

The third thing listed on the slide is to have an administrator that has all the same process, so that there's really just a one-stop shopping and efficiency for the fishing community, and we want to create a scale that's large enough to really be able to build off of expertise and efficiencies of scale, and then, really, to also be able to use all the fundings, because, each time a fund is established, it can cost, you know, nearly a million dollars just to establish the fund, and those are dollars that could be going to the fishing community, as opposed to going to just setting up each separate fund, and so there's a lot of real efficiencies, I think, in having a regional program.

The value proposition, as we've talked about, is providing this accessible, equitable, and consistent one-stop shopping for filing and receiving those claims, and, just to reiterate, that would be regardless of the port of origin or the port of landing.

There was a scoping process that kind of occurred over an eighteen-month period or so to help the states understand what stakeholders were most interested in seeing as part of this fund administrator, and, I mean, I think the top-line message was having a third party that wasn't either the states, the offshore wind developers, or the fishermen, but having this third party come in and administer the funds was going to be paramount, and so there was an eighteen-month period, and there was an RFI that went out, and, eventually, the states did release a requests for proposals to hire that third party, but, if you move to the next slide, we can talk a little bit about what we heard from stakeholders on what their primary focus should and would be.

When you have a fund, you know, money goes into the fund, and money is managed, and then money goes out of the fund. What the administrator will have essentially no control over is how much money or how the money goes into the fund. The regional fund administrator will be managing the funds, deciding on -- You know, determining eligibility and compensability, and then distributing those funds. However, the money in is really going to be determined through the NEPA process and how BOEM determines what level of funds are required from those potential impact levels.

In the Northeast, the Science Center has done a great job of looking at each lease area and what the economic value, in terms of fisheries, is contained within the lease area. BOEM works with NOAA then to kind of incorporate that into the NEPA process, when they make their socioeconomic determinations and know of those impacts, and so they can take a lease area and say, okay, we know the values of the fisheries is at least here, and then apply some type of formula, or multiplier, to figure out how much developers would owe, based on those potential impacts.

There are other ways to get money into the fund, including through when the developers actually lease part -- You know, when they get their lease for the ocean, there's an opportunity to get, you know, some monies into the fund then as well, and I think what we've heard from the fishing community is that there's a strong interest that impacts, potential impacts, be directly associated with what -- You know, how much they have to pay, and so that's just a fairness issue, and so that's kind of where the money-in issue stands. The blue outlined box contains the money managed, and the money out, which will be the scope of the third-party administrator.

Some other tasks that we've worked out with stakeholders, as we've looked at, you know, many different types of claims programs, and I watch a lot of baseball, and I'm a big New York Mets fan, and so, you know, it's not a good place to be right now, but I watch a lot of baseball, and the

commercials during baseball -- There's a lot of commercials about did you use talcum powder from the years 2018 to 2022, and did you -- You know, these very interesting types of -- Just trust me. I'm going somewhere with this.

There are all these commercials for do you need to be part of a class action claim, right, and so there are these big companies in the country, in the world, that run these type of claims programs, and we have met with many of them. I never thought my world of offshore wind would coincide with claims processors, and claims administrators, but what we learned is that there are really several, many, you know, kind of different process steps that are important to standing up these funds.

One of the firms that we interviewed, in fact, was the firm who administered the \$2.2 billion fisheries recovery fund from the B.P. oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico, and we learned a lot from those in those interviews, but, really, you know, the first step, and the primary task of the administrator, starts with that third box of designing the fund. Right now, the third-party administrator is in the process of being selected, and the RFP is closed, and we expect to be able to announce next month who that third-party administrator will be, and their first task, and we're going to talk a little bit more about it, is to design exactly what this program will look like, based on feedback from the community, and then launch the fund.

Once that's done, the subsequent steps can kind of all start taking shape, eventually with, you know, kind of that goal of verifying and paying claims, which would, you know, anticipate being eighteen to twenty-four months from now.

What we heard from the fishing community, when we went through the RFI process, was, you know, what are the key qualities of an administrator. In addition to having commercials on during the Mets games, they said that, number one, they should have strong fiduciary control and experience and really be like a legitimate, you know, claims processing firm. This was a relief, I think, to everyone, because we were somewhat worried that it was going to be, you know, a push by the fishing community to manage the funds by themselves, which could get tricky, or to have the developers do it, and so having the kind of like outside third-party fiduciary really kind of made sense to make of the stakeholders, and I think most were, you know, really happy that it aligned that way.

They wanted to see a demonstrated competency, and efficiency, in reviewing claims, sustainability for the foreseeable future in the program, and, you know, you'll see a variety of different topics there, but, you know, the number-one thing was not -- Notably, it was not understanding fish, or fisheries, and so the states got to thinking, well, how is this claims administrator going to really understand fish, if they don't understand fish, because it will be so important to understand the communities they're serving.

If we move to the next slide, we're going to talk a little bit about, you know, how this is playing out, but NYSERDA, who is New York state agency, has been serving as the procurement agent for the eleven states, to bring this third party on, and there is a scoring committee that's comprised of states, offshore wind developers, and some fishermen, who are actually in the process of picking that, you know, third party, and so, as I mentioned, that will be announced soon.

We have raised about two-and-a-half million dollars to go through this design and development process, and so, you know, the primary amount of funding came from the offshore wind developers, and then the states and some foundations, and this is just important to note, because, it, you know, takes a lot of resources to stand up a program like this. Going forward, this will be completely seeded by developer deposits, and it's just kind of this design and development phase.

In terms of the design and development phase, and this is my last section to talk to you about, we are in the third box there, which these glasses are for fashion, and they have no prescription, and so I can't read, but I think it's really -- My husband said, you know, you're forty, and you've got to get glasses, and these are -- You know, they're just cute.

The design oversight committee, and so how are we going to have to the fishermen giving the feedback to the claims administrator if they don't know about fishing, and, well, the idea is to develop something called a design oversight committee, or a DOC, and what -- The process that's going on right now is bringing together two separate and parallel bodies, one known as the recreational fishing design oversight committee and the commercial fishing design oversight committee, and both of those design oversight committees are going to be put in place so that they can bring information from their stakeholders into the regional fund administrator's knowledge. While the regional fund administrator will still have the final say in determining, you know, the outcomes of the design and development process, it's certainly important to have that input from the community.

The bottom-up design and development approach that is envisioned is essentially to have this kind of broader engagement, and we have, you know, webinars, meetings, you know, broad engagement across the fishing sectors that works its way down into having focus groups, ad hoc workshops, convening meetings as, you know, folks start self-selecting to have more interest, and then funneling all into that design oversight committee that is really, again, going to have two parallel paths, one for the commercial side and one for the recreational side.

Interestingly, what we've learned from the data, which, I mean, is a whole other conversation about data, especially on the recreational side, a potential for data-poor fisheries and how we address that, is that really the abundance, and the preponderance, of impact will be to the commercial fishing sector, and so you'll see that developing as a bit of a larger body, that has kind of probably, you know -- Kind of more life sphere around it, and the recreational fishing DOC will be about half the size, recognizing that it's likely less than 10 percent of the impacts right now estimated by the federal regulators, and so just FYI on those two DOCs.

The way that the commercial fishing design oversight committee will be formed is with three state members, three developer members, and then six commercial fishing community members. There will be ex-officio members from the agencies and then liaisons that will, you know, essentially work between the regional fund administrator and the design oversight committee. The recreational side is looking to -- Which is also still in formation, and it will be about half the size.

Both of the application processes, or, well, the recreational side will open soon, and the commercial side is open now, and so, if you know folks who are interested in being part of a design oversight committee, please do let us know, and we can share the application materials with you.

The important thing about the selection process is that each caucus has been selecting its own DOC members, and so we just want to make sure that's emphasized, and it's not like the states are going out and selecting them. Really, that is coming from the community themselves, and I mentioned this statistic about the 10 percent already.

The things that the design oversight committee will advise on include eligibility for compensation, evidence of impacts and burden of proof, and these are all, obviously, critical things to the program, what costs and losses are actually compensable, what multipliers should be used in that compensation formula, what data sources and verification should be used, making sure that a simple, verifiable, and efficient claims process is developed, and then the kind of litany of other things that the RFA will need to be counseled on.

The tasks and authorities -- Again, you know, the final authority does remain with the regional fund administrator, but, in terms of the DOC, the first steps will be approving the workplan and the stakeholder engagement plan that the regional fund administrator will be establishing. They will then continue to advise on the key elements of those plans and getting that, you know, full buy-in from their communities, and then, importantly, reviewing the regional fund administrator's performance, because, at the end of the design and development phase, there is kind of this go or no-go opportunity, where a new third-party administrator may be selected if their performance was not satisfactory, and so it's not necessary that this same firm will also be running the fund, but they are designing and developing it, is the idea.

Overall, stakeholder engagement is really important on the regional fund administrator side, and so, you know, as part of the RFP process, there was kind of robust requirements on a stakeholder engagement plan that, really, there would be strong engagement, that they would engage also on substance, as well as process, and they would bring forward those things to the design oversight committee for advice, and then, in addition, there will be a final, and kind of more public, comment period for all stakeholders before the fund is finally launched, again eighteen to twenty-four months or so from now.

If you move to the next slide, we'll just go to the timeline and next steps, just to give you a sense of where we've been and where we are, but, again, we started back in June of 2021, and we went through the RFI, the RFP process, and now we find ourselves here in the, you know, kind of back in February of 2024, releasing the request for proposals through the State of New York, working on behalf of the eleven states, and now, finally, in the summer of 2024, selecting that regional fund administrator to start the design and development process.

We have been, you know, specifically myself, kind of going up and down the east coast, and I just really want to thank Trish for the invitation to come here and talk to you folks about this program, and I'm really excited to hopefully be bringing fair, equitable, and transparent compensation to the fishing community all along the east coast, and I'm happy to take any questions, if that's appropriate.

DR. BELCHER: Thank you for that presentation. Tim.

MR. GRINER: Yes. Thank you for that presentation.

MS. OLETH: As long as it doesn't involve the Mets, I'm happy to take questions.

MR. GRINER: No. Go Braves. I know that the -- I guess it's the Vineyard Wind 1 compensatory fund is -- They already have a deadline to submit their applications, and so is that outside of this that you are -- That we're talking about here, and will that process set any precedents, going forward, and, if it's vastly different, how will that affect them?

MS. OLETH: Great question. The Vineyard Wind program is interesting, their compensation program, because what they said, to kind of really reduce the amount of administrative burden on the fishing community, is they just said, all right, and, you know, I'm short-handing it here, and so apologies if not every detail is exactly right, but, you know, essentially, they said, if you fished, and you can show us that you fished in the project area in the past five years, then you will get a check, and you just need to show us that you fished there.

The way they're determining how much money they're going to get, each fisherman, is that they're taking the total number of applicants and dividing it by the pool of money they have, several million dollars, and I don't remember the number, and so it's a little different, because, if you look at the Southfork, the Orsted project, and their compensation program, they're requiring to show impacts from the windfarm, which is, in and of itself, challenging.

We have these two models from which to learn, and I think the regional fund administrator will be getting an earful, from the fishermen in the Northeast and Mid-Atlantic, about how well the programs have been serving them. We anticipate other programs opening soon, like Revolution Wind, Sunrise Wind, Dominion in Virginia, and so, because this program won't be available for eighteen to twenty-four months, we're trying to work with those developers to figure out ways that they can develop programs that can just be folded into this going forward.

MR. GRINER: So, as a follow-up then, is it up to each developer whether they want to be a part of this overall program or whether they want to go at it alone?

MS. OLETH: That is correct. It is voluntary for the developers, and that's one reason we've been working very closely with them, because we want to figure out a program that they find acceptable. However, they are strongly inclined, and have written very many support letters on behalf of a regional approach, because, from a technical perspective, and a political perspective, doing this every time, for every project, is a no-win for them.

DR. BELCHER: Tom.

MR. ROLLER: I don't know if this is the appropriate time to ask, but how are fishermen showing that they're fishing in the areas?

MS. OLETH: They're using -- They will be using NOAA data, you know, and so the VTR -- I am probably using the wrong acronym, but the vessel trip reports from -- So, essentially, what's happening now is that South Fork Wind is making a request to NOAA to, you know, say like were they in this area, and then they have to do some type of release, because, as you know, the data are confidential, but, essentially, it's through the --

MR. ROLLER: Through the VTRs, but, if you don't have that, what other -- Is that the only way to show some sort of --

MS. OLETH: I'm not sure on South Fork. I mean, this program is not designed yet, and, so, I mean, that's part of the question, is like what type of evidence will be required, and I think that's an important question that we'll have to figure out.

MR. ROLLER: That's what I'm getting at, particularly when we have valuable fisheries that don't have that evidence, and we're going to have to think about what we're going to do.

MS. OLETH: Exactly, yes. Would you like to be on the DOC? I need to get his name.

DR. BELCHER: Any other questions for Kris? Andy.

MR. STRELCHECK: My apologies for you being a Mets fan, but it's a nice stadium. I've been there, and I'm a Rays fan, and so it's probably just as bad for me this year. In terms of the eleven states, you know, I'm curious, because, obviously, offshore wind energy is growing in other areas of the country now, and so I do a lot of work in the Gulf of Mexico, and Texas and Louisiana are going to be coming online, and, you know, we're just starting to wrestle with mitigation strategies. Is there adaptability and inclusion of other states, as this moves forward, and, conceptually, could that be built-in as well?

MS. OLETH: Yes, absolutely, and we would love to grow the effort besides just the eastern seaboard, and potentially export it to other geographies, and so that's been something that my organization has been kind of focusing on, is some Gulf work, and some west coast work, to see if that's possible.

There are also -- There is also national legislation, that is being proposed by Senator Whitehouse and others, to actually give BOEM the authority, which is probably the right way for this to be happening, but, you know, an act of Congress is kind of like an act of God, and the states don't want to wait for that, and I think -- I don't want to speak on behalf of -- We have one of the state reps sitting right here next to me, but I think, you know, states have expressed interest in, you know, once -- If there was national legislation, and federal legislation, that this program could be then comported to a national program, which would certainly make sense.

DR. BELCHER: Robert.

MR. SPOTTSWOOD: Have there been any discussions with some of the policymakers to maybe expanding outside of wind, to use this type of fund for other things, like space impacts, oil spills, but, to your point, it takes a lot of money and effort to set this up, and if the wind industry, or the energy industry, were to pivot again, and maybe not pursue as much wind, and all this is set up, and is there some way to create this that maybe has additional benefits outside of just offshore wind impacts?

MS. OLETH: Well, we are actually taking this lesson from other sectors who are already doing it, and so, you know, looking at, you know, impacts from oil and gas on fishing, for example, or agricultural disasters that require compensation, and so, while this is a new program, because it's offshore wind and fishing, it's not necessarily kind of a new concept, really, and we're borrowing a lot of principles from, you know, other types of resource management.

DR. BELCHER: Robert, to that?

MR. SPOTTSWOOD: I appreciate that, and my question was a little different, and it's, you know, is there the ability to have kind of a fund ready to go, and it seems like we're always reactive to these things, and it's really difficult for people, you know, post -- They're already impacted, right, and some people that work in this industry might be working paycheck-to-paycheck, and so it's really I was wondering if there could be something, you know, that was kind of set up in order to be, hey, we know there's going to be another issue that's going to impact fishing.

MS. OLETH: Right. Not that I've heard of, and that's a good point that you raise, is that, when we interviewed all of these claims firms, to like share the RFP, and said, you know, would you like to be the regional fund administrator, some of them actually said they would want to be, which was shocking, because this sounds like a really big, hard challenge, but we have some, I think, really great applicants, but what they said is so different about this program is it's the only program that any of the administrators had ever heard of that was not court-mandated.

They thought that was an interesting opportunity, and more challenging, because, typically, what they're just doing is, you know, somebody gets sued, like BP, and BP says, okay, here's \$2 billion to compensate for impacts. This is the first proactive compensation fund that anyone has ever designed in the United States, and, you know, I feel like that is a real kind of feather in the cap of work towards coexistence that is so needed in our country, not only between offshore wind and fishing, but in so many different ways in which we've become, unfortunately, tribal, and so it's nice to kind of see this kind of happening in a voluntary way.

DR. BELCHER: Okay. Trish.

MS. MURPHEY: Thanks, Kris, for coming. I really appreciate it, and I just wanted to sort of add a little bit, and I know Kris mentioned that there was also a recreational DOC, and the eleven states kind of had some back-and-forth discussion on how to get the recreational -- When I'm talking recreational, we're talking about recreational for-hire, and so not just private rec, but just recreational for-hire at this point, and so we kind of had some back-and-forth on how to get that, and I think going this parallel DOC is probably the way to go.

I know we had public comment last night about consideration of the recreational fisheries, and recreational fishing is really huge down in the south, and I think everything was sort of northern centric, until little old North Carolina came onboard, right, but I also want to let folks know that there's a series of webinars, and I guess the last webinar is actually tonight, that covers the southern area, and it starts at 5:00, and, if anybody is interested in listening, or want a link, Kris or I can probably get the link to you, but it starts at 5:00, and I think it's Zoom, and it's an opportunity to just ask questions and learn more about how to apply, and it's towards the commercial DOC, but I just wanted to share that with you as well, but thanks again, Kris.

MS. OLETH: Then we'll have a series of webinars on the recreational side, Trish, also, coming up in July, and so we'll get you that information. Just -- I was just saying to my friend, and colleague, in the back, how impressed I always am when I come to a council meeting, just how well you guys work together and bring together disparate ideas, and it always is a bit of inspiration for me, and so thank you for the opportunity, Trish, and thank you for your service.

DR. BELCHER: Okay. I've got a couple more hands up. Sonny.

MR. GWIN: Thank you, Madam Chair. As somebody that works -- 100 percent of my income comes from the wind lease area, and one of the questions I had was -- Actually, I have a couple of questions, if you don't mind, and one of them is you mentioned rec and commercial, and is there anything in there for retail, packing houses, and perhaps restaurants that could be affected by wind power?

MS. OLETH: Yes, absolutely, and the idea is to determine a multiplier that could compensate for the up and downstream impacts as well, and so, again, we're entering the design phase now, but that's absolutely one of the considerations.

MR. GWIN: Thank you, and then my other question is part of the process up north, that they just finished with, I was told that, if they got compensated, that they would have to sign a -- I would have to ask the lawyer what it is, if it's a waiver or something that you could not -- Up the road, if something happened, that you could not get compensated.

MS. OLETH: You can't get compensated for the same impacts twice, essentially, which is, I think, a standard legal, you know, matter that the claims administrators are, you know, kind of typically saying. If, you know, the harm was outsized, or beyond what was being filed, then certainly it would be eligible for additional compensation or litigation.

DR. BELCHER: Other questions? Robert.

MR. SPOTTSWOOD: We don't have as much -- I don't know of any discussion of offshore wind in my area, but, Sonny, I was kind of thinking along the same lines, and I would probably pay attention to that legislation and watch out for, you know, if this fund gets set up, that it somehow provides a safe harbor or cap on indemnification of liabilities for people who cause actual impacts.

DR. BELCHER: Sonny.

MR. GWIN: My wife is on the webinar tonight.

DR. BELCHER: Amy.

MS. DUKES: Thank you for this great presentation, and I am a South Carolina girl, and so I'm on that bubble, and we're looking at it starting to move a little bit further south, and so, as this expansion and development of wind energy continues -- I know that Andy asked the question of states to the south could get involved, and so I appreciate that, and I think I was curious to see if you've had any conversations with South Carolina particularly, but I think, from a fisheries standpoint, just like fish, our fishermen don't understand boundaries, and borders, and we have fishermen from the southern states that actually will travel into those northern states, where we will have potential windfarms coming about, and how do we include those conversations and discussions as part of that compensation through this? I saw you have ACCSP, and I know we can partner with our states to the north and south, but are you -- Are you sort of addressing concerns like that?

MS. OLETH: Yes, and, you know, this is for the entire eastern seaboard, and so anyone can apply. I mean, again, I'm saying this like it's established, but, you know, the idea is that it's to be designed regardless of the port of origin or port of landing, and we have reached out to South Carolina in the past, to see if they wanted to be kind of technically one of the members, but I think just resources hadn't allowed that, but, yes, the more states the merrier. Right, Trish?

DR. BELCHER: Any other questions? Laurilee and then Trish.

MS. THOMPSON: Thank you for the presentation. So, if they've got to sign a waiver, and they can only be compensated for one time, if you've taken somebody's, you know, place where they've fished all their life, and where they intend to continue to fish all their life, are you going to buy their boat, and then look at their average catch records, and pay them -- Compensate them for the whole rest of their career?

MS. OLETH: I'm not sure what is envisioned with the -- We haven't -- I haven't looked closely at the program that was being referred to earlier on -- That's for the Vineyard Wind 1 project, with the release signature, and there is no requirements on this program yet, and so I'm not entirely sure exactly, you know, how that's going to be designed, but, if that's your suggestion, then I would be happy to take that back to the regional fund administrator.

DR. BELCHER: Trish.

MS. MURPHEY: I was just going to add, Amy, that the applications for commercial membership on this is open to any commercial fisherman, and I do think they're kind of looking more at north-centric fisheries, but I think there is some like small-boat fishery in -- I can't remember the list.

MS. OLETH: There's like a carve-out, yes, for each type of --

MS. MURPHEY: So Florida through Maine fishermen can apply for this, but I -- They kind of did look at the top fisheries.

MS. OLETH: Like the gear types, yes. It was the top six, I think, gear types.

MS. MURPHEY: Yes, and so but --

MS. OLETH: Anyone is eligible.

MS. MURPHEY: Yes, and any commercial fisherman is eligible to put in.

DR. BELCHER: Further questions for Kris? Okay. Seeing none, thank you for your presentation.

MS. OLETH: Thank you.

DR. BELCHER: Next up, we have Renne Riley, who is going to talk about Responsible Offshore Science Alliance, or ROSA.

DR. RILEY: Thank you so much, and thanks for the opportunity. I am Renne Riley, and I'm the Executive Director at the Responsible Offshore Science Alliance, and so, while we are staying on

the theme of offshore wind development, our organization is a little bit different, in that we are focused on the science that is informing the decision-making in the offshore wind development space, as it relates to fish and fisheries, and so thanks again for this opportunity to speak.

We are a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, and our mission is to, as I said, advance the research, monitoring, and methods on the effects of offshore wind energy development across the U.S., and so, right now, our scope is focused on the east coast, but, obviously, with developing coming in the Gulf, and on the Pacific, we're definitely trying to share our lessons learned, and so we are aiming to serve as an objective resource for all sectors, and to facilitate the coordination of the science, right, and so our four pillars are there on the left-hand side, to be scientific, objective, collaborative, and transparent in all that we do.

This is our structure, and, essentially, we're led by a board of directors that provides our fiduciary and mission oversight, and so to make sure that we are doing what we are supposed to be doing, and the unique part of ROSA is that we were established collaboratively between representatives of the fishing industry and representatives from the offshore wind development industry, and that's reflected in the composition of our board.

For our strategic and direction setting, priority setting, we have an advisory council that's comprised of representatives from those sectors, offshore wind developers as well as commercial and recreational industry folks, and also the states and the federal agencies that are involved in the processes, and so NOAA Fisheries, the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management, as well as the regional councils, and, aside from that, we have area and topic-specific committees that are focused on our work, and help us with that, and, finally, we have an independent group, called our research advisors, who provide peer review.

As I said, we formed in early 2019, with operations starting in 2020, and so we're a relatively young organization, but this partnership is what makes us really unique, and so there were folks from the Responsible Offshore Development Alliance, or RODA, which you may have heard of, and offshore wind developers, as well as some furloughed federal employees that all got together on a cloudy day to say, hey, we want to kind of set our perspectives aside and really move the science that needs to happen forward in a way that is balancing perspectives of these two, let's be honest, sometimes opposing groups.

Right now, ROSA is in a strategic planning phase. We essentially took our guiding principles to create a five-year roadmap for how we're going to really achieve our mission in the near-term, and we have three key strategies, that I'm going to talk to you all about today, and some metrics for success.

These are those three key objectives, and I'm going to step through them individually, and so you can just go to the next slide, and so the first is to administer regional offshore wind fisheries research, and this was kind of the main reason that ROSA was established, was to administer regional science, and so I am going to step through kind of each of the components of what I mean by that.

The first is Fish FORWRD, our database, and so I know this is a busy slide, but folks always ask if we will make the slides available, and I like to make sure that you can understand what I was saying, even if I'm not speaking, and so please excuse all the words, but this is a snapshot of our

database in its current form, and it has two parts. The first is to synthesize existing research priorities, and these are priorities that have been published by the states, by the regional councils, by, you know, NOAA, and it essentially collates all of them. It doesn't prioritize them, but it does collect them all, so that you can look across themes and see where are there common priorities.

The second part is essentially a compilation of all of the work that's being undertaken to address those priorities, and so you can essentially get at what are the gaps, what is being addressed and what needs to still be addressed, for future research funding. We do have a lovely new user-friendly webtool that is almost ready to launch, and we're really excited about it. If you're interested in seeing more, we do have an open-to-the-public advisory council meeting on Friday afternoon, and I'm happy to share the link with you all, and you can come and see the demonstration of the new tool.

Next is our research funder coordination, and so this is essentially an effort to get folks who are funding offshore wind fisheries research in the same room. There are not that many opportunities for folks to gather around and talk about not only what research they are funding, but what are they planning to do, and so, in other words, we're going to take all of the priority setting and talk to the folks who are funding research, to say how can we maximize the efficiency of those dollars, and we had our first kick-off meeting last month, and I'm excited to say that this is all going to be incorporated in that update to the Fish FORWRD database, so that everyone will be able to see, okay, what is being addressed, and what isn't, and here is where we should prioritize future funding.

Then the last two on this slide are just to say that we have, right now, got our very first contract in place to administer regional research funding, and this is through the state processes, and so, in this example, the State of New York, as part of its offshore wind offtake agreement, or PSA, has a requirement that the developers fund regional fisheries and wildlife research. This is outside of the normal like permitting requirements and all of that, and so we are essentially establishing this regional RFP process, and we'll be both inclusive of our advisory council, and research advisors, creating those RFPs and awarding those projects and managing them.

That was that first category, and that's how we get at doing a good job of administering regional stuff, and the second is to facilitate the assessment of cumulative impacts, and so, within this, there's a couple of the same things, and so a lot of these key initiatives actually serve more than one purpose, and so, under facilitating cumulative assessments, we have first data standardization, and, essentially, we are looking to launch, and we'll be announcing next month the launch, a data governance committee.

This is to deal with all the issues of data standardization, data management, security, and data sharing, because the real question is how do you get at stitching together all of the work that's being done across space, right, and so, if you have all these different projects that are essentially researching what the resource is now, and then looking at the impacts, you need to be able to have those data streams talk to one another, and one of the ways that you need to create that is data standards.

We talked already about the second box, the funder coordination, and then, for the third one, updating the project monitoring guidelines, this is one of our deliverables thus far that I am really proud of as the organization got started, and Offshore Wind Project Monitoring Framework and

Guidelines, and it doesn't necessarily tell you what this document does, but it's essentially intended to help developers create monitoring plans that are effective.

We are in the process of updating this document right now, and you can see the publication date was March of 2021, which is, in the world of offshore wind, many, many, many years ago, and so we're really trying to create alignment here in both the experimental designs, the tools and methods that get used, the data sharing and analysis, as well as governance. There are four elements in this document, and, those two that are highlighted, in the original document just said TBD, and so those are the focus right now, the benthic habitat EFH monitoring studies and socioeconomic work.

We also convene committees of practitioners, and the reason this helps us to get at those regional or cumulative impacts is because there are a lot of tools that lend themselves to regional assessment, and so the example that you see on the slide is we've just recently launched an acoustic telemetry committee, and that's -- I'm sure you guys probably already know, but, just in case you don't, it's like EZ Pass for fish. If the fish get tagged, when they swim past a receiver, you know they've been there.

A lot of different offshore wind developer companies are trying to use this method, but there isn't a whole lot of coordination around how should we best do that, and so, along with folks from NOAA Fisheries and the Smithsonian, we're working on some very in-the-weeds guidance, through this committee, to really get everyone on the same page about how those data should be collected and managed, and then, finally, we have listening sessions, and so one of the ways to create the cumulative impacts assessment, or coordination, is through getting folks around the table.

This winter, we held a series of listening sessions around monitoring plans, and I really wanted to call it the offshore wind fisheries monitoring plan DIES, because that's the acronym, and everyone told me that was a bad idea, and don't have "dies" in your title, and so we called it Fish PIES instead, and we just pretended that "development" wasn't there, but, anyway, those were sector-specific conversations, and so we had the fishing industry get all together, both commercial and rec, and we all the developers get all together, all the companies, and we got the regulators, the feds, the states, the regional folks.

Then we had all the science and research community that are doing this work get together to talk about the monitoring plans, because, even though there are guidelines out there, if you take a look at what each project's monitoring plan actually does, it's wildly different, and so there needs to be some space for kind of level setting, and getting everyone on the same page, and so we have a final session for this series, at the state of the science that NYSERDA is hosting next month, and the goal is really to just document what is the challenges, and the inconsistencies, and what are we going to do about it. We have a final report in draft for that, and we'll be targeting publishing it at the end of this year.

That takes us to our last bullet, and I really think this is probably the most important one. I won't spend as much time here, and I know I have the dreaded like after-lunch spot, and so thank you for sticking with me.

All of these things are ways that we build coordination as an organization, and so we've already talked about these first five, and all of those actually are, in and of themselves, building that

coordination, but we also are really committed to information sharing and distribution, and so what I mean by that is our advisory council meetings are open to the public. We invite our partners to come give us updates there, and we also convene symposia, and we're convening a session at the American Fisheries Society meeting this year, and we have for the last three years, and the ICES meetings, and we work at all of those to make sure that we're sharing what we're doing, but also inviting others to share as well.

Then we also have a strong belief that building the capacity, through our internship program, and by serving on graduate committees, is a really important piece to this, like building that pipeline of folks that are going to be well-suited to do this work, and then, finally, by serving on other advisory panels and subcommittees, such as the Regional Wildlife Science Collaborative, the New Jersey and New York and Massachusetts and Maine fisheries working groups, et cetera, and so that's what I wanted to share, and the next slide is just to say that we are really uniquely situated to coordinate across various funding sources, research institutions, and organizations, as well as data infrastructures.

The reason that matters is there is no other agency, or organization, whose mission is to do that, and so we really feel it's important that the regional science entities kind of step up to the plate and offer those services, and the last slide, I think, is I would really look to hear from you all, how we can help streamline communications and kind of support the existing and upcoming efforts in this space, and so, you know, research that's going to involve a lot of different data streams are coming from different companies that have different cultures, and lawyers, and all kinds of differences, and so we want to provide our service to the broader community, and so thanks, Tom, for the connection to be able to come here, and to our wonderful chair and leaders here, to really being open to just hearing about this, since I know it's not top-of-mind for everyone, but it's certainly coming, and I think we are in a unique position to really offer some lessons learned in advance of things happening, so it doesn't feel so rushed, and so maybe this is the last slide.

We really are committed to producing that bridge across the sectors, really promoting science-based discourse, which you all are very familiar with, and supporting meaningful solutions, so we can have some more equity among our ocean users, new and old, and so thank you.

DR. BELCHER: Thank you, Renne. Questions for Renne from the group? Clay.

DR. PORCH: Thank you, Renne. I'm Clay Porch, the Director of the Southeast Fisheries Science, and I'm curious whether you're familiar with the Northeast Science Center's survey mitigation plan, because one of the big challenges that we'll be facing with increasing offshore wind, or any kind of infrastructure like that, is it breaks our long time series with surveys, because we can't get in those areas, particularly when we're using the big white ships, because they won't operate within a nautical mile of those structures, and so I wonder what your thoughts are there, on how we can mitigate that.

DR. RILEY: Thanks for the question. I think we all tuned into the peer review, right, and I think it's certainly early days, which is a little scary, because there's a lot of work to do, but part of the way that we are involved in that process is that we've got folks from the Science Center on our advisory council, and on our board, and we're working closely with actually the developers, to talk about how can we streamline those plans, right, and so there's the survey mitigation plans from the Science Center that we all just looked at, but each of the newer developer, or projects rather,

are required a new condition to support survey mitigation planning, and they have to submit a plan as well.

What we've tried to do is offer our service to help coordinate those plans as well, because we don't want another fisheries monitoring plan situation where there's twenty-seven versions of a mitigation plan, and so we've actively, you know, been talking through what would that look like, and no one quite knows yet how those plans are going to be implemented, but there is a commitment to this shared responsibility, and we are certainly committed to supporting that, because of the biggest impacts, that we don't have a great handle on, is the uncertainty that's going to be introduced by interrupting these data streams, and so it's certainly top-of-mind for us, and I know I didn't mention it in the presentation, but it's kind of part of what we feel is like our service.

DR. BELCHER: Other questions for Renne? Sonny.

MR. GWIN: Thank you for the presentation, and I want to let you know how important this is, the job you do. It's really important that we know the science behind these windfarms, but the question I have is, you know, Europe has had wind power for a long time, and do you all collaborate with them, and talk to their scientists, and find out data from them on what's going on with their windfarms?

DR. RILEY: Thanks, Sonny. It's a great question, and I think probably the best mechanism for that conversation is through the International Council for the Exploration of the Sea, ICES, and they have a working group for offshore wind and fisheries that we serve on, and they have actually three different working groups that we're participating in that try and tackle some of this, and to share those lessons learned, and so that's one of the main ways that we're having that communication, but also through, you know, essentially these companies that are the developers are international companies.

When we're talking to them about how are we going to address some of these scientific questions, we're really asking for them to bring their experience to the table, in terms of what were the monitoring plans that they established in Europe, how are those data being shared across political boundaries, so that you can get at the larger picture, and so yes is the short answer, I would say.

DR. BELCHER: Okay. I've got Tom and Trish.

MR. ROLLER: I'm trying to think how I'm going to ask this question, and so, you know, kind of in some of the science that I've worked with, in like telemetry tagging of fish, there's been a lot of discussion about how there's a lot of opportunities to partner with the wind companies, in order to have more telemetry, you know, receivers in the ocean, and how would that data -- How would you work within that data to make that available? Am I asking that in a --

DR. RILEY: Yes, and so it depends on the data, and so what we're learning is some data are much more sensitive than others, just like, you know, fishing industry data, and some are much more sensitive than others, and so what we're doing, through our new data governance committee, is identifying, okay, which data streams feel comfortable to just share publicly, once they're QA/QC'd, and what data streams already have repositories, and so telemetry is a good example of, you know, the ACT_MATOS network having structure already to receive large amounts of data, that are then QA/QC'd and also securely stored, meaning it's not just up and out there.

If you want to request those data, they are accessible, but you have to ask first, and it's essentially giving some comfort to the folks that are nervous that like the data are going to be used against them, right, and so, for that data stream, it's kind of clearcut. For a drop cam, it's less clear cut, and so like there's -- I think it depends on the method, and that's the way we'll be approaching the data governance terms of reference, for that committee, is by method, and so telemetry, eDNA, drop cams, fish pot surveys, trap surveys, trawl surveys, clam dredge, and like you have to think of each of those separately, because the data are, you know, inherently just very different, in terms of their sensitivity, where they could be stored, how they are stored right now, and how you can get them to talk to one another across different projects.

Part of the listening sessions I think really illustrated that, because we had the developer-only session, and every single developer was like, well, of course, we share our data, and we have to send them to BOEM, right, and so like defining what do we mean by data sharing, you know, and sitting on a final report on your website is not data sharing, and so what do we mean when we ask are you willing to publicly share your data, and that's part of the other reason that ROSA was established, is that the money that we're going to administer is going to have very strong requirements that all of the data are going to need to be publicly accessible, and so it's a little bit that it depends right now, because I think, you know, depending on what the data are intended to be used for, you have a different answer to that question. I will leave that one there, rather than implicate myself.

DR. BELCHER: Okay. Trish.

MS. MURPHEY: I just wanted to add, talking about Clay and the mitigating for the sampling, and Carolina -- I've been involved with Carolina Long Bay, which is Duke and Total, and trying to be really proactive, as far as concerns for the SEAMAP data, the video data, and how it would work with South Carolina to make sure, and so they're at least proactive in knowing where these sampling sites are, whereas I think what happened up north was that they got the leases before anybody -- They got the COP before they realized there were sampling stations there, and it was kind of too late, if that's correct, Renne, but, anyway, my point was that, at least with Carolina Long Bay, we've been very proactive and talking back and forth, as far as those sampling programs.

DR. BELCHER: Other questions from folks in the group for Renne? Okay. Seeing none, thank you again, Renne, for your time today.

DR. RILEY: Thank you so much, and I will share the information for the advisory council meeting, and I would love for folks to join. Thank you.

DR. BELCHER: Thank you. Okay. The next item on our agenda is the Highly Migratory Species presentation, which is the Scoping Initiative for Gear Considerations in the Atlantic Highly Migratory Species Fisheries, and this is Becky Curtis, and so Chip.

DR. COLLIER: All right. Becky, you're unmuted, if you want to check your mic.

MS. CURTIS: All right. Can you hear me okay?

DR. COLLIER: Yes, we can.

MS. CURTIS: Okay. Perfect.

DR. COLLIER: You can just tell me to advance the slides when you're ready.

MS. CURTIS: That sounds great. Thank you. Hi, everyone. I'm Becky Curtis, and I'm here from the Atlantic Highly Migratory Species Management Division, along with Guy DuBeck, who is also working on this project, and Steve Durkee, and others in HMS, are also working on this. In this presentation, I'll be talking about fishing gear considerations in Atlantic HMS fisheries.

We recently released a scoping document that outlines various options for changes to HMS fishing gear regulations. This is currently under a comment period, and so feel free to check it out, if you haven't already, and I'm looking forward to whatever comments you have today about this. I will be providing some background on the development of the scoping document, but not too much. I'm going to get right to the important points and present the potential options that we've identified so far, and then we would like to get your feedback, through a discussion session at the end, and so I just want to emphasize here that the goal of presenting today is not for me to talk very long, and this will be pretty brief, and it's to gather your input, and so don't settle in too much, and please be ready to provide your thoughts on the options we've outlined here, and, as I said, we are in scoping for this, for these different options that we're going to present.

Here's a list of acronyms, and I'll give you a second just to look at these, and they take up too much space on the slides, and they're too difficult to say, and so you can go ahead and advance. Why are we doing this? Over the years, we've implemented a number of management measures related to fishing gears, and these have really been put in place to accomplish different fishery management and conservation goals, including preventing or stopping overfishing, minimizing bycatch, increasing post-release survivability, and limiting the use of some gear to reduce lost and derelict gear issues.

What has happened though is that HMS fishing gear and techniques have evolved over time, due to a number of factors, including species distributions that are changing, changes in fishing gear and techniques, shifting market conditions, and varying fishing interests, and so we've also -- So we want to review some of these restrictions, to see if they may be limiting fishing opportunities or the ability to achieve optimum yield. We've also received requests for various gear-related changes, which I will get into in the rest of the presentation.

Basically, the objectives of this scoping effort, and the different options that we've presented here, is really to increase flexibility for targeting HMS, while still maintaining consistency with those management and conservation goals that I outlined earlier and maintaining -- Staying in line with domestic fishery regulations and international agreements.

Some of the more specific objectives include regulatory changes, considering regulatory changes to facilitate fishing for swordfish at deeper depths, options to reduce gear conflict, or interference between emerging or established gear configurations and techniques, and we're also looking at additional authorizations for more species with different gears, and authorizing some gear under additional permit types, and also to address regulatory inconsistencies.

This brings us to the first issue, the first gear category, that I will talk about, which is buoy gear, and so it's authorized under certain permits, which are listed on the slide here, and I won't go through them, and buoy gear is generally used at night, when swordfish are near the surface, and it has been required to release and retrieve this gear by hand, and this gear type has shown to have lower dead discard rates, when compared with pelagic longline, and also low rates of bycatch and incidental catch.

For example, buoy gear from 2016 through 2022, according to fisheries logbook data, swordfish made up over 80 percent of buoy gear catch by the numbers, with no catch of protected resources, and there's also been an increased use of this deep-set buoy gear fishing during the day, resulting in higher swordfish selectivity, and this example has been shown off the southern California coast, where over 80 percent of the catch was swordfish, which is a higher selectivity than longline and drift gillnet fisheries, and so you can advance to the buoy gear options.

The first option here is not make any changes, to maintain the current regs, but we have introduced some options here to increase fishing opportunities and flexibility for using this gear. The first would be to authorize power assistance as an option for retrieving the buoy gear mainline. The next option, A3, would be authorize buoy gear for swordfish general commercial permit holders. Currently, buoy gear is only limited to a certain number of permit holders, as it's only authorized under the swordfish directed or hand gear LAP in the CCSB, which is only valid in the U.S. Caribbean.

Because the swordfish general commercial permit retention limit, in the swordfish management area, will remain at zero, this expanded use of buoy gear could be accomplished while avoiding concerns about gear interference that has been expressed by some constituents off of the southeastern coast of Florida, and it also wouldn't be likely to have a negative impact on the value of swordfish hand gear LAPs used in those productive south Florida fishing grounds within the swordfish management area, for that same reason, and it's more likely to increase fishing opportunities outside of that area.

A4 would be to allow the retention of BAYS tuna with buoy gear in all areas, the Atlantic Ocean, Gulf of Mexico, and Caribbean, except for the Florida swordfish management area, and so, currently, targeting BAYS is only allowed for commercial Caribbean small boat permit holders in the U.S. Caribbean.

Option 5 would be to allow retention of some shark species with buoy gear. Currently, this is not an authorized gear type for sharks, and, finally, there is currently no specification, but A6 would require the use of circle hooks on buoy gear, and so this brings us to the next gear type, pelagic longline. Generally, when fishing for swordfish, pelagic longline is deployed at sunset and hauled at sunrise. However, this technique has been changing in recent years, with fishermen setting the gear deeper than usual, usually to target swordfish during the day, when they're deeper in the water column.

This deep-set technique has been considered to be consistent with the pelagic longline definition, but the two techniques are different, and so this brings us to some potential options for deep-set pelagic longline. The first would be to make no changes, since we've already determined that this configuration and technique meets the existing PLL definition, and we could just continue with the status quo and make no changes.

We also have a few options, to more specifically address the deep-set PLL technique, to reduce uncertainty associated with this technique, and improve communication to help reduce gear conflict, and also to enhance our analyses of trip data, and so B2 would be to modify the pelagic longline definition, and, for example, we could change the definition to say -- To indicate that there may be occasions and unintentional contact of the gear with the seafloor, whereas, currently, that's not in there.

B3 would be to require enhanced communication when deploying the deep-set PLL. This option could include, for example, identification of deep sets using buoys or high-flyer markings or through VHF announcements by fishermen. B4 would be to require VMS hail-out when embarking on deep-sea pelagic longline trips, and so having this information included in the hail-outs would make it easier for us to identify deep-set PLL trips through data analysis, and we could also determine catch and interaction rate variations between gear deployment types.

The next category would be bait collection net restrictions, and so bait collection gear, such as cast nets and small dipnets, might be commonly carried onboard currently, but this gear is not explicitly authorized in HMS regulations for specific permits or target species, and it's also not authorized as a secondary gear. However, it is commonly used, and, from a practical standpoint, it would not be able to be used for harvesting HMS, as the equipment is too small for that.

Options here, C1 is no action, maintain the current regulations that do not authorize bait collection nets on HMS fishing vessels, or C2 is we could modify the regs, the regulations, to allow small nets for bait collection on HMS fishing vessels, and so this would reflect the practical behavior of fishermen and be responsive to past requests.

So spearguns, and spearguns are a type of gear that must be used while the operator is physically in the water, and they were authorized for use in 2006, and they were limited to BAYS tunas, due to the stock status concerns for bluefin tuna, swordfish, and some large coastal sharks. They're also not authorized for targeting other HMS or in HMS commercial fisheries, and so the speargun options, and the first option here is no action, and so keep the current regulations regarding the use of spearguns.

We also have some additional options for increasing fishing opportunities, for additional species under additional permit types, and so D2 is we could authorize spearguns for use with HMS angling or HMS charter/headboat permit holders fishing for swordfish, and D3 would be an option similar to D2, except that it would allow the retention of some recreationally-authorized shark species, and D4 -- This option would authorize the use of spearguns to retain swordfish, BAYS tunas, and sharks under some commercial permits.

Again, these are the different options that we had, and, as I said, I was rather brief, but, really, the meat of our coming to present here today is to get your feedback, and what do you think about the options that we have outlined here, and what pros and cons do you see for different options, and are there any other revisions that we should consider, any other species and permits to consider, and now I thank you for the opportunity to present these options, and I would open it up.

DR. BELCHER: Thank you, Becky. Tom.

MR. ROLLER: Thank you, Becky, for the presentation. I have two questions for you. One is a clarification, and so an HMS vessel cannot have a cast net onboard to collect its own bait?

MS. CURTIS: Currently, that -- As I said, this is, you know, modifying the regulations to -- Can you go back to the bait net? There we go. Modifying the regulations, and C2 would correct for this mismatch. Right now, the cast nets and small dipnets are not explicitly authorized, although this is a common practice, that people have these onboard, and so that's again, why we --

MR. ROLLER: Obviously, I would support that, because that's common sense, and the other question I have is can you give me any feedback on where and how people are spearfishing for swordfish?

MS. CURTIS: Yes.

MR. ROLLER: I mean, as far as spearfishing for coastal sharks, I guess, if people have a death wish, I'm okay with that, but I'm more curious about how, and where, that happens for swordfish.

MS. CURTIS: Guy, also, if you feel like taking this one, I would let you take that.

MR. DUBECK: Guy DuBeck here, with HMS, and so swordfish -- I mean, off the coast of Florida, and in North Carolina, and it's kind of wherever they encounter them, but I think this is just kind of -- Someone suggested to us to kind of expand our speargun regulations, and, again, he's not -- The gentleman in particular, he brought this point up at our AP meeting, and he's not geared towards sharks, and, yes, he does not want a death wish, but it was just something to throw in there too as a scoping option for everybody.

MR. ROLLER: So it's more just like standardizing regulations, as opposed to people developing a speargun fishery for swordfish, which, as someone who fishes for swordfish, is a little interesting, and I'm just curious if it exists somewhere in the world that I'm not aware of.

DR. BELCHER: Other questions or comments for Becky? Okay. Seeing none, at this time, again, can you give us the timeline on your comments, so that folks, if they want to chime-in at a later time, can?

MS. CURTIS: Yes, and so the comments are, I believe, through the end of July, and so they can go ahead and make comments through the regulations portal, and, if anyone has any questions on how to do that, feel free to reach out to me, or anyone on the team, via email.

DR. BELCHER: Okay. Thank you, and, again, just checking around the room, and no comments at this time? Okay. Thanks again, Becky.

MS. CURTIS: Thank you for letting us present today.

DR. BELCHER: Okay. I'm going to suggest a ten-minute break at this point, and then we will start into staff reports, and so it's three o'clock. Come back to the table at 3:10, and we'll continue the agenda. Thank you.

(Whereupon, a recess was taken.)

DR. BELCHER: Okay. We are going back to the top of the list, to come back down through, for those of you who are tracking the agenda, and so we're going to start out with a staff report from John Carmichael.

MR. CARMICHAEL: All right. Thank you, and so the Chair told me not to be here until eight o'clock, and so I won't read this to you, as usual, but I will just hit a few highlights. As you know, the IRA projects are out there, and we've submitted for funding through this. The initial distribution is \$375,000, and, as far as we know, it's expected soon. At the CCC, which was maybe two or three weeks ago, we were told that any day now expect it to be coming through, and there's just been a lot of challenges, apparently, moving money through the NMFS grants system, I think as most of us at the councils know, and so it's out there, and we're still waiting.

We have some revisions to a couple of the jobs that we've been working on, and we've had comments from the agency, from the Regional Office and others, and we worked with the Gulf Council to work on our Job 1 with the program review, and so revisions coming on that, as well as looking at the species under Job 2, which will be looking at data-limited fish. Approval for the Job 3 is submitted, and then some clarifications on Job 4, and so we're working those through the process, and they expect to be able to disperse the money for those four jobs there summer or fall, sometime in there, so the process continues to move along, but there's been so many delays on this that it's sort of a we'll just wait and see it when we get it, which is the reality.

On the website and digital communications stuff, I really want to highlight -- You see the many things that are going on, and there's always a lot that goes on in that world, necessarily, and you've got to be fresh and new and up-to-date, or you're not doing much on your website, and that's for sure, but, as mentioned earlier, check out that What it Means to Me project, if you haven't already, and that one is really exciting. There's going to be a lot of great stuff coming in there, and some good videos to see.

ICAST is coming up, and that's a big outreach event for us. It's a time to reach a lot of people in the recreational community, and so, if any are there, come see us. Some of you I know will be there, and we will be tracking you down and seeing you, and we're having the Donuts and Descending Devices event again, which brings a lot of people over to the Conservation Corner, to the benefit of all the state and other agencies that are there.

There was a meeting recently of the WECAFC Flyingfish-Dolphinfish Working Group, and John Hadley attended that, and it was great to be able to get him there in-person and meet with them. We're putting a report on this on the agenda for the September meeting, and we hope, by that time, to have the report-out from the working group.

The East Coast Climate Coordination group held a meeting in Charleston back in early May, and they reviewed a charter and looked at action plan priorities, and they agreed to hold a workshop August 15 through 16, and it's pretty impressive to be able to convene a workshop and get it going on such short notice, and it's going to be held at the location where the Mid-Atlantic Council is meeting, and the idea is to give input to NMFS on climate-related things and needs of the councils, coordination with the various IRA projects of the councils, to feed into the agency's climate and ecosystem fisheries initiative, which is underway, and so that's called CEFI, I think is how we refer to it, CEFI, and you'll be seeing that acronym a lot in the future, and certainly hearing about

it, as various projects get done to try and improve our overall climate response and climate resilience.

Then there's a number of bullets on the Citizen Science Program, and we've heard about that earlier this week, and Julia is going to finish up her report here in a little bit, and so not too much to say there, and then the CCC Communications Workgroup -- One of the big things they're working on in the coming years is the 50th anniversary celebration of the Magnuson Act, which will be coming up I guess in 2026, and so that's the overview of staff things that aren't covered otherwise during this meeting. Any questions on those topics?

DR. BELCHER: I am not seeing any. Thanks, John. Next up will be Christina, and she'll be talking to us about the stakeholder engagement meetings and the mackerel port meetings.

MS. WIEGAND: All right. Thanks, guys, and so we're going to dive into stakeholder engagement meetings, and I'm going to give you just the very briefest of refreshers, since it's been a little bit since we've talked about these meetings, but, as a reminder, you know, stakeholder input has always been a key part of the council management process, but I think it's clear to staff, and everyone around the table, that we do have a little bit of an issue with some eroding trust in fisheries management, and so one of the things that staff has been working on, over the last year or so, is creating a series of meetings that will allow you guys, as council members, to engage with fishermen in more of an informal discussion-oriented environment, providing an opportunity to build relationships in a way that's maybe not always provided by the traditional public comment process.

Last December, we had presented some goals and objectives for you, and you guys have reviewed these, and so I'm not going to go over them in detail, but the goal is really to have an open dialogue and an opportunity for mutual learning between you guys as council members and fishermen and stakeholders generally, and the hope is that, on one end, we can work to increase knowledge of the fisheries management process, have stakeholders feel more comfortable coming and participating, as well as provide stakeholders an informal opportunity to bring their concerns and observations forward to you guys, as their council members, and, finally, just really an opportunity to share information on salient issues and have a discussion.

If you will remember, back in December, to sort of help facilitate development of these meetings, we did get volunteers for a council subgroup, to sort of talk about some of these issues and then bring that input to the council for further discussion. That group did meet last May, and their thoughts are included sort of in the purple text along the document, and I will go over that, but the goal today is going to be to sort of start with the big picture of how do you guys want to use the information that could be gathered at these meetings, and how do you want to incentivize stakeholders to attend these meetings, and then we'll sort of dig down into the nitty-gritty, talk about a draft structure, and then last, but not least, a little bit of discussion on possible locations for the first round of these meetings, which we're hoping to hold in sort of winter of 2025, and so the January-February timeframe.

With that, the big question is what is the council going to do with the information gathered at these meetings? These are very, you know, nontraditional meetings. Usually, when we're asking fishermen to come provide input at a public meeting, we are asking them to comment on specific management measures, and so there's a direct tie to some kind of action. That's not what these

meetings are aiming to do, and so, because they're not tied to a specific management action, it's going to be key to communicate to stakeholders how the information they're providing is going to be used and what opportunity these types of meetings provide for them that maybe other types of meetings do not.

This is something that our Social and Economic Panel had quite a bit of discussion on, when we brought this idea to them in April, and they really felt that something tangible needed to be done with the input provided, because just sort of communication might not be satisfying for stakeholders, and, additionally, the idea of just an opportunity to talk to council members face-to-face might get some stakeholders in the door, but, also, it might not really be enough of an incentive for everyone.

When we talked to the subgroup about it, we posed a couple of questions, and first, of course, is what do you want to do with this information, and the subgroup talked a lot about using information provided at these meetings to set workload priorities. Tomorrow, you guys are going to look at the, quote, unquote, spreadsheet of doom, and information from these meetings could really be used to sort of set which amendments, or which actions, should be your top priority, and the subgroup really felt that comments on that workplan are something that these stakeholder engagement meetings could be used to provide input on, as well as just sort of what type of questions should be discussed when the council is considering the different management actions that are on the workplan.

Additionally, the group really felt like the information from these meetings should set the tone for upcoming council meetings, and so information should be presented before each relevant committee, to sort of lead off any discussion, and, in terms of incentivizing stakeholders to attend these meetings, there was discussion about advertising stakeholder engagement meetings as an opportunity to submit a council report card, and we would, of course, need to consider a way to facilitate that discussion in a productive manner, but it was also thought that structuring a feedback portion, at the very beginning of this meeting, might allow attendees to sort of air their frustrations from the get-go, and then allow for a more productive conversation to occur for the rest of the meeting. I will say that I'm going to talk about port meetings after this, but that is something that we found to be true during mackerel port meetings.

Then, finally, just a note that it will be important to consider stakeholder burnout, and we're doing a lot of great outreach right now, but that also means that there are a lot of opportunities for public input and participation, and so we want to be cognizant of the fact that stakeholders are being asked to provide a lot of different information, in a lot of different types of venues, and so I will pause there. Stakeholder engagement subgroup, if you feel like there is other points that you want to make sure that I've covered, please feel free, but any additional discussion on these topics from the Full Council would be very helpful for staff.

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

MR. ROLLER: So the one thing -- You know, as a member of this subcommittee, Kerry brought up the idea of sharing our workload, and I just thought that it was brilliant, and I just think Kerry needs credit for starting that conversation, because I don't think stakeholders in general understand our resource limitations in the council process, and I think this is an opportunity for them to see how we're limited, but also give some feedback on the priorities that we have, and what they do

and do not think is important, and I think that could be a really important part of that, and that and the report card I think was a great way to get -- That was also your idea, and I wasn't going to give you credit for that right away, and I think the comment was we would look forward to getting a lot of Fs, potentially, but it would be a great way to kind of like get the conversation going, and that's what we experienced in port meetings.

DR. BELCHER: I've got Jessica and then Judy.

MS. MCCAWLEY: I'm really excited about these, but I noticed that we wanted every council member from the particular state where the meetings were going to be held at all the meetings, and so that's also great, but that could be a lot for Florida, and that's at least probably two weeks, or more, of these, and so, when FWC did this in the past, it was quite a big lift, and it took a lot of people to staff these, and so even doing every other meeting -- I just have some concerns with the workload of both staff and the council members.

DR. BELCHER: Christina, to that?

MS. WIEGAND: I just want to note that I agree that Florida is a big state, and we could spend months doing stakeholder engagement meetings in Florida, and we'll talk about this a little later in the document, but the thought, from staff, has always been that each state would get one week's worth of meetings, max, and so, for Florida, it would probably be four meetings, a meeting Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, and that would be it for the year, and then, maybe the following time we hit Florida, we would hit different communities within Florida, but the thought has been, considering staff and council member workload, to not to more than one week in each state.

DR. BELCHER: Judy.

MS. HELMEY: I think what I was thinking was along the lines of what Kerry and Tom said, but, if we could give them a scenario of a problem that we were having, and then ask them to give us what their thoughts are about how we can fix it, and, for instance, red snapper, choosing that for an example, but not mentioning it, of course.

DR. BELCHER: Trish.

MS. MURPHEY: I was just going to comment on the five council and staff members, and I was also wondering if it would be good to have NOAA representatives as well, be it Andy or somebody from his office, just to -- You know, so that they can hear the input and engage with those guys as well, and not just the state reps.

DR. BELCHER: Jessica.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Did you guys consider maybe doing per state -- You know, like a webinar that occurred, and, instead of in the evening, maybe it occurred during the day, for people that couldn't attend, and you would have to totally change up the structure for how you're going to get that information, but it's just a thought.

DR. BELCHER: Kerry.

MS. MARHEFKA: I just want to say, all joking aside, and I saw everyone's face when the report card stuff came out, and I knew I was going to get it, and so you can give it to me, but, you know, I think that -- You know, what we heard last night, as Christina said, was obviously we're at a -- Probably, in my experience, it's an all-time low for trust for this council, and what we saw earlier in the week, when Julia and Christina gave the presentation on the work they've been doing, is you saw that, when they were -- In-person engagement was up the highest, and that's where they had the highest result.

We've also shifted, and I understand why, but mostly to webinars for public hearings and scoping, and it makes total sense, but, for me, I don't want to lose this opportunity to engage with people face-to-face, because I've said before there's just no other way.

The other thing I will say, and they can correct me if I'm wrong, and this is my own experience, was, you know, when I was staff, and working on FMPs all the time, and sitting in front of a computer all the time, and you just feel like you're never getting anywhere, like we all feel, and it can be really disheartening, and I think that our -- We're so lucky to have a staff that gets on very well with the public, and, while it is work in a way, I hope it's rewarding work, for them to be able to be out in the public, and so I would like to give them that opportunity, if they are comfortable with that, and, you know, if they say we can't, and we're too busy, of course, 100 percent, but I just hope that, as a council, we can really put our full support behind this, because I think it's the beginning, hopefully, of rebuilding of the trust process, and I'm 100 percent in for these stakeholder meetings, for whatever it takes.

DR. BELCHER: Thanks, Kerry. Amy.

MS. DUKES: Thanks, and I absolutely agree with everything that Kerry just said. That opportunity to get in front of those folks, to be real, to unruffle some feathers, to provide some really good information, I think is really valuable, and I'm 100 percent with the no webinar. If folks don't -- Folks need to not hide behind a screen. They need to show up, and they need to be face-to-face, because that's really where they're going to learn, and, to me, this is, again, carrying the momentum forward that citizen science and best fishing practices is already doing, in a little bit of a different form, and, you know, we've realized that Kevin Costner lied to us. If we build it, they will come is not the truth.

If you build it, you've got to go to them, because they're not going to come to you, and so this is that huge opportunity for us to get in front of our constituents, and I think it also allows an opportunity to tie our mutual desire result effectively, in an intimate setting, depending on how many folks you get, and to let them know that we're -- That we want them and us to be a part of the solution and not a part of the problem. Thank you.

DR. BELCHER: Tim.

MR. GRINER: Thank you, Madam Chair, and I just wanted to echo the same thing. I mean, every single one of our staff are incredibly wonderful public speakers, and it means -- You lose that in a webinar. You know, you need to be face-to-face with the staff, because they speak so well, and it's so easy to understand and pay attention when they're in front of you, and so I don't want to lose that either.

DR. BELCHER: Andy and then Amy and then Gary.

MR. STRELCHECK: A question first, and how many stakeholder participants are we targeting for these meetings?

MS. WIEGAND: So understanding that sometimes it can be challenging to incentivize fishermen to come out to something like this, I think this is something where it likely starts small and grows over time, like the sort of rolling the snowball up the hill that Julia and I were talking about earlier. This is, because I'm only so creative, set up very similar to mackerel port meetings, and, for mackerel port meetings, we found around forty participants, forty to fifty participants, as being ideal for the structure we set up, but we, of course, had sort of backup plans for what happens if not that many people show up and what happens if, all of a sudden, we have a hundred stakeholders in the room, and so I believe the intent with this would be to have it function similarly, where we're aiming for around that forty to fifty number, but have a plan for if it goes one way or the other.

MR. STRELCHECK: All right. That's helpful, and the reason I was asking, right, is that, you know, we're at potentially eight participants from the council and council staff, and Trish mentioned NOAA, right, and so you start adding those numbers up, and then you're going to bring potentially an equal number of people to the meeting, right, and it seems like that wouldn't be a very productive dialogue, but you're talking about, obviously, a considerable number more that you would at least be targeting for meetings, which makes sense.

You know, from my perspective, you know, I agree, and I think it would be beneficial to have NOAA at the table. It would be very challenging for me to participate for four weeks, right, on the road, and already I'm traveling half the year, and so I would have to give some thought to that, in terms of NOAA participation.

The other comment I will make is I really commend the council, in terms of your outreach and education strategies. I am an optimist, and I'm a glass three-quarters-full type of person, and I think you've learned that about me, and I am also a realist, and I feel like this is a good attempt to try to build trust, but we also have to recognize that we manage fisheries, and we have laws and regulations, and that affects people's livelihoods, and I think the challenge for us sometimes is that people just -- They don't like to be regulated, and all of us don't like to be regulated, and that is a tough position to be in, and so navigating that, and trying to, obviously, figure out how that can be part of the engagement strategy, I think is another critical component that you need to think through.

DR. BELCHER: Amy and then Gary and then Trish.

MS. DUKES: Sorry, and I forgot one thing. I really think it also speaks volumes that council staff initiated this effort, and that they want to do this, and I think it's always interesting when Christina and Julia and Meg and Ashley get up, and the smiles on their faces, and it's just incredible, and it's infectious, and I think that something like this really helps fill their tank, and it kind of reenergizes them, for some of the hard stuff that we've got to do too.

DR. BELCHER: Gary.

MR. BORLAND: Thank you. As you all know, I'm in the fishing industry, and I've been on the road the last couple of months, visiting a lot of retail tackle shops up and down the coast, and we have a lot of work to do, and I can tell you that. I don't believe the fishermen, the fishing tackle dealers, and I shouldn't say the fishing industry, because that's overstepping, but they don't understand the process of what we go through and some of the challenges in front of us on how we regulate this, and so any way we can educate them, and I know you guys have tried this in the past too, but any way we can educate them, to understand the challenges that we have in front of us, for them to understand it, would be, I believe, a huge mechanism to increase the partnership, or understanding, of what we all go through. Other than that, I'm 100 percent behind getting in front of the stakeholders, and I think it's very important.

DR. BELCHER: Trish.

MS. MURPHEY: I've got several thoughts, and so just bear with me. I think, and I'm kind of thinking of how I am, and, in order to have people trust you, they've got to get to know you, and so they've got to see that you're a human, and I will give an example. I mean, you know, folks call Tom all the time, because they know him, and I don't really get the calls that Tom gets, because they don't know me. I am starting to get to know more people, and they're starting to get comfortable to call me as well, but I guess my main point is our stakeholders need to get to know us as individuals, and that will help with the trust, because then you're building relationships.

I guess where I'm going is, and I think you had sort of logistics down further, and so I may be down a little too far, but I almost wonder if you should attempt to make somewhat of a quasi-social interaction, and like -- I'm just thinking about going to a scientific conference, and you have the post sessions, with, you know, snacks and drinks, and people are walking around and socializing, something like that, and, with that said, the posters could be the different things that the council does, what MSA is, you know, just stuff like that, and have that one-on-one interaction, because then folks will see that you're actually human.

One of the things that I noticed at the port meetings was that, you know, I tried really hard to mingle, because all of those guys were kind of in their own little groups, and they won't mingle themselves, and so I tried to mingle and introduce myself, and it felt a little awkward, but still, you know, that's something to think about too, when folks come in, and they're going to still hang with their buddies, and so you've almost got to make a meet-and-greet, maybe, is where I'm going, but the main point is that, you know, we just -- They need to know us as individuals as well, and I think that would help with trust, or at least it does for me.

MS. WIEGAND: I will say that I'm glad to hear you say that, Trish. I will talk about the structure in a second, and we do have part of it structured a little bit like that, and so I would be interested in your thoughts on how we've done that.

DR. BELCHER: Okay. I'm going to jump in quick and then go to Tom. I understand where Kerry is going with the idea of a report card, but I can say, from the standpoint, and Spud can speak to this too, but we've been doing satisfaction surveys, and we've done them -- We did one right before he retired, and we did a follow-up one five years later, and the one thing that we -- I caution that you get hung up on the metrics, and how to make things better, and so I think the main thing is we were having discussions, with the last one, that one of the gentlemen who was on our

finfish advisory panel said that -- He owns a car dealership, and he said, I'm just going to tell you right now that you get more bad reviews than you get good reviews, because the question kept coming up of how do you measure success?

You know, is it 75 percent, or is it -- I'm like, well, usually, to me, if you're over 50 percent, you're probably doing okay, but other people want to see higher metrics, and they want to see that needle moving, and so I get from the standpoint of let's gauge where we're kind of not performing as well as we should, but just cautioning that, if you're using that as a metric, you might find yourself getting disappointed, because we're not moving the needle very far.

MS. MARHEFKA: To that point, just because of the way I said it on the call, and not everyone was there, but it was in response to the question of how do we get fishermen to want to come, and it wasn't in response to really using it as a metric to measure, and it was you're a fisherman, and, you know, you want to tell us that we're doing very poorly, and you're more likely to come, and that's all. I am not at all wedded to that idea.

DR. BELCHER: I think then you still run the peril of you're setting people up that this is going to come, and we're going to smoke the session, as opposed to we're really coming together with the idea of trying to move for the greater good, you know, and so, again, that was just kind of like our take-home with that, is that we've used it more just to kind of gauge where things are not -- You know, you're unhappy with the fishery, but tell us the specifics of why're you're unhappy with the fishery, and is it something we can do, or something that's beyond our control, but at least we're getting an idea of how stable it is and who is most affected by it, and so, again, I'm not saying it's a bad idea, but just thinking that, if there's any potential tie to measuring our performance, you're probably not going to get that from it. Tom.

MR. ROLLER: To go back to some of Trish's points, which I completely agree with, I will say that I may know a lot of people in the community, but one reason that people contact me is my business cellphone is so easy to find on the internet, but, that being said, you know, I think it's important to remind ourselves that our community is actually really small, the fishing community, and it's a little bit easier to engage with them sometimes than we give ourselves credit for, and one thing we see, at like the mackerel port meetings, is we have some people that went to MREP, and we have some advisory panel members, and they all bring a few people, who tell a few people, and they bring a few people, and, you know, you get in a less-formal session, where everyone is kind of talking, and we have a little snack break in the middle, and, yes, it does make people realize that you're human, and that travels really fast.

The reviews we got, from pretty harsh areas of North Carolina, were pretty glowing, just as a way to engage with the public and have good conversations, and I was -- Not pleasantly -- I don't want to use the term "pleasantly surprised", and it was really nice to hear how much people enjoyed that conversation process, and a lot of that is just bringing a less formal approach to it, which I look forward to.

DR. BELCHER: Other comments and questions from the group? Okay.

MS. WIEGAND: All right. Well, then let's dive into a little bit more detail on how staff has sort of envisioned structuring these meetings, and so the thought is that sort of we would have at least five council staff members there, and you will see why, and then the hope would be to have sort

of all council members that represent a state available at these meetings, and I understand that, sometimes with scheduling, that can be challenging, but it would certainly be the hope that all three were able to attend.

We're going to have some areas in here where we would be talking about specific topics, and the thought is that those topics would be decided upon between staff as well as sort of the three council members that are from that state, to make sure we're addressing some of the most salient topics for a given state or city, and then, finally, we would make sure that we have sort of a pre-meeting training session, to make sure that staff and council members involved are comfortable with their role in the upcoming meetings. You will notice, as I go through this structure, this is sort of very council-member forward, with staff being in the background to help and assist as needed.

The plan would be to have the meeting last no more than two hours, and run from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m., and this is what we've been doing for port meetings, and, sort of in that 5:30 to 6:00, as people are arriving, we would, you know, of course, greet them and then try to gather a little bit of information on why they decided to attend and what they hope to get out of the meeting that night. Then, once 6:00 hits, jump into a very, very brief presentation, and, again, these things are meant to be discussion-oriented, and not presentation-oriented, and so we would have a council member give a brief presentation to welcome attendees, explain the goals and objectives for stakeholder meetings, and how the night is going to operate.

Next, we would have what we're calling the structured session, or the structured breakout groups, and so we would have sort of two separate groups, each discussing a pre-selected topic, and council members would be sort of facilitating the discussion for each of those groups, and then they would switch, so that both groups got an opportunity to talk about both of the topics.

Then we would have sort of a quick intermission. At the end of that intermission, staff would sort of, or council members, note the key points from those earlier structured breakout groups, just sort of a quick 1, 2, 3, this is what my group talked about, and then we would sort of note that we were going to move into this more unstructured session, and that, while the meeting ends at 8:00, staff and council members are going to be around cleaning up, if people want to sort of hang back and continue to chat.

These unstructured breakout groups are meant to be much more informal, and set up sort of like a mini tabling session, if you've ever been to like an expo, or anything like that, where there's just different tables set up, and you can walk around to learn about what you want to learn about, and the thought would be that we would have just a couple of stations, and some would be set stations that we always have, things like management 101.

One of the things the subgroup talked about, and this council talked about, is that it's going to be helpful for attendees to have an understanding of the management process, and sort of what the council can and cannot do, and so a management 101 station, maybe a citizen science station, and then there could be some stations that change based on what's important at the time. Say it's Shadow Shark Amendment 23, and maybe there's a station with a council member and a staff there to talk to people about Shadow Shark Amendment 23. The thought would be that, at that point, stakeholders could just move around and talk to council members and go to different staff and stations, based on what was of interest to them.

Then, finally, a very brief conclusion presentation, given by a council member, just a thank you recapping the goals and objectives and reminding attendees of where this information is going to go next, and then, sort of post-meeting, the thought has always been that all the council members and staff that attended a meeting would meet the following morning, to just debrief, talk about what was learned during the meeting, any key takeaways and ways to improve future meetings. Staff would prepare a summary report, but the hope would be that council members would be the ones presenting to the council about what was learned at these meetings.

Finally, staff will make sure we're following up with everyone who attended these meetings, both a thank you, with sort of a bullet-point list of some of the things learned, as well as information on upcoming council meetings.

One of the things we've also discussed doing is preparing the summary report and then sending it back out to everyone who was in attendance, for them to review. This is something that we decided to do for the mackerel port meetings, and I will say, sort of first night that we mentioned it, you could see a change in tone in the room, that fishermen felt excited about the idea that they would get to review the report before it was finalized.

So we presented that draft structure to the subgroup, and the subgroup had sort of a couple of comments. First, they thought that it would be important, during the unstructured session, to tailor the number of sort of, quote, unquote, tables to the number of staff and council members that are going to be present, to make sure that we had enough staff to cover everything.

Additionally, as staff, we've gone back and forth a lot on whether or not to prioritize the more structured breakout groups, or this more unstructured tabling session, and it was thought that maybe that's something that each state could discuss and decide what was going to work best for their constituents. I noted that facilitation training for council members may be helpful, as well as sort of quick synopses of each of the main topics that are going to be talked about at the meeting, so that council members had some key points to make sure they were telling stakeholders.

We asked if they thought council members would feel comfortable facilitating these groups, knowing that sort of staff would be there to aid, but it would be the council members sort of upfront facilitating discussion, and, by and large, the subgroup members felt that, yes, they would be comfortable facilitating, so long as staff was there to support.

Then, finally, there was really a note that we needed to make sure the meeting included an opportunity for all attendees to bring up new topics and ideas, and then just a few notes about the importance of working with advisory panel members and then making it clear, sort of at the start of the meeting, that stakeholder engagement meetings are sort of meant to be forward-looking and not rehashing things that have happened in the past, and so, with that, that's the subgroup's input, and any sort of other input the Full Council would like to provide on that structure would be helpful for staff, as we sort of go back and revise how we plan to conduct these meetings.

DR. BELCHER: Questions and comments for Christina on this part of the document? Amy and then Trish.

MS. DUKES: I like how you hit Trish's mingle effect idea in here, which was really neat, and I appreciated that, Trish. I was just curious, and I got really invested when you said that the

summary report would then be distributed back to the attendees, to allow them that opportunity to review and to make comment on, and I was just curious more so -- Has any of that action happened from the North Carolina port meetings, or not quite yet?

MS. WIEGAND: Not quite yet. We're hoping -- I'm hoping to get that done next week. It's taken a little bit longer than I anticipated to summarize the very large amount of great input we got, but, based on the interaction that we had at port meetings, when we let people know we were going to be doing that, I would say it's worth providing that opportunity, even if we don't end up receiving a lot of comments on what we provide.

MS. MURPHEY: (Ms. Murphey's comment is not audible on the recording.)

MS. WIEGAND: I think there are absolutely opportunities to partner, especially when it comes to spreading the word about these. I think, for example, we talk a lot about the citizen science and best fishing practices outreach, and we have the Sea Grant fellow as well, and Sea Grant has a great reputation among the fishing community, and often the tone can sometimes change, I know, when some of our staff has been in tackle shops, when they mention an affiliation with Sea Grant, but, by and large, I would say we would be happy to partner with anyone, especially when it comes to sort of spreading this information and getting the information out to the communities.

MS. MURPHEY: Because I guess I was thinking that, if that partner is trusted, then maybe that will help at least initiate the start of trust.

MS. MARHEFKA: I was just going to say that remember as far as -- I forget if you said that right then, but, I mean, when you were going through your part, but we had decided, really, it was probably going to be important to hold it somewhere local, I mean somewhere neutral, and so like not hold it at tackle shops, or not hold it at a commercial fish house, so that it was -- You weren't finding yourself having to separate sectors. The other thing I wanted to encourage you is -- It came in today, but somehow it's missing from my mailbox, but the final report from the Florida commercial summit is out.

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

MS. MARHEFKA: Oh. I swear that I saw something.

MS. MCCAWLEY: No, and it's a survey.

MS. MARHEFKA: Okay. Well, there is going to be a report, and I think that's interesting, because while, obviously, that was tailored to that very specific thing, there was a lot of good facilitation, a lot of good ways to have open communication, and so it may be interesting to look at that report and to speak to them about some of their experience, and I would highly recommend it, because I think that they did a very good job managing a lot of people that had a lot of complaints.

DR. BELCHER: I've got Laurilee and then Judy.

MS. THOMPSON: So maybe you should lean on Jessica and find out how they promoted -- I know they did it through various associations, like Southeastern Fisheries Association, Organized

Fishermen of Florida, the stone crabbers, and so there was a lot of fisheries associations that put it out in newsletters, and emails, and I think, you know, you had some partnerships with some seafood processors, and things like that, but you could do the same thing with tackle shops.

DR. BELCHER: Jessica, to that, and then Judy.

MS. MCCAWLEY: We also had email lists and ways to kind of blast that out, like, hey, here's the spot to register for this.

DR. BELCHER: Judy.

MS. HELMEY: When we had our fishing schools, on land, we had it at a place called Tubby's Tank House in Thunderbolt, and they have a back room, and they handled all the -- You know, we had lunch and everything, and they handled all that for us, but what I did was I got the tackle shops to give us a discount to everybody that came to the school. For coming to the school, they would get like -- Like they would go over and have the discount, if they wanted to purchase something, and so, you know, that incentive -- You know, you could go to several, or I could go to several, tackle shops in the area, and see if they would be willing to do something like that, and you could give them that. You know, a fisherman is looking for anything to do to spend his money on tackle, and I will give him a prescription.

DR. BELCHER: Other comments or questions for Christina at this point on this section of the report? Okay. Back to you, Christina. No other questions or comments.

MS. WIEGAND: All right, and so last, but not least, some thoughts on meeting locations, and, so, again, we're hoping to do these around January or February of next year, which seems far away, but it's not when it comes to planning the logistics of a meeting like this, and so thought has always been, again, that we would do two states a year, and then do the other two states the next year, and switch back and forth, again trying to be considerate of both council member and staff workload.

Each state would have a week's worth of stakeholder engagement meetings max, and so that's a maximum of four meetings, and maybe some states need less, but certainly no more than that, understanding that that might mean that we're hitting different communities in different years, for large states like Florida.

In the table, and these are just a couple of the cities that we went to for snapper grouper visioning, the times we held the meetings, and the number of attendees that we received at the meetings, and we provided this information because some of the questions we wanted you all and the subgroup to consider, and sort of the first, and most obvious, is which two states want to go first and be the guinea pigs for 2025.

There was support, from the subgroup, for holding meetings in only two states each year and rotating, and there was some thought to hold North Carolina and South Carolina first, followed by Georgia and Florida, and I will note that, when staff discussed this a few weeks ago, we did have some concern that that means, the first year, you only have input from the northern end of the South Atlantic, or the southern end of the South Atlantic, depending on which states you choose, and it might be another option to do like North Carolina and Georgia, which would at least give you a little bit of a broader range of the coast, thinking that some South Carolina fishermen might

come up to North Carolina, some Florida fishermen might come to Georgia, and so just something to consider.

I will note, in terms of staff travel, we would likely do one week in each state, and we wouldn't be doing necessarily two weeks back-to-back, and so splitting the states or holding them together does not necessarily affect staff travel or workload, and then the other thing we talked about were just sort of key areas in each state, thinking about past meetings we've held, and are there areas that you guys feel like we don't hit often, that we really should.

Oftentimes, council meetings have to be held in cities that have big conference rooms and space for everyone, which means we're not always going to some of the smaller communities, and so, for North Carolina, we talked a lot about how it was probably worthwhile to continue holding meetings in the three key areas, sort of southern, central, and then the Outer Banks, but to consider, within each city, where we were holding the meetings.

For example, in Wilmington, when we're there, we often hold meetings in the northern part of Wilmington, and to maybe find venues in the southern part of Wilmington, where we might be getting a different group of people, and this is something that Ashley found with her Best Fishing Practice MVP program, that sometimes people don't want to cross the bridge, for example, and so moving the location around within a city could change the stakeholders that you're able to get at a meeting.

For South Carolina, note that it would be good to go to McClellanville, continue to go to Murrell's Inlet and Little River and Beaufort. For Georgia, it was noted that Shellman's Bluff tends to be centrally located, and, if you look at that visioning table, you can see that we did get great attendance for the visioning meeting that we had there.

There was some discussion about trying to go more inland and hitting some of these larger cities, like Raleigh, Columbia, and Atlanta. There was some concern that then we would be primarily getting a recreational crowd, without a lot of commercial representation, but, of course, for all meetings, it's going to be important to note what sector attendees are from, when providing information, and that, historically, meetings inland have not been well attended.

Then, sort of last, but not least, there was discussion about whether we should continue to hold meetings at the evening hour, 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m., and it was thought that was still probably the right time, and you're likely to get a more varied group of stakeholders, and that, for visioning, the reason that some meetings were held during the day was primarily driven by venue restrictions, and most of the attendees were from nongovernmental organizations.

Then, finally, as Kerry noted, it's going to be important to consider social dynamics when selecting a venue, and that a fish house, or a recreationally-focused tackle shop, might not be a comfortable place for all stakeholders, and so to maybe consider that, while hotels are okay, there are also schools, community centers, YMCAs, et cetera, that the council could look into holding meetings, and so any other thoughts on that? I will say we're especially looking for input on which states should go first.

DR. BELCHER: So just one thing to consider with that, and I'm going to look to Jessica, because I know that their commission is active throughout much of the year, and do you feel that there is

risk of stakeholder burnout, shutdown, because now you've got state issues coming in, that people are hitting hot and heavy, and they're feeling like they're not being heard, and potentially that impacting your ability to come in, because they're just done with the state part of it, and vice versa, and, I mean, is it something that maybe it would be better to have, on the frontend, a plan to talk to the states, to see what they've got potentially in the queue, and let that dictate how you engage the states? Like I said, we don't have -- We don't do a lot of legislative changes, but, when we do, you know, it's -- So that's why I'm saying someone that is more active, like Jessica, might have better insight on that. Tim.

MR. GRINER: Thank you for that. Not to speak to what state to go to, but I would say that, at least for me, in my mind, and I think others are like this, that maybe January and February is not the time, and a couple of thoughts there. Number one, it's just -- It's dark, right, and so I almost think that you need to wait until daylight savings time. People -- January and February is probably the couple of times a year where active fishermen aren't really thinking about fishing so much, right, and so I almost think you need to wait until, you know, March or April, or when everybody is really getting geared up, and they're thinking about fishing again, and it's daylight at six o'clock, and those are just my thoughts.

DR. BELCHER: Tom.

MR. ROLLER: Tim raises an interesting point. You know, I do think the off-season is a better time to hold these meetings, but there's a fine line between like January and April, right, I mean, when people really start thinking about things, and I think you can get a different level of engagement, and so, I mean, you do it when you can do it, but, you know, there is a good point to think about there.

DR. BELCHER: Other comments from the group on the questions that Christina has posed to us? Okay. I am not seeing any, Christina, and so, if you have ideas, again, I'm sure she would appreciate it, and it doesn't have to be like right now, but as it trickles in.

MS. WIEGAND: I think maybe one of the things that staff can do is maybe reach out to the state representatives, to see sort of what things are going on in your area that you think may affect willingness to participate in this kind of meeting, at the beginning of 2025, and sort of see what moves forward there for us to present to the council in September.

DR. BELCHER: Sounds good. Amy.

MS. DUKES: Tim, I hear you on the dark part of it, and I know that January and February seems ideal, based on the fact that folks aren't necessarily fishing, and it's also a relatively, and correct me if I'm wrong, but a quieter time on the council staff's schedule. When we start rolling into March, we've got a council meeting. In April, we have a bunch of AP meetings already, and is there any other slower time in council staff's schedule that you feel like you could do something like this? I do want to be cognizant of staff's time too.

MS. WIEGAND: That is a tough question to answer, because I feel like it varies a lot with different staff, and our different responsibilities. You're right in that April, and then October in the fall, do tend to be very busy, and that's when we've traditionally held advisory panel meetings, and that's when the Social and Economic Panel and SSC meet. On the flip side of that, January and February,

we're coming off the holidays, and we're gearing up for the March council meeting, and so it's hard for me to answer, as just my perspective, from what I do for the council, and there are a lot of council staff involved in this, but I would say, traditionally, January and February are much calmer than the spring and fall months, without a doubt.

DR. BELCHER: Tom.

MR. ROLLER: Back to my previous comment, and to Amy's comment, and I think that, when you're looking at this, you know, yes, maybe it could be a little bit better, like when it starts to get a little bit warm in March, but the winter is still a better time to hold meetings, and you're still going to get better involvement. I see this in our state commission meetings. You know, when we have any sort of good agenda -- I want to say good, but I mean an agenda item that's going to elicit some good feedback, because it's controversial, and, if it's a February meeting, boy oh boy, we're going to get a bunch of people in that room, and that's something that I've experienced, and I think the way to look at that now is that people do have more time that time of year, and, if it's a good time for council staff, it's probably a good time to hold the meetings.

DR. BELCHER: Okay. Thank you for that. All right, Christina, and next is your report on the mackerel port meetings.

MS. WIEGAND: Yes, next is mackerel port meetings, and this one will be pretty quick, but I did want to give you an update on how things have been going with the king and Spanish mackerel port meetings, and we felt that it was sort of appropriate to follow stakeholder engagement meetings, since they are similar, though different.

We have completed the first three of six legs of mackerel port meetings. In April, we were in North Carolina, going all the way up the coast from Wilmington to Manteo, and then, in May, we did a series of three webinars targeting New England fishermen, and then, just last week, we were up in New York, at the Mid-Atlantic Council meeting, to hold a port meeting up there, and so we've been busy with port meetings, and it's not going to slow down.

We're looking to do South Carolina and Georgia around July and August. If you are a South Carolina or Georgia council member, you strategically received an email from me this morning, and so I'm looking forward to working with you as we get these port meetings on the books. We're going to be going to Florida in October, and then we will be wrapping up the year and going to the Mid-Atlantic in November.

So, before talking about each of these individual meetings, I wanted to give you the briefest of overviews of sort of the outreach information that we've been providing to get people to come to these port meetings, as well as some of the information that we're providing them while they're actually at the meeting, and so we've got sort of a series of flyers that we've been giving out, that we've been providing to all of our state agency partners as well to give out in communities, especially for states like North Carolina, where we are not based, and we've been working with our advisory panel members, to get the word out, and, of course, sending news releases like crazy.

Nick also designed a beautiful port meetings website, where people can register for the port meetings, though registration is not required, and, if you haven't gotten a chance to look at it, I highly recommend that you do, and then, given that these meetings are only two hours, and we're

asking fishermen to provide us a lot of information in those two hours, we did create two different flyers.

The first one is just a CMP FMP 101, and this one has been especially important as we've moved up to like New England and New York, where people aren't quite as familiar with how we manage the king and Spanish mackerel fishery, and this just gives sort of a brief overview of the fishery and then provides some QR codes that will take them to specific regulations for each species.

Then we provide a two-pager, with data for them to look at, understanding that, if they're going to be commenting on the fishery, they might want to understand what information we are using to manage it, and so just brief information on stock status for both king and Spanish mackerel, landings trends for both commercial and recreational king and Spanish mackerel, and then seasonality of catch over the last ten years. Additionally, we do link to the fishery overviews that Chip creates and then presents to you at the beginning of any amendment addressing a stock assessment, and so there's a much larger suite of data contained within those.

I'm not going to dig in too deep to what happened at each of these port meetings, and, like I said, a summary report will be available and on our website soon, but I just sort of wanted to note the attendance and how things went at each meeting, and so we started off in Wilmington, North Carolina, and we had forty-five fishermen in attendance at this meeting. They were primarily recreational, private recreational or charter-for-hire fishermen, and there was less representation from the commercial sector in Wilmington.

Then we moved up the coast to Morehead City, and this was our most-attended port meeting. We had fifty-two attendees here. Again, primarily the recreational sector, but we did see the representation from the commercial sector start to grow as we got to Morehead City, and it grew quite a bit once we got up to Hatteras, North Carolina. We heard a lot from fishermen here about how grateful they were that the council had come to their community. Hatteras is not a place that we're able to get to often. We had thirty-two attendees, primarily from the commercial sector. Similarly, we had primarily commercial attendees when we got up to Manteo, and we had about twenty-nine attendees at that meeting.

Then, like I said, last month, we did a series of webinars, and we only had a total of three attendees, but, again, we were focused on New England fishermen here. We don't actually manage king and Spanish mackerel in New England, but we know that fishermen in that area are starting to interact with them regularly, and I will say, in the name of quality over quantity, the three attendees that we did have provided some really valuable information about how the fisheries are operating in that area, and so while this is obviously low attendance compared to North Carolina, that is to be expected, given the sort of comparatively lower importance of king and Spanish mackerel in New England right now.

Then last, but not least, we were in Riverhead, New York last week, and we only had one member of the public attend, but I want to give a huge shoutout to the Mid-Atlantic Council members. I would say at least half of them came back to participate in the mackerel port meetings, and we got just a whole lot of really valuable information, especially looking to understand sort of how states interact with federal management of the species up there, and how it is, in fact, very different from how states and federal management tend to interact down here, and so incredibly valuable

information, especially as this council starts to move forward and think about how we're going to manage these species with increasing prevalence in the Mid-Atlantic region.

So, all in all, wildly successful, and I just want to note a few key takeaways, the first being that outreach beforehand and the day of is key. If you're looking at those North Carolina numbers and think, wow, it's incredible that we got fifty-two fishermen to come out to a port meeting, it is, and a lot of that work was done by the North Carolina Division of Marine Fisheries. Their staff, especially Kevin Aman and Amanda Macek, spent a lot of time doing research, going to tackle shops, calling tournament organizers, and they actually drove up the coast, following us every day, going out into the community and talking to fishermen, and so I just want to say thank you to them for that incredible work, and I would note that we are looking forward to partnering with staff in other states, to help us get the word out about these port meetings, because it is essentially, and North Carolina did it flawlessly.

I would say the other big takeaway is that it was really important to set the stage, and we learned this by our very first meeting in Wilmington. People came in sort of very hot, and frustrated, because the perception was that we are coming to comment on some new regulation that the council wants to implement for king and Spanish mackerel, and so we found that it was really important to make it clear from the get-go that the council is actually not considering any changes in management to king and Spanish mackerel right now, not until we've gone through this whole series of port meetings and that the input provided during these port meetings is what is really going to drive management decisions for the council moving forward. We found that, sort of once we set that stage, we were able to get some really valuable input from the attendees.

Then last, but not least, we need to consider sort of different opportunities for fishermen to provide additional input outside of the breakout groups that we have structured, and we originally had it set up where we had, you know, cheesy facilitation-style flipboards set up around the room, and we were asking fishermen to write on post-its and answer some questions, and we found that, even when we sort of put some post-it notes up there, when we, you know, gave the elbow to some of the AP members that were there and said, can you start doing this, to hopefully get other people to do that, people just weren't really interested in participating.

What we're going to do, moving forward, is we've created just sort of a sheet that we hand out to people when they arrive, and it allows them to write down their thoughts to those questions, as opposed to putting them up on sort of flipchart, and it worked really well in New York. We got some responses, and so hopefully it will work well moving forward.

Then last, but not least, I just want to say thank you, especially to Trish and Kerry and Tom, who have been the ones that have done sort of the first three legs of port meetings, and then to Allie and Myra especially, as the two staff that traveled with me to all of these meetings, and I think it's been a great success so far, and I'm looking forward to seeing what the next three legs have to bring, and so, with that, just a very quick update on port meetings.

DR. BELCHER: Thanks, Christina. Trish.

MS. MURPHEY: I want to just really stress -- I would really to just stress the importance that I think our division staff played in getting that outreach out, and I think what was good about that was because those guys were boots-on-the-ground, and they know our fishermen, and they know

where to go to talk to them. I mean, when they were going up the coast, they were also tying into their carcass collection, and so I just want to stress, to the state agency folks sitting here, that I think that was a big -- I think that was a big help, having your own staff who know these guys, and, you know, those guys trust your boots-on-the-ground staff, and I think definitely take advantage of that to get the word out for everyone.

DR. BELCHER: Thanks, Trish. Other comments or questions for Christina for these? Okay. Thanks again. Julia, CitSci Part 2.

MS. BYRD: All right, guys, and so I was really excited to be able to share some information on the CitSci Program with you guys on Monday, with Christina, talking a lot about outreach and our SAFMC Release project, but we've had a couple other things going on over the past several months that I just wanted to give you a quick update on, since I haven't had an opportunity to share information with you all since December, and so this will be quick, and I'll just give an update on a few of our projects.

Last year, you guys provided a lot of awesome feedback on a new tool that we were developed called our Citizen Science Project Idea Portal, and so this is an online form, where kind of any member of the public can share their citizen science project ideas with us, and so this will give an opportunity for people who maybe aren't in our network to share project ideas with us, and so we're really excited that this launched in April of this year, and so that QR code will take you to the form.

People can submit ideas in less than ten minutes, and it's a really simple, easy-to-use form. We're going to use the ideas that are submitted to help us update our citizen science research priorities, and, eventually, we're hoping that this can help us connect fishermen and scientists that may have similar research interests with one another, and so we had kind of a soft rollout with our April AP meetings, and we stated that this was available, and I've just started promoting it via social media and our South Atlantic Bite Newsletter, and so we've had our first kind of project ideas roll in, and then I talked to a fishermen, just last week, who was interested in sharing a project idea with us, and he was going to submit it to the portal, and so we're really excited that this has launched, and I think we're going to end up getting some great ideas from it.

Next, just a quick update on our SMILE project, and so, again, this is a project that's being led by the Reef Environmental Education Foundation, and it's a project that partners with recreational divers to collect length information on some of our data-limited species, and so divers are using these laser-mounted underwater cameras to get photos of fish, and so, when they're doing this sampling, they're not only collecting information with these SMILE cameras, but also stereo-video cameras, which is a more traditional way to collect length information on species, and so we'll be able to compare the data collected from those stereo-video cameras with the SMILE cameras.

The first field season ended last year, and they've been busy analyzing those data. The second field season started this spring, and something that's cool that they're trying to add into the project now is to do kind of a social science component, to try to better understand the motivations of divers, and what would make them want to participate in a citizen science project, and so I think our program will benefit a lot more from that information. We haven't worked with recreational divers very much, and so better understanding kind of the motivations and barriers they have will be beneficial, not just to the SMILE project, but I think to the program in general.

Next, a quick update on the SciFish platform, and, just as a reminder, this is a project that we were working on with North Carolina DMF and ACCSP over the past three years. It's a citizen science mobile application that has this project builder that allows people to kind of easily create customizable applications from selecting from specific data fields, so you're not building kind of a new app every time you need a new data field or you have a new project idea, and so SciFish originally launched in 2021, and it has housed our Release project and North Carolina DMF's Catch U Later project. We've been working, and we have officially launched the SciFish project builder.

Back in April and June, April 1 and June 1, people were able to apply to be able to use the SciFish tool for their own projects, and we've had kind of two preapplications come through the process thus far. One is a project in New England, and they're hoping to kind of develop a project within our project builder platform, but the other application received was a little more unusual, and it was actually a commercial app called Anglers Catch from Rhode Island, and they were interested in using the SciFish API, the way the mobile app talks to ACCSP's data warehouse to share information collected from their commercial app, format it with ACCSP data standards, and get it to the data warehouse.

So, when we originally developed SciFish, that wasn't a use that we thought may be helpful, but, since we kind of launched SciFish, I think we have heard, from other kind of commercial app folks, that they may be interested in using this SciFish API as a way to get their data formatted into a way to make it usable and get it into ACCSP's data warehouse, which is where a lot of the data for our stock assessments come from, and so that was kind of a cool use of a tool that we didn't even think about when we were developing SciFish.

Next, a quick update on the FISHstory project, and so, again, a quick reminder that this is a project where we're using old, historic fishing photos to help us better understand kind of catch and size composition from the 1940s through the 1980s, and we're really excited that FISHstory was actually one of the projects that was highlighted in the White House Office of Science and Technology Citizen Science Report to Congress, and, as you guys know, over the past kind of six to eight months, we've been really looking to try to gather new photos for FISHstory, from kind of across the South Atlantic region. We held scanning events at council meetings, and at AP meetings, and we were really lucky to have AP members, and then several council members around this table either provided photos or helped connect us to people in your communities that had photos.

Then we also had members of the public who saw us advertising that we were scanning, and trying to gather new photos, who contacted us, and, actually, Meg just let me know today that someone from a fish camp out of St. Augustine, and I can't remember the name off the top of my head, contacted us, via social media, to tell us that they had photos that they would be willing to share with the project.

We're really excited to announce that -- For our pilot project, we just really had photos from Rusty Hudson and the Daytona Beach area of Florida, and now, in our FISHstory archive, we have photos all the way from the Outer Banks down through the Keys, and so thanks to all of you, and our AP members, and libraries, and partners, and restaurants, and members of the public, and we've been able to gather over 600 new photos that were digitized and archived as part of the project.

Up here is a photo that was provided by Paul Nelson, and so he is a member of our Snapper Grouper AP, and this one down here is from the Keys. Richard Gomez provided it, and he got it from Bill Wickers, and this photo down here is from Atlantic Beach, and it was provided by Bobby Freeman, who is on our Snapper Grouper AP, and this photo here is from The Sanitary, the restaurant that is in Morehead City, and Chris Kimrey, who is on our Snapper Grouper Advisory Panel, connected me with the owner of The Sanitary, and he let me go by and take all their photos off the wall, and take photos of them, after our December council meeting last year.

Although we've collected a ton of photos, we still need more, and particularly from the 1980s, and so we need photos from the 1980s, kind of from along the coast everywhere, and then we also really need more photos from the Carolinas, and so, just as a quick reminder, for anyone who may be listening online, when we're kind of trying to gather photos, we're really trying to look at pictures that were taken at the end of fishing trips, that kind of display the harvested catch with the anglers, and we need at least a ballpark year, and kind of state information on where the photo was taken, and then, if fish are hanging on a leaderboard, that helps us estimate the size of the photo, and so, if anyone has any additional tips on where we might be able to find photos, please come find me. I would love to chat more about it.

The first part of FISHstory is gathering all these photos, but then we need to analyze them, and so we do that using kind of the FISHstory project in the online crowdsourcing platform Zooniverse, and so this is a platform where we train people from all over the world to help us identify and count fish and people in the photos, and so we learned a lot through our pilot project, and we have been refining our project in Zooniverse, and Alex Rocco, who is an NC State graduate student, has been doing a lot of the heavy lifting here. We just beta-tested our kind of revised project, and FISHstory will be relaunching in Zooniverse come July.

Then the last component of FISHstory is we've kind of developed this method to estimate the size of fish in photos. For the pilot, we measured king mackerel. Now we're measuring red snapper, and so, thus far, we've been really lucky to work with our length analysts, some of whom work for the Southeast Fisheries Science Center's Headboat Survey and some who work for South Carolina DNR's MARMAP program. We have measured red snapper in over a thousand photos now, and are still kind of working to measure more. We're really hoping to provide the information from FISHstory, not just from these length measurements, but also from kind of the Zooniverse piece to be considered for the upcoming red snapper stock assessment.

Then the last thing that I wanted to kind of update you guys on was some evaluation work we're doing on the program, and so, again, we want to make sure the citizen science program is doing what you all want it to do, and so one of our program goals is focused more on building relationships, trust, learning, engagement, collaboration, things like that, and so, in order for us to figure out if we're meeting that goal, we need to gather baseline information that helps us better understand folks' knowledge about, confidence in, and trust in the citizen science process of collecting data for fisheries management.

We're interested in gathering that baseline information from fishermen and scientists and managers, and so we've been really lucky to be working with Rick Bonney, who is our kind of citizen science guru, or Yoda, who has been advising our program since its inception, and so he came up with a plan for us to try to gather this baseline information.

The first step in the plan was to do interviews with a small group of fishermen, scientists, and managers. He presented kind of results and findings of that to you all when we were at the meeting in Key West, and then we took what we learned from those interviews to develop methods to gather information from a much broader group of fishermen, scientists, and managers.

Rick Bonney is leading the charge on gathering information from a broader group of scientists and managers, through an online survey, and so everyone around this table should have received an email from Rick, asking you to participate in a short survey. If you haven't done it, I would really encourage you to participate in it, and it would be really helpful to our program, and then, for the kind of fishermen component of this work, we've been really lucky to work with Jennifer Sweeney-Tookes. She is on our SEP and SSC, and she is leading a team of researchers to interview more fishermen, throughout the region, to gather information kind of from for-hire commercial, and recreational fishermen.

Over the past year, they've been gathering data, and analyzing data, and then, just last month, they presented kind of preliminary results to one of our citizen science advisory panel groups, the Citizen Science Operations Committee, and, even though they were just preliminary results, in particular from the kind of work and interviews that are being done with fishermen, I think there's a lot that we can learn to make our citizen science program better, but I think there's a lot of information that will apply more broadly to the council, in particular for kind of these trust issues that we've been talking about all week.

They will be finishing their reports, final reports, and providing those to us in July, and then, this fall, our citizen science advisory groups will be meeting to kind of review the final project results and then figure out how we can apply those results to our program, and come up with recommendations for you guys, and so, in December, during the Citizen Science Committee meeting, what we really want to do is we'll have Jennifer and Rick kind of share their findings with you guys, and then we will share recommendations on how we can adapt our program based on those findings, and also give you a little evaluation on where we are with our program, in regard to our goals and objectives.

The program has been in place now for almost five years, and so we want to make sure we're moving in the direction that you guys want it to move in, and so that's just a little bit of what else has been going on in the program, and I'm happy to take any questions if you all have any.

DR. BELCHER: Robert.

MR. SPOTTSWOOD: Thank you for that. The SMILE project, that was pretty interesting, and I don't know if we can encourage REEF, but we had a few folks in public comment offering to help, whether it was video or photo or other, and so anything we can do to get commercial fishermen involved in that effort I think would be fantastic.

MS. BYRD: Thanks, and there's also -- There was -- North Carolina Sea Grant does a -- Hook, Line, and Science is their blog post that they do every week, and there is a project that was in Australia, but that is actually using -- Volunteers are taking photos of GoPro video, or photos of the reef, just to kind of characterize the habitat, you know, if there are changes in habitat and that

sort of thing, but they found that volunteers, whether they were fishermen or divers taking pictures, they could really use that information for some of their decision-making.

DR. BELCHER: Robert.

MR. SPOTTSWOOD: I wasn't necessarily suggesting volunteers, and I think somebody is spending resources doing that, and so I think there's a program in the Gulf, and I don't know where Jessica went, where they're actually paying commercial fishermen for getting some of this data, and that was kind of what I was thinking.

DR. BELCHER: Other comments for Julia on this? Okay. Thank you again, Julia. The next item on the agenda is the Council Coordination Committee Report from John.

MR. CARMICHAEL: Thank you, Carolyn. The Council Coordination Committee met May 21 through 23 in San Juan, Puerto Rico, hosted by the Caribbean Fishery Management Council. Just a reminder that the CCC is a gathering of the chairs, vice chairs, and executive directors of all the regional councils nationwide, and so all eight councils, as well as representatives of the National Marine Fisheries Service, and so we have our Regional Administrators like Andy there, with several representatives from Headquarters, including Sam, who was here earlier this week, Kelly Denit, and Janet Coit, and so it was a good representation, and the intent is to keep the councils up-to-date on various things that are going on within the agency.

The meeting agenda and materials are hosted on the national council's website, and this is www.fisherycouncils.org, and it has the meetings from all the past CCCs, as well as various resources related to really the higher order of council business, the nationwide interest things, Magnuson Act updates, various subcommittees that the CCC has, as well as the Scientific Coordination Subcommittee, which is basically a gathering of the SSCs nationwide. If you go there, you can see all the information that I'll be covering in more detail, and the final report of the meeting, when it's available, will be there.

A few highlights on things that we've been talking about for a while, that we got updated on, is the confidentiality rule that NMFS recently published, and there was some discussion about its flexibility and implementation, and it might have effects on fisheries, such as Alaska, and Alaska is kind of unique, in that you have a council within a single state, and they operate, in many ways, different than the rest of us do.

On NEPA, there's been a rule underway for quite a while, and there was a final rule published in May of 2024, and the NEPA workgroup is created, and it's going to address guidance for implementing the NEPA regulations, which will help us respond to that rule. Remember there were changes, through an Executive Order, to how NEPA is going to operate, and this has just been working through the system.

The councils are increasingly interested in sanctuary regulations. It's of interest here, and, obviously, we've talked some about issues with the Florida Keys Sanctuary, and Jessica mentioned Key Biscayne, and there's been some created to the north, but it's also a very big issue when you go out into the Western Pacific, where very large sanctuaries and areas have been created. The councils have been trying to make sure that we have a voice in the decision-making process. We requested that someone come from the sanctuary program, and they weren't able to at this meeting,

and so we anticipate that, at our next meeting, which will be in September, that it will include more details on sanctuary regulations, how they're developed, and what's the real role of the council, and do we have the ability to provide input, and influence, on sanctuary-level decisions.

We always get an update on the budget, and it's kind of a broken record here, but we're really looking at essentially flat funding for 2024, and I think our net increase was something like \$20,000, and so, considering where inflation is, we're not getting that far. The council has actually submitted a letter to Janet Coit about the state of council funding and the ability to continue to address new responsibilities, whether it's related to wind, climate responsiveness, EEJ, dealing with the regular business that we have every day, in light of the lack of any significant funding increases for quite a while.

We looked at inflation-adjusted funding levels, and I think we've been basically trending downward since about 2015, and so it's becoming quite a burden, in terms of the councils' abilities to do their job, and we expect to continue to have conversations with the agency about the council funding situation, which we all know is -- You know, it's a situation that's decided by Congress, and so it's pretty challenging.

There's an anti-harassment policy that has been completed, and the EDs are going to meet to consider best practices and consider funding for training. We went through training recently, and I think most of you all recall, and so the next question is where are we in terms of support from the agency to provide ongoing training to council members and staff, because there is turnover in both over time, and there is also the need to redo this training on a regular basis, so it stays fresh.

We got a pretty extensive update on the IRA, which I kind of hit on earlier, and they're still working on distributing the funds, with an initial distribution hopefully during June, and the next sometime in the summer of 2024. They have received proposals to cover all of the available funding, and so no further RFPs are expected. They've only been released a portion of the funding, and so these are multiyear projects, and so councils are not going to get allocated the complete funding for all of our projects here in 2024, and I think about three-quarters of what was budgeted for the IRA has been released to the agency initially, and so they expect to spread that when they make this, but the other will come in later years.

Despite the delays in getting the funding, and, if you recall, we expected to get the \$375,000 by the end of last year, and we certainly expected that we would have the rest in-hand by now, and we have not gotten either, but this money is on a hard timeline, due to the congressional allocation of it, and so the project timelines cannot be extended because of funding delays, as we often do, and, normally, you have a three-year project, and it starts when you get the money, and that's not going to be the case. All work must be completed on these by December 31, 2026, and so we only have our set time in which to do that, and so it's getting kind of tight on us, and we're quite concerned.

The MRIP-FES evaluation and calibration got quite an extensive discussion. The pilot is underway through 2024, and the evaluation and calibration will be developed through 2025, and then final results, and any revised estimates, will be available in April of 2026. This is the planned timeline, and they're talking about that, and, as I said, we're going to devote time on the September agenda to getting a report from them, and so start thinking now about questions that you might want to ask and what you want to see out of MRIP as it is re-envisioned.

The 304f governance, recall this is addressing how council governance, and so between adjacent councils, could change in response to species changing their distributions, and this has been essentially finalized, and the agency is working on completing it, and getting it into their procedural directive and guidance system, and some of the key changes, in response to the comments that we raised, is they don't envision regular, ongoing reviews and tracking of this, and that was something that was sort of alluded to, and we raised concerns about the timing and workload of that, but, if an issue is noted, say in a stock assessment of a species shift, or a council raises an issue, or otherwise it gets brought up, and then the process would be considered, and they would go through it and evaluate the situation.

There was also some significant improvements in the transition plan, which caused a lot of concerns, and, obviously, say if you were to shift responsibility wholly from one council to the next, there's a lot of, you know, institutional knowledge within the existing council that's been working on it, and so that would be transferred over in some way, and have a plan, and also having a pause on any regulations while that is going on is considered as well, and so try to reduce the amount of upheaval that could happen while you're making that transition. They anticipate the completion of this, and it would be made available to everyone publicly, in the summer of 2024.

While we're concerned about a number of species that are transitioning within the South Atlantic, potentially becoming more abundant within the Mid-Atlantic region, you know, this is really looking at governance at an FMP level, essentially, and so it's the snapper grouper fishery, and the snapper grouper FMP, that would be evaluated, and so one of the questions that I raised is that we have species that are shifting, but I really think it's unlikely that enough snapper grouper resources are going to shift into the Mid-Atlantic region to offset, you know, the vast abundance of snapper grouper resources that are kind of down in Florida, and some of our top species in landings are things like yellowtail snapper and gray snapper.

What we would do in those situations is, as we've been doing with things like blueline tilefish, where we're able to continue working with the Mid-Atlantic Council on that, with seats on APs, working collaboratively on assessments and stuff, and, you know, being climate responsive as we need to be, but it's unlikely that this would trigger the 304f governance issues, and then, of course, we have dolphin and the CMP stocks, where we already do have agreements, and, you know, our jurisdiction extends into greater areas, and so it may turn out, for us at least, that, at least on an FMP basis, this may not cause a lot of heartache, at least in the foreseeable future, which I think is quite encouraging.

A number of motions were passed by the CCC. There is an Area-Based Management Subcommittee that's been working for quite a while, and it's basically tied to the 30-by-30 initiative, and so just requesting that the CCC be directly involved in any process for evaluating effective conservation measures developed on this, working on the IUCN and FAO guidelines, and this is an issue that's kind of brewing on the international stage, and we want to be included.

Then the CCC recommended some minor revisions to the ESA, and so Endangered Species Act, and the Magnuson-Stevens Act working directly policy directive, to do some minor revisions on that, and then, just looking ahead to the next meetings, we'll meet October 15 through 17 in Washington, D.C. In spring of 2025, we'll be, May 13 through 15, in New Bedford,

Massachusetts, hosted by the New England Fishery Management Council. We don't have the fall meeting just yet, and it will probably be sometime in the September-October window.

Looking a little bit farther ahead, to 2026, it will be hosted by the North Pacific, and then us in 2027, and so our time is coming back around, and it's hard to believe already, but eight years seems to go by pretty quick. With that, any questions on the CCC report?

DR. BELCHER: Thanks, John. Questions? Okay. Seeing none, thanks, John. Robert.

MR. SPOTTSWOOD: We talked a little bit about resources earlier, and I was wondering if there's any opportunity, on IRA funding, to try and capture some more resources for MRIP, or if that's already kind of in there and you guys are working on that.

MR. CARMICHAEL: There isn't through IRA funding, and that's a very restricted pot of money, and it's temporary, and it's really going toward climate-related issues, based on how Congress provided that funding. There is different pots within in, and at least that's the council's portion, and there is different pots within IRA, and some of that is being used for recreational data improvements, and, in fact, I think a workshop held recently in the Gulf, looking at recreational data, was tied to -- There was a \$20 million pot that went to the Gulf of Mexico for red snapper issues, and some other things, and the agency as well got various bits of funding, and so I think there are some things within that that are going toward recreational data collection, but just nothing like towards us as a council specifically.

DR. BELCHER: Andy.

MR. STRELCHECK: To add to that, \$20 million has been set aside, and it's for red snapper, but really for reef fish as a whole, inclusive of the Gulf of Mexico, but, also, some of those funds can be used in the South Atlantic. It's focused on a number of areas, but the two main areas -- Well, the three main areas of focus are improving kind of data management and state surveys, improving effort estimation, and improving estimates of discards, and so we just got done, as John was pointing out, with an IRA effort workshop in New Orleans last week.

Some of the recommendations that are coming out of that are going to be looking at camera technologies to be able to kind of quantify boat traffic, an effort in discrete passes in areas, and this has been tested in various locations, but at a much larger scale, but, also, looking at things like satellite technology, right, and can we count boats using satellites, right, and, to me, the question is always, you know, our expansion factors, and, you know, self-reported data, and so the workshop really focused in on emphasizing the need to quantify boat, or vessel, level effort, you know, in a tangible way, and so electronic monitoring was certainly kind of the area of emphasis, and focus, but we got some really cool presentations as well with regard to the use of cellphone technologies and other things to look at just effort, or patterns of effort at least, at boat ramps, and other locations, and so lots of opportunities there.

The discard workshop will be in late July, and then we're going to continue to work with the Gulf States Commission with regard to data standards and improvements for the state surveys, but, whatever comes out of the recommendations, and the proposals, that ultimately are funded, we see it as directly applicable, whether they're conducted in the Gulf or not, right, and they'll be directly applicable to work here in the South Atlantic.

DR. BELCHER: John.

MR. CARMICHAEL: So, Andy, just a question on that money, and so like it's a \$20 million pot, and, just for reference, that's equivalent to what was given to all eight councils for the climate-related activities, and where do that go? Is that something that, you know, like the Regional Office or the Science Center is overseeing, and I know the Gulf States Commission is involved in it, and the Gulf Council, and I've never been real clear on, you know, who is sort of getting to decide how that money gets spent and what it gets used on.

DR. PORCH: The money goes to the Science Center, but with the understanding that most of it is going out to the states, or other partners, and that is how it was sold to the administration, and it was -- The focus was on the Gulf, because of the competing state surveys, and so trying to help those surveys get in a more common footing, to enable the infrastructure that will allow them to report in a timely way, and to stitch those estimates together, but that's why there was a Gulf focus, because there were already some competing surveys, and a need to reconcile all that.

Having said that, you know, a million or so, probably, can -- There is latitude to distribute that to the South Atlantic, to support some of the programs there, and, as Andy mentioned, there should be some spillover effects, just from the things that we learned. Things like the effort surveys could conceivably, and especially the camera work, be done on the east coast of Florida, and other places where you have limited access points, and so all that's being worked out.

In addition, there was \$1.8 million that continues to be appropriated, largely for the South Atlantic red snapper count, you know, the work that Will Patterson and crew is doing, but some of it is also being applied to expanding observer coverage on the for-hire fleet, and we hope to get that rolling in 2025, and we've been in conversation with all the states about that, and so I think we're going to see improvements across-the-board, and I'm rather excited about it, but it is true that the money that was secured with the understanding -- For the \$20 million red snapper pot, with the understanding that it's mostly going to the states and for the Gulf of Mexico.

DR. BELCHER: Other comments or questions? Okay. Seeing none, we're going to continue to move on. Bear with me, because tonight -- I know we're supposed to go to 5:00, but we still have about four agenda items that need to be addressed, and, because of, again, people with connections, and no other options for flights out, I want to try to get this done this evening, if we can do it. Next up is the Topics for the Fall 2024 Outreach and Communications AP Meeting, and this is with Kim.

MS. IVERSON: Thank you. Very quickly, and I know it's been a long day, but, as you heard earlier from Scott Baker, we have a very active Outreach and Communications Advisory Panel, and most of our AP members participated in the webinar in May, and we're looking forward to getting back together again in-person on October 9 and 10 in Charleston.

Here we have a list, a preliminary list, of ideas, or topic ideas, for the agenda for that meeting. Given this week's meeting, and some other discussions, I just wanted to give the council members an opportunity to look at that list and add any other items that you would like to see addressed by our Outreach and Communications Advisory Panel in October. I can go through those one at a time, if you would like, but, if you see something there, or you see something that you would like

to add, and we've talked about the private recreational permit and reporting amendment, and we'll get an update in October, and see where that stands from the September meeting and discussions.

The spawning SMZ, I think Chip is going to talk about that a little bit more, the research plan, and also include an outreach plan. The documents review, we're putting together documents to hand out at council members, to help introduce the council members, and there's been a lot of discussion about humanizing council members and the process, making it a little more personal, how the process works, how a council meeting works, how public comment works, and so those documents are in development, and Nick has asked for some time on the agenda, as John Carmichael mentioned earlier, and he does a great job with our website and digital communications, social media, et cetera, and so we'll be getting an update there, and then best fishing practices. If there are other agenda items, given the discussion this week, or anything else that you would like to see added, please let us know.

DR. BELCHER: Thanks, Kim. Are there comments for Kim on the action items that are provided on the list, or agenda items? Andy.

MR. STRELCHECK: First, Kim, it's great to hear your voice. We missed you at the meeting this week, and so I'm good with the list. I think the other thing maybe to add, with Item 1, is this re-envisioning the state-federal partnership for recreational data collection, and what will be discussed more in September, since your meeting, it sounds like, will be after that, and it would be really good to get some feedback from an outreach standpoint, how that's being communicated, what you're hearing, anything we could do to kind of improve that effort as it goes forward.

MS. IVERSON: Okay. Thank you, Andy. I appreciate that.

DR. BELCHER: I've got Kerry and then Spud.

MS. MARHEFKA: I just didn't see on there -- I think it would be important to get their input on the stakeholder meetings, and also do they normally get an update or give input on citizen science topics?

MS. IVERSON: Thank you, Kerry. I think we can certainly add citizen science updates, and Julia is always kind and provides those updates to the AP, and so I think that's a given. Thank you, and I will add the stakeholder.

DR. BELCHER: Spud.

MR. WOODWARD: I was going to mention the plans for the stakeholder meetings as well as an update on the mackerel port meetings. I think that would be of interest to them as well.

DR. BELCHER: Other suggestions for Kim? Okay. It looks like that's good. Thank you, Kim.

MS. IVERSON: Okay. Thank you, all. I appreciate that.

DR. BELCHER: Okay. The next item is Terms of Reference for SEDAR 90, which is red snapper, and the Statement of Work for Black Sea Bass, and this is Chip. We're supposed to be approving TORs and an SOW.

DR. COLLIER: That's correct. If you remember from our SEDAR Committee from the last meeting in March, we went over this in quite a bit of detail, and the reason it's in Full Council is, one, I was a little bit slow telling Myra that we needed to get this done, but, two, it's also not really -- I didn't feel like it was worth the time it was going to be to set up a committee meeting. Hopefully it's going to be short, because we did revise the items, based on your requested input.

Just going through this real quick, there was two things that we were talking about. One, it was changing from a research track assessment to an assessment, and I don't know what we're going to call it now. Right now, we have it as a benchmark, but maybe that benchmark name drops, and it's just going to be an assessment, but, with this assessment, the plan is to have a data workshop, an assessment workshop, and also a review workshop, and, with that, we plan on getting management advice coming out at the end.

In the early discussions of this, there was some indication of looking at potential changes in life history over time, and so we added this bullet under 1, where it explores the evidence of changes in life history characteristics over time, and that was a little bit different than where we had it during -- I guess, in the report for Full Council in March, and I just wanted to let you know where that was.

Also, there was a recommendation, here, to do -- A recommendation to include information, or a discussion, of spawning stock biomass versus total egg production, for use in the stock assessment stage, and then, continuing on, there was a request to add information, or revise information, related to the mini-season estimates, the Florida State Reef Fish estimates, FISHstory, and SEFHIER, just considering all those pieces of information, and then, in Item 5, under assessment, we also added this bullet in there to consider alternative metrics for estimating spawning potential ratio, and we have listed in there, specifically, spawning stock biomass and total egg production.

The other big thing that changes within this is you will notice, under the review terms of reference, it does have information on the status determination criteria and looking at overfishing levels and the productivity, and so, with that, that was a quick overview of how we improved this from last time, and there are really very few other changes that are associated with it, and we would be looking to make sure that this would be okay for the terms of reference for SEDAR 90, the red snapper stock assessment.

DR. BELCHER: Comments and questions for Chip? Tim.

MR. GRINER: Thank you, Chip. Just so I'm clear here, Items 3 and 4 -- That's going to allow us, for this assessment, to evaluate, as we talked about, the landings and discards as a whole?

DR. COLLIER: So you're looking at wanting to be able to separate out the landings and discards, or are you talking about what you wanted to do for black sea bass, where the projections would be able to be separated out?

MR. GRINER: Yes, and is that what 3 and 4 does?

DR. COLLIER: So, under the data, they would not be working under the projections, and that would be coming under the assessment, and let me check there. We're not really going into that

detail for it, but what I can do is just reach out to the analyst and say that the council's intent is to be able to look at this and have the split at the sector levels, and then we might have to come back to the council to get feedback on the best way to do that, just because that will be a challenge.

MR. GRINER: But does that need to be in the terms of reference then, I mean, or how -- I mean, I want to make sure it gets done. We talk about it, but we don't get it done.

DR. BELCHER: John or Chip?

DR. COLLIER: I say we add it in, just to cover our bases.

MR. GRINER: Thank you.

DR. BELCHER: Thanks, Chip. Other comments or suggestions for the TORs? Clay.

DR. PORCH: I can't resist pointing out that, you know, this is why the assessments take so long, because we have so many things like this to evaluate, but I also want to point out there are some things in there, for instance examining whether there is changes through time in life history, particularly reproductive information, that, even if there is, we don't have enough of that to ever quantify it, and so they can look at it, but there's not going to be that much we can do about it, and, in fact, we've been having to downsize our program, and so certainly, in the future, we'll be conducting many fewer reproductive samples, and so it will be incumbent on somebody else to do all those analyses and collect those samples, and we just don't have the resources to continue, and so, generally, we're going more towards spawning biomass reference points, rather than fecundity, and not because we want to, but we just don't have the resources to collect all that information.

I guess I would also mention, you know, things like SEFHIER -- We can look at that, but we already kind of know the answer to that, and that was the letter we sent to you several years ago, or Cisco Werner sent to you, and it's not going to be able to do anything more, the current program, than give us sort of a minimum bounds on effort estimates, and so we can look into all of that, but some of it is kind of a foregone conclusion. Thank you.

DR. BELCHER: Further comments? Okay. We need a motion to accept. Is somebody willing to make a motion to accept the TORs for SEDAR 90? Jessica.

MS. MCCAWLEY: **So moved.**

DR. BELCHER: Second? Kerry. Any further discussion? **Any objections?** Okay. **Seeing none, that motion passes.**

DR. COLLIER: All right, and then I also have an item on the agenda for black sea bass, and so we have black sea bass coming up for potentially on the agenda for 2026, and it's a very jam-packed 2026, as far as number of stock assessments that are in there, but, as you heard earlier in the week, the discussion of projections for black sea bass, they are only through 2026, and so having a stock assessment be started, or an interim analysis be started, and be available to provide catch-level recommendations for 2027, I think would be valuable for this species, especially given some of the concerns with recruitment.

It would be important to look at what is happening as far as in that recruitment index, or not necessarily recruitment index, but the index of abundance, just figure out what's going on with that, and is the population going up, or is it going down, and, if you remember back to when this stock assessment was being put together, the SSC was looking at projection time period, and they averaged the last five years of average recruitment to project the future landings, and we --

At that point, each year was a subsequent low in the overall number of recruits predicted for the fishery, and so, even though it was an average for the last five years, trying to get a recent trend, there was no indication that was slowing down, and so that could have been an overestimate, the last five years, and I think it's very important to get an interim analysis, or a stock assessment, in the near term, to understand what's going on with this species.

We wanted to have something available to consider for a stock assessment for black sea bass, or an interim analysis, and this -- Obviously, an interim analysis would not need this level of detail in it, but these are some of the concerns that were identified by the SSC for black sea bass, and so, for this, we just have the normal stuff up top for an assessment, where it's the last assessment that was done, the terminal year for the previous one.

As opposed to having a set date for when the next stock assessment, or the data that would be available through this, we have that data providers should provide all available final datasets sufficient for use in stock assessment for the year prior to the assessment, and that gives a little bit of flexibility, trying to make sure all that data is being provided to the analysts, and we don't have to come back to the council and say, hey, you had 2024 in there, and it's not going to happen until 2026, and can we add 2025, and this adds the flexibility in there.

Some of the requested updates from the SSC were to review any new and updated information to determine if modifications exist, and looking at life history and natural mortality, stock productivity and steepness, and discard mortality, and there was a lot of information, or a lot of discussion, at the March meeting about discard mortality by depth, and Mike went over that at this meeting as well, and then does the SSC think a data workshop is needed, or a topical working group, and the SSC didn't know at this time period.

There might be more information that's available for black sea bass, and they weren't comfortable giving an answer for that, and I'm not sure if the council would be any more comfortable giving an answer for it, given that that's going to be two years down the line, and things seem to be changing pretty quickly for a lot of these species.

Then we also have some potential modifications, and one of them is to incorporate length composition from the SERFS video survey, if feasible, and we're hoping that this is going to be a feasible item that would be able to be incorporated into stock assessments, and incorporate the catch level projections working group recommendations, and this was a recommendation from I think 2022, from the SSC, on several projection methods that would be useful as they evaluate a stock assessment.

There is some new estimates of natural mortality that could be considered for black sea bass, and we have a list of those papers, and also consider new ones as well, and then explore the disconnect between high estimated recreational landings, despite low abundance of older age classes, looking

at that F, and so maybe things are going to be more consistent in 2026, and we're not certain, but just look at these different things.

Calculate different F metrics and then check on sensitivity analyses to address the SSC concerns with selectivity difference between chevron traps and cameras, to create the combined index of the video and the camera, and there is no fishery-dependent indices in the later part of the time series, and that likely affected catchability, and so they wanted some comparison in there, and then investigate the range shift of black sea bass, and potential causes of it, such as climate change.

There was a report, at the recent SSC meeting, that talked quite a bit about climate change and looking at some of the reasons for low recruitment, and they also listed that in this as well, and so hopefully that work will continue, and maybe there's an answer that could be available for that, and so, with that, those are just items that we had in there.

Given that we are going to be talking SEDAR quite a bit at the September meeting, and there's a lot of process change that might occur, I was just getting my ducks in a row, to know what I might need to provide to the Science Center for 2026. It's not clear if we should be providing statements of work for that, but I wanted to have something that could be provided in a quick fashion, if needed, and so this is me preparing for that. If there are additional items that we need to include in the statement of work, that you would like to include for black sea bass, please let me know, and we can add those into this one as well.

DR. BELCHER: I am thinking -- For me, I think, yes, this statement of work for black sea bass is a good way to go, and the only reason is I know the idea of an interim is appealing, but this is a stock that we know the trajectory is down, because of issues that aren't necessarily fishery related, and so we don't know really what that means, any more than we would in the situation where we have a fishery that has issues, but it's not being affected on the recruitment side of it, and so my gut leans more towards I think the assessment is really the tool that we need for this, just to make sure we're covering all of our bases, but I would like to hear other people's comments. I've got Jessica and then John.

MS. MCCAWLEY: So you're thinking that like a topical working group would look at regime shifts, and is that what you're saying, or you're saying that the topical working group would look at what's going on with recruitment?

DR. BELCHER: I was actually not talking to the topical, and I was talking more to the ideas that Chip was saying moving forward, if you were to try to go with an interim approach versus a stock assessment, and I know -- Like I said, the reactivity of an interim sounds appealing, because it's quicker, but I just think, because of the unknowns that we have, because of this potential with the recruitment issues, that I don't know how we would move forward with that information, and so Chip and then John.

DR. COLLIER: Just to build on that a little bit more, at the last SSC meeting, there was indication that it would be just as easy to do an update to the assessment as it would to do an interim analysis.

DR. BELCHER: Fair enough. John.

MR. CARMICHAEL: That was one thing that I was going to ask Chip to clarify, because I remember there was a pretty good discussion between the SSC and the analysts on that very point, and so thanks for that. My other question is do you recall that black sea bass was SSB, or was there a fecundity estimate, and I'm just thinking of what Clay said earlier about keeping up with the life history to support fecundity estimates down the road.

DR. COLLIER: I think -- They actually looked at several metrics for this, and I believe they came out indicating that the SSB was going to be the best one.

MR. CARMICHAEL: Because I'm sort of thinking, given what Clay said, and, you know, I guess I'm a little sensitive to, you know, the reality of supporting things down the road, and it would seem like, you know, we shouldn't be making promises that we're not going to be able to keep up with, knowing the resource limitations, that the Science Center can't keep up with fecundity for these stocks, and it's unlikely that anybody else can really pick that up, and so I'm a little late to the game, and I was asking, on SEDAR 76, if black sea bass was using fecundity, and this would be the time to say, look, we need to consider backing off from that.

We just approved 90, but I did notice that 90 has a question about looking at fecundity versus SSB, and so I don't think it needs to change the terms of reference, but I do think that part of that should consider also considering the ability to support -- If they say fecundity is best, I think they have to be realistic and consider the ability to support fecundity estimates into the future. You know, given the realities we're facing within SEDAR, and the talk about simplifying models, I think now, as we get into this, is the time to start getting those people working on these models to really be thinking about simpler approaches, just given the reality that we face.

DR. BELCHER: Clay.

DR. PORCH: That's exactly the discussion we had at the SEDAR workshop. It's definitely going to be challenging to keep up a number of data streams, as time goes on, because we also are suffering with relatively flat budgets, which, in an economy where the inflation rate is averaging between 2 and 8 percent, that means a declining budget. You know, buying power is going down, and so that is a real issue, and that's one of the reasons that we do want to simplify some of these models, especially where it's not clear that you're gaining a lot by adding the complexity.

The other comment I wanted to make is I think there's some confusion, and the interim analysis is actually much faster than conducting an update, if you're talking about the interim analysis in the sense that you use an index to adjust the catch, to adjust the index, and so the index goes up 50 percent, and the catch gets adjusted by some percentage close to that, and that's a relatively fast thing. The question is whether the index is really representative of the fishable biomass, and so that's a discussion that has to be had with the SSC, if they're comfortable using that sort of approach, but, otherwise, it's a much simpler approach, and much faster.

DR. BELCHER: I guess the question comes back to the topical working group. My question would be, based on the SSC saying that they thought that maybe an update could be done, and that kind of negates the need for a topical working group, without saying that, because, I mean, that doesn't mean that you have to revisit anything, right, which the topical is to kind of help revisit, or discuss, some options.

DR. COLLIER: Yes, and, I mean, maybe we just hold off a little bit on saying a topical working group is needed for this, because, you know, it's hard to say, two years down the line, for a species that we don't even have projections from the last assessment, and we do have some projections, but we're just asking for additional ones, and so it's hard to predict what's going to be going on in the fishery, and how to address it, but, I mean, there's a list of items here, but it looks like a lot of these could be handled by the analysts without a topical working group, and I don't see necessarily that we need a bunch of experts to get together to have the stock assessment analysts consider different natural mortality rates, and they can look at those. I mean, a lot of these are fairly typical for them to really either provide sensitivities or just do in-house.

DR. BELCHER: Does anyone else have any comments or suggestions for the statement of work? Okay. Are you good with what we have then, Chip? Okay. The last agenda item, with a few parts, and I know it's kind of like back to school, with one question and twenty-five subparts, but Agency Reports, starting with the Southeast Regional Office, and we have an update on the status of the permits system from Andy.

MR. CARMICHAEL: Carolyn, just quick, before that?

DR. BELCHER: Sure, John.

MR. CARMICHAEL: Just I do want to correct something that I said earlier. We have through Calendar Year 2027 for spending IRA funds. It's through Fiscal Year 2026 for NMFS, and we have through 2027, and not 2026, and so I inadvertently cut a year off in that earlier discussion, and I also forgot to add what I was going to say in there as well, that the council budgets have been flat.

If you were to look at the CCC budget reports, it appears that, you know, the NMFS budget has been increasing, but, as Clay has pointed out, and I think Andy said this before, and, increasingly, those funds are going toward earmarked projects, where they're passthroughs for the agency, things like, you know, the red snapper count, and the red snapper count in the Atlantic and the Gulf, and I expect that IRA funds will look like a pretty good bump for a while, but a lot of that is passthrough, and earmarked for doing things, and it's temporary. The reality is the core operating funds of the regions, and the science centers, is much like the core operating funds of the councils, where they're also flat too, and so just kind of don't be misled by that, because that is a pretty important point as well.

DR. BELCHER: Thanks for the clarification, John. Andy.

MR. STRELCHECK: John, I appreciate you acknowledging that, because, unfortunately, we're in the same sinking boat that the councils are in, and we're getting also additional priorities from the administration that we have to work toward.

I will keep my update on the permits system brief. You heard me, a little bit earlier this week, talk about it, and so, just as a refresher, we have put together this core team of IT developers, system experts, people from my catch shares team, the Science Center, and they've made significant progress, and they were getting ready to kind of test the fix, right, and, unfortunately, they discovered another challenge, where kind of data on the backend of the system -- About 10 percent

of the records were being merged together, even though they should have been unique IDs, right, and so they should have been unique records that were separated and kept apart.

We're still going through kind of the root cause analysis of what's causing that, what coding changes need to be made, and I am optimistic that, once we can solve that, figure that out, then we'll be able to get back to the testing, to see if we have kind of corrected the things on the backend, to be able to then correctly kind of interpret the data, have it housed in the database correctly, and move forward, obviously, with restoring the informational needs that we need to, you know, pull that data from the system for use in management plans and other activities.

I did want to assure the council that, on the frontend of the system, everything is working fine, and we do know that we're collecting all the data correctly, but it's just a matter of kind of how it's ultimately getting stored and put together on the backend, but we are, obviously, still optimistic that we are going to be able to fix that, and resolve the issues on the backend, and so, unfortunately, I don't have an ETA, in terms of when this is going to be fixed, but we'll certainly inform John, and the council, as soon as we do have a fix, because I know it is affecting potentially some of the actions before this council, as well as some of the things that have been submitted to the agency for review and approval. Any questions?

DR. BELCHER: Questions for Andy? Okay. Seeing none, thanks, Andy, for the update. Next was supposed to be an update on disaster relief changes, but Mike Travis had to drop-out for this afternoon, and we'll hear from him in September, and so that will just be moved to the next meeting. Next is an update on protected resources. Jennifer Lee, were you prepared to give an update?

MS. LEE: Hi. Yes, and you have a briefing in your materials. There really wasn't a lot new to share with you. Highlights were -- Give me one sec to pull this up. The only really new items were queen conch recovery workshops. We held these in the in the Caribbean, but also one in your area, in Fort Lauderdale, Florida, and that's just looking at queen conch. They were recently listed as threatened, and we're looking at what should be considered with respect to recovery, and so we had some workshops to get some stakeholder input.

We did have an oceanic whitetip shark proposed 4(d) rule, and this is the case where, when a species is listed as threatened, it doesn't automatically have all the same protections and take prohibitions, and so that's a proposed rule that's out right now, which would go ahead and apply ESA Section 9 prohibitions, with limited exceptions for scientific research and law enforcement activities, and so you can check that out if you want to.

Other than that, our pillar coral uplisting proposed rule, and that's no change there, and then the same thing with our designated marine critical habitat for the six DPSs of green turtles that you had a pre-statement on before, and we're still not out with a decision. We are working on some consultations, and you heard, in your Shrimp Committee, about, obviously, the shrimp reinitiation, and you also heard about our smalltooth sawfish mortality event.

We are working on the Dolphin Wahoo FMP consultation, as well as a snapper grouper consultation, and we think we might have some drafts by the end of the summer, maybe, and so maybe, at the next meeting, I'll have more to share.

For marine mammals, the final rule to modify the North Atlantic right whale vessel speed regulations is now with the White House Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs, and so, because that's in OMB, at this point, we can't share anything about that, and it's still a deliberative process, and there's just an update on the North Atlantic right whale unusual mortality event, just keeping track of numbers, and you can look at our website for information.

The Atlantic Large Whale Take Reduction Team did have a webinar, and, again, there's a link in the briefing, if you want more information, and then, for the bottlenose dolphin take reduction plan, they had a webinar that was postponed until fall, and they're working on some team membership updates, and that's really all I had in there. Thank you.

DR. BELCHER: Thank you, Jennifer. Laurilee.

MS. THOMPSON: Terrestrial habitat for juvenile green sea turtles?

MS. LEE: I think that's just there were proposed rules for green sea turtles. Our agency has one dealing with the marine environment, and the Fish and Wildlife Service has one for their jurisdiction.

MS. THOMPSON: But what would terrestrial critical habitat for green sea turtles be?

MS. LEE: Let me look. It's generally designated critical habitat, and I'm scrolling up to see, but maybe there is some funny typo there.

DR. COLLIER: Would that be the beach for nesting?

MS. LEE: Generally like we're looking in our jurisdiction, and then Fish and Wildlife Service is looking at nesting beaches.

MS. THOMPSON: So that would be like at the Archie Carr National Wildlife Refuge and places like that, where the green sea turtles are nesting?

MS. LEE: I can share a copy with you of the Fish and Wildlife Service rule, and I'm sorry that I'm not as familiar with it as ours.

MS. THOMPSON: Okay. Thank you. I was just curious.

DR. BELCHER: Any other questions for Jennifer? Rick.

MR. DEVICTOR: Myra asked that I update the council on the commercial e-logbook amendment, and I know that was on a version of the agenda, and it got lost a little bit, and so I just want to update the council about that. If you recall, this is the commercial e-logbook amendment, and this would implement electronic reporting for commercial vessels in snapper grouper, dolphin wahoo, CMP, and reef fish in the South Atlantic and the Gulf of Mexico. You all finalized this at your September 2023 meeting, and then you submitted it to NMFS for implementation in February of 2024.

As we normally do, we go through notice of availability, since it's an amendment to FMPs, and we're going to do rulemaking, proposed and final, but this one has additional steps to it. There's a few things that we need to do first, such as PRA, like we did the SEFHIER program, and we have to do Paperwork Reduction Act on this, and so that's going to take some time. The Science Center is taking the lead on that, but we're working very closely with them to work on PRA.

The permits issues that we're looking at right now, that's going to also need to be worked on too, before we can move forward with the rulemaking on that, and so that's going to take some time also, and technical specifications, just like with SEFHIER, that needs to be worked on, and a database by the Science Center, to store the reports, and so I just wanted to highlight that for you all, since you submitted that in February, and this is going to take some time for NMFS to work on, and we're working very closely with NOAA GC and the Science Center on this amendment, and so stay tuned, and I can report more at future meetings.

DR. BELCHER: Any questions for Rick? Okay. Seeing none, thank you, Rick. The last item for today is from the Southeast Fisheries Science Center, a report, which is the headboat program annual report, and it says Rob Cheshire is going to be giving the report, and is it going to be Ken or Rob?

MR. BRENNAN: It will be Ken. Can you hear me?

DR. COLLIER: Yes, we can.

MR. BRENNAN: Okay. Great. Good evening. I'm Ken Brennan, with the Southeast Fisheries Science Center. I'm the Branch Chief of the Recreational Fisheries Monitoring Branch, which includes the Southeast Region Headboat Survey. I know you've all had an extremely long day, and I have the unenviable task of going last, but I will get through this quickly.

I would like to present the Southeast Region Headboat Survey 2023 South Atlantic annual report today, and just some history about what led to this report. In the late 1990s, until 2003, the Beaufort Laboratory's reef fish life history team provided a trends report to the South Atlantic Council on the trends in catch for fifteen important species in the Southeast. The purpose was to provide a snapshot of where catches were going and to give the council a perspective over time for these species. Since the headboat survey data is a very important data source used for stock assessments and management, in 2017, we thought that it would be useful to revive this report to show recent trends in the headboat fishery in the Southeast region.

The report is meant not only to inform councils and data users, but we also wanted the headboat survey participants to be able to see how their data is used and what trends are for various species in the region, in their region, and so I would like to acknowledge Rob Cheshire and the other authors for preparing the report. Many thanks to them, and I would especially like to thank all the captains and port agents that provided and collected the data. This report wouldn't be possible without them, and, also, the report includes the most recent estimates, up to 2023.

The structure of the report includes the introduction, which has a brief history of the survey, and also a section on any events that may have impacted the headboat fisheries, such as COVID or storms. The data collection section of the report outlines the survey design, sampling protocols, and any changes that occurred to the headboat survey, such as electronic reporting and other

significant events. There are summary tables on landings, effort, dockside sampling, discards, and catch per unit effort information. There is also a section describing the economic data that we collect. In addition, the majority of the report consists of a one-page summary for sixty-three individual species.

On each species page, you will see tables on landings and discards for the past ten years. Here's an example of spottail pinfish. There are tables that summarize the number of samples by state, the number of positive trips that caught or discarded that species, and CPUE for the entire series, time series, for that species. Here's a look at the single page with all the information that I just mentioned for that species. We tried to keep it concise, so we could cover more species, and this was at the council request with the initial report. Finally, the next annual report will be released following the completion of the 2024 landings and effort estimates, and, with that, I would be happy to take some questions.

DR. BELCHER: Thanks, Ken. Anybody have any questions for Ken on the report? John.

MR. CARMICHAEL: Ken, I really want to thank you for you guys doing this report. I know it's something that we talked about, and I know we talked about it with like Erik and you, and your staff, about doing this, and I think it's really helpful, and I want to say, in particular, you know, sometimes it's thought that doing reports like this comes down to just being like a bit of busywork, but, you know, the reality is, to the fishermen, it's not that way at all, and, in fact, I recently had some conversations with Jimmy Hull about trying to access information, and I said, well, everything you want is on the MRIP query page, and he's like, you know, I'm fairly computer savvy, John, but I can't, you know, make head nor tails of that, and so, you know, it really brings it home, that those various tools that those of us that do this every day take for granted are often not accessible to our fishermen.

In that situation, Jimmy was going out to talk to a group, and, really, when you get right down to it, doing some outreach for us, you know, because he's very good at spreading the truth to fishermen, and he's one of those very trusted resources, and so, you know, these are really valuable, and I truly appreciate the effort that you guys have put into this, and there's some really interesting findings there. You really do -- I think it achieves the goal that we talked about years ago, that you can really go through there at a glance and see the state of various species within this, and, you know, we do consider this a pretty reliable source.

You know, it's not an independent survey, but, considering the big coverage, and the long time series, and the fact that, you know, these are professional fishermen that are identifying these fish, and there's observer coverage to go with it to validate it, that this is a pretty good indicator of what things are going on within the fishery, and so I just wanted to thank you for that. I've got one last thing to say before we turn Ken loose, but I will see if anybody else has questions.

DR. BELCHER: Anyone else have questions or comments for Ken?

MR. BRENNAN: John, can I say something?

MR. CARMICHAEL: Yes, Ken.

MR. BRENNAN: I would like to close by saying the headboat survey has had a long and productive history with the South Atlantic Council, for over forty years, and I'm -- I've been proud to have been part of that collaboration for twenty-five years, and I plan to retire next month, and I wanted to thank the council and staff that I've worked with over the years, several of whom I've worked with for most of my career, like John Carmichael, Chip Collier, Kim Iverson, Myra Brouwer, Julia Byrd, Amy Dukes, and Trish Murphey, to name a few. I wanted to thank them.

I've been very fortunate to have had the support of the Southeast Fisheries Science Center and the Southeast Regional Office leadership, while overseeing the survey since 2006. In recent years, Clay Porch, Andy Strelcheck, John Walter, Lisa Desfosse, Dave Gloeckner, and Jack McGovern have all supported the survey, and myself, through many challenges.

I also wanted to acknowledge my gratitude to past mentors and supervisors Jean Huntsman, Chuck Manooch, Bob Dixon, Pete Parker, Erik Williams, and Todd Kellison. They all had a role in establishing the survey and helping me maintain its integrity and value, and, finally, I would especially like to thank all the headboat captains and port agents that provided and collected the data. It's their contributions that ultimately make the Southeast Region Headboat Survey the valuable data collection program it is. Thank you, and I will sign-off by saying I hope I've done my part to maintain the legacy of the program. I believe, with your continued support, it will provide the council the information it needs to make informed decisions for many years to come, and so thank you all.

MR. CARMICHAEL: Ken, thank you, and I kind of told Carolyn that I wanted to come back to this, because I had heard the rumors of your retirement, and I wanted to be sure to thank you for all that you have done. You know, I got to know Ken -- We worked together at DMF back around, I don't, 1998, or 1999, sometime in there, and we've had a good time keeping up, through SEDARs over the years, and we were near enough to be neighbors, back when I lived downeast in North Carolina, which was really good, and, you know, Ken, while you may not quite be the character of Huntsman and Dixon, I think you've done the program certainly in your time, and we are truly going to miss you, and all that you've done for this, and we certainly wish you the best in retirement.

MR. BRENNAN: Thank you. Thank you very much, John. It's been a pleasure.

DR. BELCHER: Clay.

DR. PORCH: Many of you may not know that not only is he the coordinator of our Southeast Region Headboat Survey, but he also stepped up to become the chief of our Recreational Monitoring Branch, and so he's been a huge part of what we are, a huge part of expanding our engagement with the recreational fishery, and he's going to be very difficult to replace, and I know he's been working with the staff, to transfer all the vast knowledge that he has accumulated, but you can't easily replace a Ken Brennan, and so we're all going to miss him very much, and he's also leaving me as one of the oldest people left in the center, and so --

DR. BELCHER: Any other questions or comments for Ken? John.

MR. CARMICHAEL: Ken, don't forget that we often have openings on various APs, and so don't be shy.

MR. BRENNAN: Okay. Thank you. I will take a few months and think about that one.

DR. BELCHER: Thanks again, Ken, for what you did today and for all you've done previously.

MR. BRENNAN: Thank you.

DR. BELCHER: Okay, folks, and so that gets us back on track, relative to tomorrow and tomorrow's agenda. I am, again, because we have folks that have to get a flight out tomorrow, request that again that we start at eight o'clock tomorrow morning, and we will be finishing up with committee reports, going over the workplan, and we have one other piece of business, which is related to the Florida Keys National Sanctuary, and that will get us through the day tomorrow, and so, again, eight o'clock tomorrow morning. I appreciate everybody's patience with staying later today.

(Whereupon, the meeting recessed on June 13, 2024.)

- - -

JUNE 14, 2024

FRIDAY MORNING SESSION

- - -

The Full Council Session I of the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council reconvened at The Shores Resort & Spa, Daytona Beach Shores, Florida, on Friday, June 14, 2024, and was called to order by Chairman Carolyn Belcher.

DR. BELCHER: Okay, folks. We're going to go ahead and get started into our final day of the June council meeting. We will be doing committee reports this morning, finishing up with the workplan, and discussing an additional piece of Other Business, and so we'll be starting out with the report-out from the Full Council closed session.

The council met in closed session on Monday, June 10, 2024 and discussed the following items. We received a legal briefing from Monica Smit-Brunello. We reviewed applications, and recommendations, for appointment for the filling the SC DNR designee on the recreational permitting advisory panel. We also reviewed applicants for open seats on the SEDAR Pool, Scientific and Statistical Committee, and various advisory panels, and we provided recommendations for new appointments and reappointments, which we will go through the motions that are associated with those at the end of the report.

We reviewed the draft structure and timing for appointments and discussed the charge to the new advisory panel, and we provided guidance to staff on some of the nuances of the revised structure, and we revised the charge for the AP, to be that the for-hire reporting AP is tasked with providing stakeholder insight on improving the Southeast For-Hire Integrated Electronic Reporting for the charter and headboat components of the federal recreational snapper grouper, dolphin wahoo, and

coastal migratory pelagic fisheries, particularly improving compliance with existing requirements, and the modification that we added was “and any potential new requirements”.

The AP should consider lessons learned from self-reporting programs and discuss strategies that would enhance timeliness, accuracy, and quality of the data for SEFHIER. The AP should also consider ways to balance data and compliance needs with reporting burdens associated with any recommendations that are put forward, and so, again, that was the modified charge.

We discussed the 2023 Law Enforcement Officer of the Year Award, which will be presented in September. We also went through the list of participants and observers for SEDAR 90, which is the South Atlantic red snapper, and SEDAR 94, which is the east coast Florida hogfish, and then we will go into the draft motions. I’m going to need folks to make these, as these were the recommendations from our discussions.

Relative to the Recreational Permitting and Reporting Technical Advisory Panel, we have a motion to appoint Elizabeth Gooding to the Recreational Permitting and Reporting Technical AP. Do I have someone willing to make that motion? Amy. Anyone willing to second that motion? Laurilee. Any further discussion on this motion? **Any objection to this motion?** Okay. **That motion carries.**

For the Scientific and Statistical Committee, we have a motion to reappoint Anne Markwith, Chris Dumas, Kai Lorenzen, Fred Serchuk, Alexei Sharov, and Jennifer Sweeney-Tookes to the SSC. Do I have anybody willing to make that motion? Kerry. Second? Jessica. Any further discussion? **Any objection? That motion carries.**

Relative to the SEDAR Pool, motion to appoint Chad Englert, Eric Finn, Brice Semmens, and Bob Zales, II to the SEDAR Pool. Do I have anybody willing to make that motion? Kerry. Second? Jessica. Any further discussion? **Any objection? That motion carries.**

Going into the general advisory panels, we had Habitat and Ecosystem AP appointments, and the motion that came out of that discussion was to appoint Erin Spencer to the Habitat and Ecosystem AP. Do I have anybody willing to make that motion? Trish. It’s seconded by Laurilee. Is there further discussion? **Any objection? That motion carries.**

Next was the Law Enforcement AP, and the motion is to reappoint Alana Harrison and Kevin Roberson to the Law Enforcement AP. Do I have anybody willing to make that motion? Spud. Do I have a second? Judy. Any further discussion? **Any objection? That motion carries.**

Next was the Mackerel Cobia AP, and we had a motion to reappoint Anthony Benevento and Charles Griffin to the Mackerel Cobia AP. Tom is making the motion. Do I have a second? Spud. Any further discussion? **Any objection? That motion carries.**

Also under Mackerel Cobia, we have a motion to appoint Alana Harrison, Jot Owens, and Robert Waddick to the Mackerel Cobia AP. Tom makes the motion. Do I have a second? Spud. Further discussion? **Any objection? That motion carries.**

Additionally, replace Charles Proudfoot with William Weeks on the Mackerel Cobia AP. Do I have anyone for that motion? Spud. It's seconded by Tom. Is there further discussion? **Any objection? That motion carries.**

Next, we talked about the Shrimp AP and Deepwater Shrimp AP, and we had a motion to appoint Laurilee Thompson to the Shrimp AP and Deepwater Shrimp AP, with term starting August 12 of 2024. Do I have someone willing to make that motion? Judy. It's seconded by Kerry. Any further discussion? **Any objection? That motion carries.**

The Shrimp AP, we have a motion to appoint Bob Zales, II to the Shrimp AP. Do we have a supporter for that motion? Laurilee. It's seconded by Spud. Any further discussion? **Any objection? That motion carries.**

Snapper Grouper AP, a motion to reappoint James Paskiewicz to the Snapper Grouper AP. Do I have someone to support that motion? Jessica. Do I have a seconder? Kerry. Any further discussion? **Any objection? That motion carries.**

Next, a motion to appoint Scott Buff, Stephen Ranney, and Haley Stephens to the Snapper Grouper AP. Do I have someone willing to make that motion? Amy. It's seconded by Kerry. Is there further discussion? **Any objection? That motion carries.**

I have a motion to replace Selby Lewis with Paul Rudershausen and Randy Beardsley with David Moss on the Snapper Grouper AP. Remove Scott Amick from the Snapper Grouper AP and advertise an open seat in Georgia to be filled in September. Do I have someone for that motion? Tom. It's seconded by Kerry. Is there further discussion? **Any objection? Okay. That motion carries.** Law Enforcement Officer of the Year, this one will actually be announced in September, and I wanted to make sure that I didn't let the cat out of the box, Amy.

MR. CARMICHAEL: I think you just did.

DR. BELCHER: No, we didn't.

MR. CARMICHAEL: It's right there.

DR. BELCHER: Oh. Sorry. Okay. **Moving on, SEDAR 90 and SEDAR 94 participants and observers, we have a motion to approve participants and observers from SEDAR 90, listed in Table 1, which is partly on the screen there, if folks want to look at that as Chip scrolls up. Funds will be used to reimburse travel and per diem for participants and observers that exceed the requested number from SEDAR.** Okay, and so a motion to approve that list. Do I have someone to support that motion? Kerry. Do I have a second? Laurilee. Any further discussion on the list? **Any objection? Okay. Then our appointments stand as listed there in the table.**

Then we have a recommendation, and I guess that's part of that motion. Chip, can you help me with that? That was 90. **Okay, and so then there's a recommendation that says to approve participants and observers for SEDAR 94 listed in Table 2, and so that will be restructured in the form of a motion to approve participants and observers for SEDAR 94, listed in the**

second table. Do I have a supporter for that? Trish. A seconder? Kerry. Any further discussion? **Any objection?** Okay. **Then that list of participants stands as well.**

We then provided the following direction to staff to develop a document for the September 2024 meeting to consider combining the Shrimp Advisory Panel and Deepwater Shrimp Advisory Panel and adding new seats for Virginia and Maryland. Membership changes would be considered at the December 2024 meeting. We are going to review the Law Enforcement Officer of the Year nomination and award process during the December 2024 council meeting. Advertise an open seat for a Georgia representative on the Snapper Grouper AP, to be filled during the September 2024 meeting. Send notification letters to appointees and email notifications to those not selected by June 28, 2024. Conduct an orientation of new AP members before the September 2024 council meeting. Publicly advertise for the For-Hire Reporting AP, with the intention to appoint AP members at the September 2024 council meeting. Engage state representatives, existing AP members, and other fishery management councils, where appropriate, to help identify potential candidates for the AP. That is all I had from the closed session.

MR. CARMICHAEL: Can you go back to the law enforcement and go ahead and make that motion, since it's out there?

DR. BELCHER: Okay. **Circling back to the Law Enforcement Officer of the Year, I have the following motion, to recommend Staff Sergeant Ladue and Game Warden Barnard as the Law Enforcement Officers of the Year.** Do I have a motion for that? Amy. Do I have a second? Spud. Any further discussion? **Any objection?** Okay. **Seeing none, that motion also passes.** Apologies for that little snaggle there. Okay, and so that ends our report from closed session. Laurilee.

MS. THOMPSON: I want to clarify -- If you could go back to the -- If you could scroll back up, Chip, please. Thank you. In the direction to staff, for the shrimp APs, the adding new seats for Virginia and Maryland, I had some discussion with the two Shrimp AP members that happened to be here, and they would like to make sure that these are liaisons, and not full voting members, because their fishery is different, and it's a different location, and they weren't comfortable with the two new seats being full voting member seats.

DR. BELCHER: Go ahead, John.

MR. CARMICHAEL: Laurilee and I talked about that, and I think that's reasonable, and, you know, you consider that that area isn't part of our fishery management unit at this time, but, you know, to be aware of shifts in the fishery that are potentially happening, and developing, and we want to get them on there, and so my thought is, you know, if we got to a point where we felt the need to expand the fishery management unit, then we would create seats there, and, in fact, we may create, you know, more seats, or cover other aspects of the industry, to make sure we get that, and we would also be considering say expanding our committee and all of that, and so I see that as being the next step, and so I think it is good to have them there, but as liaisons is good as well, because it gives those jurisdictions a little more flexibility in who they recommend from their area for the liaison position.

DR. BELCHER: Any other clarification points? Sonny.

MR. GWIN: Thank you, Madam Chair, and I agree with that, being the new shrimp fishery up there is so small, and it's just evolving, and, you know, get some APs from up there to come into the meetings and learn, and see how it goes, because, you know, we don't know what the future of it is going to be, and we appreciate it. Thank you.

DR. BELCHER: Thank you for that info too, Sonny. Okay. Any other discussion before we move on to the Full Council report for the first session? Okay. Going into our open session of council, we received reports from agency representatives, both from NOAA Office of Law Enforcement and Coast Guard, as well as the council state representatives.

We went through the best fishing practices and citizen science update, and we moved, from there, into the Southeast For-Hire Integrated Electronic Reporting program improvements. The Atlantic Coast Cooperative Statistics, or ACCSP, has been undertaking a for-hire methodology technological review, with goals that include more fully utilizing for-hire logbooks in MRIP catch statistics in setting specifications allow Atlantic coast logbook programs to adopt MRIP-certified design requirements. Geoff White provided an overview of the effort. Council staff then reviewed information gathered to address council requests from the March 2024 meeting, as well as options to potentially improve the SEFHIER program to obtain higher compliance with reporting requirements. The council approved the following motions.

Motion 1 was to start a SEFHIER improvement amendment considering the ACCSP for-hire methodology technical review, as information becomes available, with a focus on incorporating actions that can be taken in the near-term without an amendment, including additional outreach. Consider actions and alternatives being considered by the Gulf Council. Consider actions to modify reporting frequency, such as hail-in and hail-out, landing locations, no fishing reports, and validation surveys, and that motion was approved by us during that session.

We then had the dolphin management strategy evaluation update, and we're looking at an expected completion in the summer or fall of 2025 on the MSE. We considered limited entry in the South Atlantic for-hire fisheries, and SERO staff provided the summary of comments received on the requested control dates of December 5, 2023 and December 8, 2023, and council staff then provided an overview of a discussion document addressing guidance and requests from the March 2024 council meeting and presenting possible options for a moratorium on for-hire permits as well as elements of a limited-access program. Chip.

DR. COLLIER: I know the two dates in there are December 5, 2023 and December 8, 2023, and I believe that first one should be 2016, and is that correct, or is it both in December?

DR. BELCHER: Andy.

MR. STRELCHECK: With the control date notice that was passed, December 5 was I think the date we passed that control date recommendation, but the December 8 was when they had to have logbooks submitted, and so there was actually a multi-step control date.

DR. BELCHER: Okay. John Hadley.

MR. HADLEY: Andy covered it, and I was just noting that it's kind of a two-step control date, as Andy noted. Thank you.

DR. BELCHER: Okay. Thank you for that clarification. NOAA General Counsel reminded the council that a limited-access program needs to address optimum yield. Council members noted that, while it may be useful to refer to the Gulf Council's limited-access programs, it is important to note that the Gulf's fisheries are very different from those in the South Atlantic, and ACLs in the Gulf are often much higher.

The council provided the following guidance and approved one motion, and so direction to staff is postpone further discussion of for-hire limited access until updated for-hire permit data are available. Work on developing a discussion of OY in the context of limiting access in for-hire fisheries and consider on a stock-by-stock basis. Gather information on whether there are ways to take or suspend a for-hire permit for reporting violations if the permit is not limited access. Prepare a discussion to develop the purpose and need of a for-hire limited-access amendment. Continue gathering further discussions and feedback from the appropriate APs.

Our second motion that was made during this session was to postpone further discussion of for-hire limited access until updated for-hire permit data are available. This was approved by the council, with a vote of eight in favor, four opposed, and one absent. Is there anything further that we need to discuss on the report, as published? Andy.

MR. STRELCHECK: Just a couple of questions. With regard to the permit data, and so the council meeting will be mid-September, and I believe you have to advertise it at about a month in advance, correct, and what would be kind of a drop-dead date for us to tell you that we have the permit data, and we're going to be able to analyze it and provide it to you, if that's a go?

MR. CARMICHAEL: Well, I mean, if we're going to put it on as an agenda topic, then, yes, we need it about six weeks before the meeting, and we definitely need to put it in the Federal Register notice that has to be submitted four weeks before the meeting, and so, to really plan for it and fit it in, yes, I would say we need to know at least six weeks before the meeting.

MR. STRELCHECK: All right, and so we'll -- I'll make sure to reach out to you in late July, or the first of August, and discuss that. The other thing that I will add, with regard to the SEFHIER motion, is so the way the wording is, it's that we're going to start an improvement amendment, and then the first bullet says focus on incorporating actions that can be taken without an amendment, right, and so I just want to point out that, if there's not a regulatory requirement, we can certainly incorporate that information into the amendment, but there's no actions for like outreach or things that you would need to do, in terms of a range of actions and alternatives at that stage, and so I think we want to continue to focus on talking about those non-regulatory, or non-amendment, actions that can be incorporated into an amendment, but it wouldn't be a range of actions or alternatives.

DR. BELCHER: John Hadley.

MR. HADLEY: I was just speaking to the point on the permit data and the timing of when the council will review a limited-entry amendment. A little bit of a preview to the next discussion, but, in the workplan, we moved it to December, just because it sounded like there was an interest in sort of a time certain, to allow a little bit more of a time buffer to have that permit information available, to be able to really analyze it in-depth, because I think that's kind of a decision point

that the council -- Or information that the council needs to make a decision, and so just a preview of the next discussion, but that doesn't mean that work stops on the amendment. Staff will continue to work on it, but just a heads-up that, when we talk about the workplan, we did move that to December. Thank you.

DR. BELCHER: Thanks, John. Any other further clarifications or add-ins to the report, as it currently stands? Okay. Seeing none, then I am closing out the business from the Full Council thus far, and next up will be the committee report from the Shrimp Committee, and so Laurilee.

MS. THOMPSON: Okay. The Shrimp and Deepwater Shrimp APs met on April 24 and 25, 2024, in Charleston, South Carolina. The AP Chair, Mike Merrifield, provided a summary of the advisory panel's discussions and recommendations. The committee expressed their appreciation of the AP's in-depth discussions.

When reviewing the AP's discussions on the economic disaster and foreign imports, the committee provided direction to staff to develop a white paper to outline the current economic state of the fishery, possible tariff rate closures, using the sugar and the dairy industry as examples, in support of the southeastern shrimp industry.

For the giant manta ray and smalltooth sawfish ESA Section 7 updates, since the 2021 shrimp opinion was completed, new information for both giant manta ray and smalltooth sawfish and recent take data have triggered a reinitiation of the Section 7 consultation. The council previously received a presentation on this consultation in September of 2023, and Jenny Led provided the committee with an update on the consultation, including updated bycatch estimates and information on the recent smalltooth sawfish mortality event.

The shrimp fishery plan overview, council staff reviewed an FMP overview tool, which provides a short summary of each amendment within the FMP that can be used quickly -- To quickly reference, including a summary for the original plan and eleven amendments. For full plan or amendment details, see the Shrimp FMP page.

The shrimp SAFE report and fishery performance report, council staff reviewed the Stock Assessment and Fishery Evaluation, which is the SAFE report, for white and rock shrimp. Staff noted the additional information, such as fuel prices, that have been added as a request from the APs. Staff asked the committee whether an analysis of trends would be more appropriate on a five-year or ten-year scale, considering the fact that shrimp is an annual crop. The committee discussed a three-year timeline, but decided there was too much variability and then agreed that the five-year timeline was most appropriate for the analysis.

Shrimp Futures Project, DR. Carissa Gervasi provided the committee with an overview of the Shrimp Futures Project. The committee mentioned that, for this project to be successful within the South Atlantic, the states should be involved in the planning process to help bring the relevant fishermen and other partners involved.

DR. BELCHER: Okay. Thank you, Laurilee. Any questions, or follow-up, on the report for Shrimp? Andy.

MR. STRELCHECK: Just a small clarification. In the ESA Section 7 update, Jenny Lee provided updated observed bycatch records, and that's different than estimates. We haven't expanded them out yet, and so the estimates will actually be available later this year.

DR. BELCHER: Thanks for that point of clarification. Anything else that we need to clarify in the document?

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

DR. BELCHER: Okay. Can you repeat that, Andy?

MR. STRELCHECK: Jenny Lee provided observed bycatch records, and those are essentially the observations, rather than the actual expanded estimates.

DR. BELCHER: Okay, and so the next report-out is coming from the Habitat and Ecosystem Committee, which is Trish.

MS. MURPHEY: The committee approved the minutes from the December 2023 meeting and the agenda for this meeting. Stacie Crowe, with South Carolina, delivered the April 2024 Habitat and Ecosystem Advisory Panel report, and there was no discussion. Council staff reviewed a draft annual report meant to address habitat activities during the prior calendar year, as outlined in the habitat blueprint, and asked for feedback on the content of the report. The committee did not comment on the report, due to time constraints. Staff requested that, if the council develops feedback, to send it to staff via email.

Council staff also provided an update on the Coral 10 resubmission process and requested feedback from the council on how the goals and objectives of the Coral FMP are addressed by the proposed action in Coral Amendment 10. The committee reiterated that opening the shrimp fishery access area is an issue that was never meant to take this long to correct and should have been a simple adjustment of the Oculina Coral Habitat Area of Particular Concern boundary. This is a historical shrimp fishing area, and there is no known evidence of the shrimp fishery causing damage to the coral.

The committee debated whether modifying the CHAPC boundary could be done as a separate framework amendment. However, doing so would still require addressing the Coral FMP goals and objectives, which was a highlighted issue for Coral 10 in the rejection letter. NOAA General Counsel reiterate that, no matter what steps the council takes with this amendment, the record has been built, and there are concerns still in existence. The council will need to address the disapproval letter and the Coral FMP goals, whichever direction they choose to take this amendment.

The committee then debated whether this is the correct FMP to reopen an area for the Coral HAPC to rock shrimping. Historically, the shrimp fishery access area has been established in the Coral HAPC through an amendment to the Shrimp FMP. The proposed action would be more appropriate through an amendment to the Shrimp FMP, but, since it could involve modifying the Coral HAPC, it also requires an amendment to the Coral FMP, and so the committee expressed interest in a joint amendment to the Shrimp and Coral FMPs, but noted that this would increase the timeline for development.

Finally, the committee discussed a potential compromise to add a subalternative that would shrink the proposed fishing access area and increase the buffer zone between the access area and the coral, thereby decreasing the dangers of plume sedimentation. All these options have pros and cons and will involve a lengthened timeline.

The direction to staff, at this point, is to bring the discussion of potential options, which include moving forward with Coral 10, adding in an alternative in between no action and the proposed Coral 10 fishing access area, modifying the boundary as framework, or having a joint FMP amendment for Shrimp and Coral, and this is to the Coral 10 IPT, and also to bring feedback listing the pros and cons and timelines to the council in September.

To address the rejection letter and the staff request for verbiage for the Coral 10 resubmission process, the committee listed the following rationale, and so this is to address the -- It's to address the concern about minimizing EFH effects, and the fishing access area width varies between 310 and 700 meters. We need to identify how big the buffer needs to be between active shrimping and the eastern boundary of the Coral HAPC to fully address sediment plume concerns. We also need to identify the strict requirements that are in place for the rock shrimp fishery and the complicated technical knowledge and experience needed to utilize this area.

We also need to highlight that the fishermen use a self-imposed quarter-mile buffer zone to avoid the closed area. This self-imposed buffer will exist no matter where the furthest eastern boundary is, meaning the distance between the active shrimping and the eastern boundary of the Coral HAPC is, in effect, a quarter-mile wider than listed in the amendment. Also include the illustration of area used that was provided by Council Member Laurilee Thompson. Review the fisheries violations of shrimpers to establish that the rock shrimp fishery is not only the council's most heavily-regulated fishery, but also the most responsible.

Also, to address the concerns about bycatch, the IPT is already working on a bycatch practicability analysis, highlight that TEDs and BRDs are required in this fishery, investigate the historical bycatch levels, and use the bycatch images provided by Laurilee. Trawling concerns and potential damage will identify the sedimentation studies, will look into plumes and potential damage, and also research what the furthest distance is that a mud plume can travel, and this will utilize studies conducted in the Gulf.

Council staff provided a general overview of recent predictive modeling work, visual surveys, and geomorphic characterization occurring along the Blake Plateau. There are existing Coral HAPCs for deepwater coral that are adjacent to the Blake Plateau.

Staff requested feedback on whether the council would like to move forward with integrating this new data to review, and possibly modify, the boundaries of existing deepwater Coral HAPCs in the areas. The committee was interested in the discrepancies of the studies and what the potential impacts could be on the boundaries. The committee highlighted that future steps in technology could involve deepwater mining and identifying deepwater Coral HAPCs preemptively would be prudent. This is still of interest to the committee. However, it would take staff time away from other items.

DR. BELCHER: Kerry.

MS. MARHEFKA: Before we -- I realize that it's not a motion, and it's just direction to staff, but I have a question for clarification. If we -- If it comes back in September that the best path forward is to have it be a joint shrimp and coral amendment, or framework, or whatever vehicle it is, because the shrimp part has never been through the NEPA process, are we going to have to start with scoping and go forward through the NEPA process with the shrimp part of the plan? Kathleen is saying yes.

DR. BELCHER: Monica.

MS. SMIT-BRUNELLO: I think we would have to look at that and bring it back to you, but maybe. I mean, the fact is this has already been scoped quite a bit, and I think it would depend on what kind of new alternatives would come out of this, and so I think it's a probably, but let's see what staff brings back.

DR. BELCHER: Kerry, to that, and then Robert. Chip.

DR. COLLIER: I will say, at this meeting, it was mentioned that other topics have been talked about for a decade, and that was reason enough to say that scoping has occurred, and this has been talked about since it was implemented in Coral Amendment 8, and so it seems like it's been scoped quite a bit, talked about quite a bit, and I know this has been highlighted by the Shrimp AP ever since I've come on staff, and so that's been almost a decade now.

MR. SPOTTSWOOD: I'm struggling a little bit with the plume sedimentation issue. In one instance, the direction here is we're saying, hey, bring us some information on what sedimentation could do, or would cause, and, in other, we're saying, you know, go modify the boundaries to avoid it, and I think we're kind of putting the cart before the horse, perhaps, and so, if it's -- You know, if the studies say there's not really any real concerns about plume sedimentation issues, because of new ways they're fishing or other, why are we doing -- Directing staff to look at the boundaries? I feel like they should kind of be tied together, maybe, in some form.

DR. BELCHER: Kathleen.

MS. HOWINGTON: The official motion for the Coral 10, the next step, is to bring those options to the IPT. The reason why all of these are highlighted here are notes of the conversation of if the IPT determines that moving forward with Coral 10, this is the advice that you all gave us to integrate it into the amendment.

Yes, it is a little bit -- The evaluate the plumes and the potential damage they cause, but then, up top, you have discussing what the exact boundary needs to be to make certain to minimize EFH, and so that's ultimately where that sedimentation conversation is going to be, is what damage could occur, how do we avoid it, and then making certain that, in the amendment, it says, because we're this distance away from the coral, we are minimizing damage to EFH, and that is no longer -- That this is no longer a concern, and so that would be the next step, if the IPT determines that moving with Coral 10 is the most efficient way of getting this process completed.

MR. SPOTTSWOOD: Okay. Thank you.

DR. BELCHER: Andy.

MR. STRELCHECK: A clarifying question, maybe for Kathleen, and it says, in the first bullet, “SFAA width varies between 310 and 700 meters”, and I believe that’s 180 and 700 meters, the narrowest of -- The distance from the western boundary to the closest pinnacles is more that range of distances, and is that correct?

MS. HOWINGTON: I will need to double-check my notes, to make certain that I got those numbers correct.

MR. STRELCHECK: Okay. When I referred to those numbers during the committee, I was referring to the distance between the westernmost boundary and the pinnacles, and that was directly coming out of the amendment itself.

MS. HOWINGTON: That was the shrimp fishery access area buffer zone.

MR. STRELCHECK: It was page 68 or 69 of the amendment, and so you can go back and look. The other comment I will make is that -- I don’t see it in here, and I don’t know if I brought it up during the committee, but balancing the goals and objectives of the Coral FMP and the Shrimp FMP -- Obviously, we’re trying to optimize yield in the rock shrimp fishery, and so I think it would be good, obviously, for the economists to come in and bring us some new, updated data with regard to the ex-vessel value of the fishery, how that has changed, kind of pre and post, you know, implementation of this HAPC. Thanks.

MS. HOWINGTON: We did not bring that up during the committee, but it is part of the plan at the IPT, to get updated economic data from John Hadley.

DR. BELCHER: Okay. Any other further discussion at this point? Okay. Trish, if you want to pick back up.

MS. MURPHEY: Am I at direction to staff? Is that where I left off?

DR. BELCHER: Yes.

MS. MURPHEY: Okay, and so direction to staff is to keep modifying the Coral Habitat Area of Potential Concern on the workplan, as a low priority. As far as agenda items for the next Habitat Protection and Ecosystem-Based Management Advisory Panel, the fall meeting, the council staff reviewed a draft list of potential agenda items noted here below to be covered during the fall 2024 meeting, and it includes the EFH five-year review, which will be finalized; tools and partners evaluation for the habitat program; review the progress on the habitat website, as well as on the habitat program communication strategy. If information is available, we’ll discuss space program impacts on habitat.

We’ll also have inclusion of wind energy in the energy policy. We’ll also discuss revision of the alterations to riverine, estuarine, and nearshore flows policy, to address impacts from freshwater discharges and impediments to river flow. We’ll review tide gates, living shorelines, and beneficial use projects and impacts on habitat, the Coastal Virginia Offshore Wind updates, though this is low priority. The Army Corps of Engineers projects for reefs, offshore wind infrastructure

coverage, and artificial reef footprint, and improving the EFH tier structure. I'm just going to note that I really don't see a reason to have Coastal Virginia Offshore Wind on here. I wouldn't even call this a low priority, and I don't see the point, and so that's my two-cents' worth on that. We had a motion to approve the list of agenda items for the October 2024 Habitat and Ecosystem AP committee. It was approved by committee, and so, on behalf of the committee, I so move.

MR. CARMICHAEL: Before you move on behalf of the committee, the council has the right to change the motions, if you wanted to remove that thing. You could do that, and make a new motion, as you modified it here.

DR. BELCHER: So the process would be just to strike from the list the offshore wind for Virginia.

MR. CARMICHAEL: Right, and then you would write a new motion.

DR. BELCHER: Okay.

MS. MURPHEY: If everyone is good with that, and so we've got a new motion, and so would somebody like to make a new motion on the agenda items?

DR. BELCHER: Jessica.

MS. MCCAWLEY: **Approve the list of agenda items for the October 2024 Habitat and Ecosystem AP meeting, as revised.**

DR. BELCHER: I will second that.

MS. MURPHEY: Any discussion? Okay. **Any objection?** Okay. **The motion passes.** Thank you. For Other Business, there is an up and coming movement from the Natural Resource Defense Council to protect the Blake Plateau under a marine monument designation. They recognize the need to protect deepwater coral, and they foresee no impacts on fishing activities. We do have a motion here for timing and tasks, if anybody would like to make that motion. Carolyn.

DR. BELCHER: **I make the following motion to adopt the following timing and tasks: 1)bring the discussion of potential options, and this is a list of moving forward with Coral 10, add in an alternative between no action and the proposed Coral 10 SFAA, modifying the boundary as a framework, or having joint FMP amendment for Shrimp and Coral, to the Coral 10 IPT and bring feedback listing pros, cons, and timelines to the council in September; 2)keep potentially modifying the Coral HAPC on the workplan as a low priority; 3)convene the Habitat and Ecosystem AP in fall 2024 incorporating approved agenda items.**

MS. MURPHEY: Is there a second? Amy. Discussion? I see Laurilee.

MS. THOMPSON: I was seconding.

MS. MURPHEY: Okay. Any discussion? **Any objections?** Okay. **The motion is approved.** That is the end of my report, Madam Chair.

DR. BELCHER: Thank you, Trish. Robert.

MR. SPOTTSWOOD: I just have a question about that last -- The item relating to the Blake Plateau, and is that just -- Was there any action there? Should we be -- Should this council be suggesting, you know, that's what we're here for, and it's kind of our role to look at things like that, and come up with protections, and, you know, the administration side-stepping this, and just going in and doing something without public comment is not something we would be supportive of?

DR. BELCHER: Jessica.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Like in a letter or something? Is that what you're suggesting?

MR. SPOTTSWOOD: Yes, and, I mean, it would upset me to come back, three or four months now, and hear that, okay, we now have this monument that's been created, no public comment or no nothing, and the discussion we had is, you know, really I didn't even understand why it's being discussed, or what the risks are there, and so I don't know what we do about it, but I think that's why we're here, and so, if there are issues, they should be notifying us, and we should be looking at them, and studying them, and seeing if some action is necessary, and not just standing by and letting -- I mean, we can't stop it, but we should at least make our opinions known to the administration.

DR. BELCHER: Okay. I've got John, to that, and then Trish.

MR. CARMICHAEL: So, you know, what is our role in another -- The people who decide to create monuments, creating those monuments, given that, you know, we have authority over fisheries things, and they have authority over other things, and there's the question, and that's kind of the gist of the discussion that the CCC has been trying to have, and we've just had delays in getting people from the, you know, monument creators to come and talk about that, you know, but that's totally an issue.

I mean, I think the council could, at some point, consider do you want to write a letter to them that says we intend -- You know, we expect that we should be consulted, and included, in discussions of creating a monument, so that we can, you know, provide accurate information on how it would impact fisheries.

DR. BELCHER: Robert, to that, Trish, and then Kerry.

MR. SPOTTSWOOD: I guess I would like -- I don't know if it's staff or if we need the council - - I don't know exactly how that works, but I would like to know why. I mean, at least in my brief look at this, you know, monuments seem to make place sense in places where a council doesn't have jurisdiction, something that needs to be protected, but I don't understand why it would be used here, and maybe we should be objecting even more strenuously. Not only do we not want to be included, but this shouldn't be the type of action that is occurring within the South Atlantic region, and I don't know.

DR. BELCHER: Okay. Trish, Kerry, and then Jessica.

MS. MURPHEY: I was wondering if we should reach out to them, either through a letter or just give them a call, and see if they would like to come and present to us and have that discussion.

DR. BELCHER: Kerry.

MS. MARHEFKA: I guess my question is who is them? My understanding, and maybe I don't understand where we're at, but my understanding is where we're at right now is an NGO, NRDC, is sort of starting a campaign to look at the Blake Plateau, and, obviously, NRDC doesn't give a - - I mean, I'm sure they give a flying hoot, but, you know, they're not required to worry about our opinion. I suspect -- I don't know how far along we are in their message getting to the administration, and that's what I wonder. Is it our place to step in, or are we just shining more light on it? I don't know.

DR. BELCHER: Jessica and then Robert and then Spud.

MS. MCCAWLEY: So, to me -- I mean, I appreciate what John brought up, and just kind of a generic letter, but I was thinking it was something more specific, and I presume, but we have this information from -- Luckily, from Spud going to that meeting, but I presume that they would be lobbying the Biden administration, and so it's like, if we want a letter, or we're going to do something, it seems like we need to make those decisions now, because I don't know how far along they'll be, and I feel like a lot of folks are trying to lobby things for the Biden administration right now, and so I don't know that we have time to wait, I guess.

DR. BELCHER: I've got John, to that point, and then Robert and Spud.

MR. CARMICHAEL: So there's an Office of National Marine Sanctuaries, and I think that's who we were trying to get to the CCC. I assume they're the ones that make these, and is that not correct?

MS. MCCAWLEY: No, and monuments are a separate designation, and so sanctuaries have a public input process. It is a separate process, and it's a separate entity, and, in fact, it might even be under Interior and not under Commerce, and so we had looked this up, coming to the meeting, you know, after we heard this information from Spud. I could send some additional information, but, yes, monuments are a separate, a totally separate, entity.

DR. BELCHER: Okay. I've got Robert, Spud, Andy, and John.

MR. SPOTTSWOOD: To the point of shining a light on this is exactly what I think we should be doing, because, in my opinion, this NGO is looking for a path that doesn't require public comment, that doesn't require opportunity for us to object, just to get this through, and that's what I want to stop.

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

MR. SPOTTSWOOD: I know. I just wanted to make sure that everybody else hears it.

DR. BELCHER: Okay. Spud, Andy, John, Trish.

MR. WOODWARD: I had a feeling this might happen, but that was the reason that I brought it up. When I interacted with the NRDC folks on that Zoom call, I stressed to them, urgently, that they needed to reach out to the council, specifically to Kathleen and to Christina, to better understand what the impacts could be and what the council has done. Now, to my knowledge, that has not happened, but I did what I could to say, you know, you all need to understand how you might affect existing and possible future fisheries here, and I got a lot of head-nodding, and, you know, writing down stuff, but I think, if we don't follow-up on this, then this could very easily happen in these last few months of the administration, and then it will be done, and we won't know, you know, and so, anyway, I would suggest that we intervene somehow, whatever that is appropriate to do.

DR. BELCHER: I've got Andy, John, Trish, and Jessica. Andy.

MR. STRELCHECK: A comment and a recommendation. Personally, I, obviously, work for the government, and so I will allow the council to do whatever they want, right, in terms of writing a letter, and I would recommend that you write it to the Secretary of Commerce, and probably include Janet Coit, as Assistant Administrator for Fisheries, as well as Nicole LeBoeuf of the National Ocean Service, on that letter.

I do caution the council here, and I think this is a precedent that you want to be careful about, because the government gets lobbied all the time, right, from all kinds of organizations, and regardless of the administration, right, and so are you going to be jumping into everything you may hear about from an NGO, or something else, in the future? I think just give some thought to that, because you want to be very strategic, and thoughtful, in terms of what you engage in, what you insert yourselves in, but this is certainly not uncommon, to have NGOs, and others, engaging with the government and trying to lobby for certain activities or regulations.

DR. BELCHER: Thanks, Andy. John.

MR. CARMICHAEL: I was just looking at it, to try to think about like what do we do with it, and so creating a precedent, and that creates an interesting situation, and I don't know if we get somebody to talk about it, or, considering what Andy said, if you need to see this play out more, or do we want to write a letter now, and I think Andy answered one of my questions, was who would we write a letter to, and so thanks for that.

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

MS. MURPHEY: I was all for, you know, inviting somebody to discuss it with us, but, you know, I don't know that we -- Maybe we do need to consider what Andy is saying, as far as precedent, but it just seems like we've got to have -- If they're not going to start the conversation with us, then we're going to have to start the conversation with them, and so I'm not sure how best to do it. That was my original thought, was to have them here, but, if there's a concern about precedent, then, you know, I'm willing to go whatever -- However best way to go.

DR. BELCHER: I've got Jessica, Robert, Kerry, and Andy.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. I am going to read from the National Marine Monument designation area. It's designated by presidential proclamation under the Antiquities Act of 1906,

which authorizes the President to establish national monuments on federal lands that contain historic landmarks, historic and prehistoric structures, and other objects of historic or scientific interest. NOAA has no formal role in the establishment of monuments.

I just wanted to go back to what Andy was saying, and I don't think that the letter to Janet is the right place, and I also -- I don't know that engaging that group, and asking them to come here, so we can give them a what-for, and I don't think that that's the right thing to do either, and I think we would just be expressing our concern on this particular issue, and I'm not saying get down in the weeds on every single -- On every issue that groups are coming forward with, but I think that, based on the Biden administration, the 30-by-30, all of the other things that we know are out there, and how this could affect all the things that this council works on, and I think that we should send a letter to someone, and I don't believe it to be the Secretary of Commerce or Janet.

DR. BELCHER: I've got Robert, Kerry, and then Andy.

MR. SPOTTSWOOD: I am curious if this is -- You know, if there's a formal letter from this group to the administration asking for this, and I'm curious if there's anything in writing, and I don't know if this is a public records request, or a FOIA request type of thing, that we need to find out if anything has been sent.

DR. BELCHER: I've still got -- I've got Kerry, and then Andy, and then we're going to come back to John, because I do think that there's -- I have a flag going up about something with lobbying, but Kerry.

MS. MARHEFKA: I just want to express support for Jessica's comment that I don't feel comfortable at all inviting NRDC to come talk about it here, and I feel strongly about that.

DR. BELCHER: Andy.

MR. STRELCHECK: To clarify, the reason I was recommending the Secretary of Commerce and the Fisheries Service and Oceans Service, right, is that, essentially, that's who you are working with on a regular basis, right, and, now, if you're going to send that letter, right, you really want to elevate that above the Department of Commerce, really to the President's office, and others that are going to ultimately make a decision on monuments, and so I still kind of go by my comments, and I think we need to be thoughtful and strategic here, in terms of when you pick and choose to write letters.

This is a little speculative, I feel like, right now, but the other, I think, important thing is, if you do want a presentation, I think, rather than specifically like Blake Plateau, or anything that, you know, someone is lobbying, is just how does the monument-setting process work, right, and what does that mean, how does the government go about actually establishing monuments, and, you know, Jessica read to us, obviously, a little bit about that process, and so it's starting at the President's desk, essentially, but then, thereafter, we have to implement those monuments, right, and so it's not like they just automatically take effect, and there's other things that happen, and so that might be helpful for the council, going forward.

DR. BELCHER: Thanks for that, Andy. I've got John and Robert.

MR. CARMICHAEL: That was going to be, you know, sort of my question, is like are we a little premature here, and I understand the concern, but, if we wrote like a letter to the President, it could easily be seen as lobbying, right, and you interact with elected officials different than interacting with the Secretary, and so I think we would have to look into that, and my thought was like Andy had just said. I think we need to get someone in here to help us better understand this, and what's our appropriate role, and where we can get engaged in this process, and it's a bigger question.

It looks like some of them are done through the National Ocean Service, which is part of NOAA, and, as Andy said, they're involved in implementing, and maybe that's a place we can reach out to, to find someone who could, you know, come in September, and try to explain this process to us, and, in particular, what is our opportunity for comment, and I think this is something that I would add to the planned CCC discussion, is to say, you know, let's not overlook monuments as well in that.

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

MR. SPOTTSWOOD: Andy, I get it, and I understand there's a lot of asks from a lot of groups. The thing that concerns me particularly about this one is the process, and the lack of public comment and ability for us to intervene. If this is moving, I don't know that any of us would know it's moving until we get direction that, hey, you've got to go implement this monument, and then, I think, you know, the cat is out of the bag, and so that's just -- I don't know exactly where it goes, and I agree with John, and I asked the question of does the council need counsel for this, and who advises us on how the appropriate steps are to make that request, or to intervene, however we're going to.

DR. BELCHER: Jessica.

MS. MCCAWLEY: A couple more things, from looking up stuff about monuments, and so it can be -- One of its benefits is that it can be created quickly, since it can be established by presidential proclamation, and it's typically then managed by multiple government agencies, and so some examples are the Mariana Trench, Northeast Canyons and Seamounts, and Pacific Remote Islands, and so I just bring that up to say, yes, I think that other government agencies come in after the proclamation is made, but the key word there being "quickly".

DR. BELCHER: Okay. Further points of discussion? I guess the big thing is just, again, the procedural and to make sure that we stay on the right side of the line. I mean, I do think, like John said, the suggestion about the CCC, and trying to get that discussion there, is going to be helpful, because, obviously, there is seven other councils, and I know, from sitting at the CCC the last couple of years, the West Pacific has been dealing with this, and so I feel like there's discussions out there, but it's just a new thing for us. I would like to keep us, again, on the right side of the line, and I think we definitely need to know what the procedures are. Okay, and so any other further discussion relative to the Habitat and Ecosystem report? Okay. Seeing none, we will move on. Jessica, are you ready for Snapper Grouper?

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. I'm not going to read this word-for-word, and you guys have a copy of the committee report, and so the committee met earlier this week, approved the minutes from the March 2024 meeting and the agenda for the June meeting, and received an update on

exempted fishing permits that have been issued for red snapper discard research projects in Florida, and then we went into red snapper management.

The Southeast Regional Office staff presented the recreational catch estimates for the 2022 and 2023 red snapper season. NOAA Fisheries also announced an interim rule that's finalized to specify 2024 annual catch limits and seasons for red snapper. This interim rule will implement catch levels based on the latest stock assessment for red snapper. SERO estimates recreational catch rates for red snapper annually to determine the season length for the recreational sector. For 2024, NOAA Fisheries determined the red snapper season will be one day, July 12, and NOAA Fisheries has the authority to change the recreational season opening, in the event of a small craft advisory, to address safety-at-sea. The commercial season will open on July 8 and last until the commercial ACL has been met.

Then the committee started looking at other things, like a recently-published study that evaluated potential management strategies for reducing discards of red snapper, and this was the Shertzer et al. paper, and that was presented by Scott Crosson. This study was reviewed by the SSC in April, and the SSC chair presented the SSC's comments and recommendations, and then we also looked at the management strategy evaluation and how the information from Shertzer et al. went into the topics that are going to be looked at in the MSE. The committee also reviewed the MSE workplan and provided guidance on the strategies and how some should be more highly prioritized in the development of the MSE than others.

The committee then went into wreckfish, which is Snapper Grouper Amendment 48, and I'm trying to figure out what all I want to read here. We've been working on this for a long time, and public hearings were held this week, during this council meeting, and staff presented an updated decision document, with draft council rationale for review, and a draft amendment document to consider for formal review. They also provided codified text.

The committee passed the following motions and provided the following direction to staff, and so this is direction to staff here, and this is ensuring that the prelanding notification -- It's modifying this to read that: "The council was advised by the agency that implementing a pre-landing notification would allow for better monitoring, enforcement, and compliance", et cetera there in that language.

The committee then made Motion Number 1 to approve all actions and alternatives in Snapper Grouper Amendment 48, Wreckfish, as modified, and, on behalf of the committee, I so move. Is there any discussion? Kerry.

MS. MARHEFKA: I did do my best to read the codified text, and I have a quick question about that, or is that a separate motion? I forget how we do that.

MS. MCCAWLEY: We could do it in between, after we finish this motion. Any discussion on this motion? Monica.

MS. SMIT-BRUNELLO: It's a roll call vote.

MS. MCCAWLEY: We're not on that motion yet.

MS. SMIT-BRUNELLO: You're not there yet?

MS. MCCAWLEY: No.

MS. SMIT-BRUNELLO: Sorry.

MS. MCCAWLEY: We're still on Motion Number 1. Any more discussion? All right. **Any objection?** All right. I'm going to pass it over to Kerry. We also, Kristen and I, and mostly Kristen, spend time reviewing the codified text, and we sent some questions, comments, and edits to Christina as well, and so do you have other questions, or thoughts, here, Kerry?

MS. MARHEFKA: Just a quick question. At the very beginning, there's a discussion about, you know, sort of the new -- Not the new, but the legal provisions about being a U.S. citizen and having to create the online account and everything, and my question is, for people who are already -- The people that are currently shareholders, are they going to need to go through a process where they -- I don't know if it's a resubmit, or if they've done it before, but proof that they're U.S. citizens, and are the current people going to have to go through the entire system to set up their account?

MS. SMIT-BRUNELLO: I don't believe so, and I think a lot of that information is just taking in the regular fishery permit application, and so it's nothing special that will need to be done.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. Any other questions or comments? All right. We have a draft motion here, and this motion will be a roll call vote, but would someone like to make this motion? Kerry.

MS. MARHEFKA: **I move that we approve Snapper Grouper Amendment 48 (Wreckfish) for formal secretarial review and deem the codified text as necessary and appropriate. Give staff editorial license to make any necessary editorial changes to the document/codified text and give the Council Chair authority to approve the revisions and re-deem the codified text.**

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. We have a motion. Is there a second? It's seconded by Carolyn. All right. Any additional discussion? All right. I'm going to pass it to John.

MR. CARMICHAEL: Thank you, Jessica, and so a roll call vote, beginning with Mr. Borland.

MR. BORLAND: Yes.

MR. CARMICHAEL: Ms. Dukes.

MS. DUKES: Yes.

MR. CARMICHAEL: Mr. Griner.

MR. GRINER: Yes.

MR. CARMICHAEL: Ms. HelmeY.

MS. HELMEY: Yes.

MR. CARMICHAEL: Ms. Marhefka.

MS. MARHEFKA: Yes.

MR. CARMICHAEL: Ms. McCawley.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Yes.

MR. CARMICHAEL: Ms. Murphey.

MS. MURPHEY: Yes.

MR. CARMICHAEL: Mr. Roller.

MR. ROLLER: Yes.

MR. CARMICHAEL: Mr. Spottswood, Jr.

MR. SPOTTSWOOD: Yes.

MR. CARMICHAEL: Mr. Strelcheck.

MR. STRELCHECK: Yes.

MR. CARMICHAEL: Ms. Thompson.

MS. THOMPSON: Yes.

MR. CARMICHAEL: Mr. Woodward.

MR. WOODWARD: Yes.

MR. CARMICHAEL: Dr. Belcher.

DR. BELCHER: Yes.

MR. CARMICHAEL: **The motion passes unanimously.**

MS. MCCAWLEY: Yay. Go, Christina. All right. Back to the committee report. All right. Then the committee went into the gag and black grouper recreational vessel limits and on-demand gear for black sea bass, and this is Regulatory Amendment 36, and there was direction to staff here to revise the purpose and need statements as recommended by the IPT.

The committee then made Motion Number 3, which was to select Alternative 2, the aggregate vessel limit for the private component, and Alternative 3, the aggregate vessel limit for the for-hire component, as the preferred under Action 1. On behalf of the committee, I so move. Any discussion? Any objection?

MR. SPOTTSWOOD: I have discussion.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Okay. Go ahead, Robert.

MR. SPOTTSWOOD: Later on in our discussions, it became apparent to me that the misidentification issue between black and gag was occurring at the fish house, and not at the point of capture, and, based on me understanding that, I object to the aggregate bag limit, just because of the impact that it's going to have on the black grouper fishery.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right, and so are there any other objections? You can just raise your hand. Tom, a question or an objection? A question?

MR. ROLLER: I am supporting Robert in his objection.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. I guess let's do a show of hands of those in favor of the motion. All right, and so does everyone -- Since we had some objections, and people felt like they needed to go on the record to object, let's do some show-of-hands votes on this particular motion, but first more discussion. Robert.

MR. SPOTTSWOOD: Kerry, after we got through this, Chip and I had a different discussion, and I was asking more questions, that I should have asked earlier, but, nonetheless, I learned later that the real misidentification issue between gag and black grouper is happening at fish houses and not at the point of capture, and so my understanding of the need for this was to reduce, you know, catch of gag grouper, because they were being misidentified as black grouper, and, as I understand it, that is not actually the case, and so this action I don't think is appropriate to try to resolve the issue that was presented to us.

MS. MCCAWLEY: I am going to comment on this, but I did see multiple hands going up, and so let me try to explain what we're doing here. We have actually already approved this, in a previous amendment, but there was some confusion between what the committee and council thought we did in that amendment versus the language that was in the codified text.

What we are doing here is we are trying to fix that and go with the council's original intent. Yes, it was partly due to this misidentification, but it was also to do everything we could to make sure that gag was rebuilding, with the intent that we had the black grouper assessment on the horizon, et cetera, and so I can also get into the numbers of what we approved in the previous final action, versus what is happening in this framework, if that helps, but I saw -- So hands were just going up pretty quick, and so I think I saw Tim, Kerry, and I think I saw Amy and Robert, and were there others that I missed? Okay. Tim.

MR. GRINER: Thank you, Madam Chair. Yes, and I disagree that it's a misidentification at the fish house, and I'm looking at my North Carolina trip ticket form right here, and, on the form itself, it lists black and gag/gag on the trip ticket itself, and so it's not a misidentification necessarily, and that's what the actual trip ticket says. It says "black/gag grouper" on the trip ticket, and so you don't have a choice but to choose that.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Okay. That's a problem. Just saying. Amy, and then back to Robert.

MS. DUKES: Thank you, Tim, and, to take that a little bit further, I agree with what Tim's assessment was, is that it's not necessarily a misidentification. I think there were years where fish houses were lumping them together, from an ease, and, basically, it was just easier to report a single fish than separate fish, but, when we to an electronic platform in 2011, or 2012, it was made very clear, from an ACL standpoint, that dealers needed to take the time to separate things out, and we don't accept unclassified, and every species is listed out, at least in South Carolina, and so it is not necessarily as much of an issue now, and it has not been an issue over the last decade or more.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thank you, Amy. Robert, did you want to add here?

MR. SPOTTSWOOD: Amy, I appreciate that, but at least I have not been -- I'm not personally convinced that people can't tell the difference between a black grouper and a gag grouper at the point of capture, and so that kind of eluded me, the entire time to this discussion, and I went along with it, because, you know, in my discussions with our fishermen down south, people are satisfied with two black grouper, and so this isn't necessarily an issue today. What I see is an issue is moving forward and not meeting the ACL and having secondary repercussions of this management strategy, to try to save gag from something that is not actually an issue, as I understand it. Maybe it is, but I don't think we have the data today to tell us that, no, when people are catching gag groupers, they think they're black groupers, and I just don't believe that is really an issue, and so that was why we set down this path, and, if that's not really the case, then that's why I objected.

MS. MCCAWLEY: I just wanted to add a little bit to this, and so our Catch a Florida Memory Program, which is our angler recognition program, and so we also had them kind of go back through the photos that came in, and things that were misidentified, and this was when we were making the education course for the EFP, and, over 50 percent of the time, the pictures that were sent in were misidentification between black and gag, and the public could not tell the difference, and so I think that people that fish frequently in the Keys can, but it seems like, at least in this Catch a Florida Memory program, our evidence is that, more than 50 percent of the time, they are sending in a picture, and it's not the fish that they think it is. Robert.

MR. SPOTTSWOOD: I will also add that those fish have been ice for a long time, and they've been bleached, and it's a different thing in trying to identify a black or a gag in a picture, in an old picture at the dock, versus when you catch them. I mean, when they come out of the water, they're a vastly differently-looking fish, and I will say it again, as different as a mutton snapper and red snapper, or lane snapper and mutton snapper, and so I think this could be a dangerous slope.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thank you. Carolyn.

DR. BELCHER: I just kind of want to -- I have heard a couple of different discussions around the table, and this is related to fixing an error in how the codified text interpreted our action, and so the action is not a new action that we're under deliberations whether it's a right or wrong thing, and we're just trying to make sure that the intent of what we put forward is appropriately regulated, understanding your concerns of, if we go back into this, this would be a discussion when we go back and talk about that, but, similarly, it's not commercial, and it's recreational, and so I was kind of trying to make sure we took that off the table as well, and so back to where you are, and I think

it's just that discussion of, again, what's the impetus for this motion, and why we're doing it is to create for the intent and the practice of what we were putting in play.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Of what's already in place, yes. Correct. This came to -- Just to add to what you're saying, Carolyn, this came to light when FWC tried to make consistent regulations for state waters, following the council's action, only to realize that the codified text was not what we thought it was, and then we couldn't match it back up to the council's discussions, et cetera, and so that's what started us down this path.

Then, also, as the season opened recently, there was lots of confusion between what is the limit for federal waters, what's the limit for state waters, can I stop in state waters, et cetera, and so the intent, for FWC, is, once this final action is taken by the council, and this is fixed, if you will, then we intend to go back and make consistent regulations in state waters, which was how we got here in the first place. Tom, I believe you had your hand up. Okay. Any more discussion on this? Okay. So let's go back to voting on this motion. Does everybody understand or have any additional questions about what we're doing here, what we're voting on? Since there were some folks that seemed to be not in favor, let's do a show of hands. **Those in favor of this motion, please raise your hand, I counted ten in favor; those opposed, two; any abstentions.** All right. **The motion passes.**

All right. Continuing back through the committee report, also, as part of this discussion earlier this week, we had a good discussion about headboat vessel limits, and so there was direction provided to staff to develop one report examining headboat vessel limits for South Atlantic snapper grouper species and another report examining potential different regulations for black grouper in south Florida, and so then there's some bullets there of some information to include in this headboat report. Mike.

DR. SCHMIDTKE: I have this highlighted in the timing and tasks, but I will go ahead and just note it now, and I wanted to see if we could get clarification from the council on the timing with which you would like these reports. I'm thinking kind of workload considerations, and we have two snapper grouper amendments that are going for final approval in September, and would it be -- When are you hoping to have these, and would it be possible to stagger them, with one report coming one meeting and one report coming another meeting?

MS. MCCAWLEY: It's a great point, and I don't think that these need to come before the September meeting, and I feel like we're putting a ton of other items, including hearings and scopings and other things on the table, but I will look around -- This is also two reports, and not just one, and I will look around the table for people to suggest when this could come back. Kerry.

MS. MARHEFKA: I mean, I want to be respectful of you all's workload, and I would just note that, for me, the priority, I think by far, would be the headboat vessel paper report, because, you know, we are taking some action, and this is one of those cases where we're taking some stuff away, and we said we're going to come back and see if we can give you some stuff back, and these are businesses that, you know, are on thin margins, and time is of the essence, and so I would just prefer that we handle the headboat issue as quickly as possible.

MS. MCCAWLEY: So let me try to put words in your mouth, and then you respond, and so maybe the December meeting, and so we're saying not September, and so I'm trying to give it another

timeframe, and so maybe the December meeting for the headboat vessel limits, and then the report for black grouper in south Florida -- Do we want to push that further out, push it to like the March meeting, or the June meeting, next year? Robert.

MR. SPOTTSWOOD: Yes, I'm fine with that. We're not going to make anything before May of next year anyway, and so, you know, at least shooting to have an understanding of that before the following season opens for Florida would be good, from my perspective.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Okay, and so one is December, and the other is March. Okay. Are we good with that? I see some thumbs-up around the table here. Okay. Thanks, Mike. Andy, and then back to Robert.

MR. STRELCHECK: This is more, I guess, to John Carmichael, right, and so, in terms of tasks of like drafting a report, right, and so, early in the process, right, I see sometimes value of like just bringing back a presentation, or something that's a little bit more simplistic than a full-blown report, and so I don't know if the council agrees with that, but I would want to leave it kind of in the hands of the council staff, to kind of assess what's the best information to bring back to us, in what format.

MS. MCCAWLEY: John.

MR. CARMICHAEL: Yes, and that's what -- In putting this update on this in the September agenda, what I had put down was to bring back a workplan, see how it's coming, what we think is going to be necessary to do this, and then have a question to have an opportunity for staff to ask any questions as they go through it, and consider this guidance and what may be available to make progress on this work.

They may have some questions, and they may run across some things that they're like, hey, what about this, and so I think just sort of touching base in September on these, and then, you know, I think, what Andy said is good, and we'll see -- If a report is not fully done, I certainly think, by December, we should have quite a bit of insight, and, as these things often do, it's good to do that, because that may lead to some more questions from you, and so, you know, I really see more of a final in December, but more of a, you know, pretty good along report-out as to what we know at that point.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Sounds great. Robert, did you have your hand up? All right. Good discussion. **Continuing to move through the committee report, the committee then made Motion Number 4, which was to select Alternative 2, the buoy remain connected, as preferred under Action 2. On behalf of the committee, I so move.** Any discussion? This is the black sea bass gear. Any discussion? **Any objection?** All right. **That motion carries.**

The committee then made Motion Number 5, which was to approve Regulatory Amendment 36 for public hearings, to be held via webinar prior to the September council meeting. On behalf of the committee, I so move. Any discussion? **Any objection?** All right. **Seeing none, that motion carries.** There is just a note to staff there that we are thinking two webinar hearings and not in-person hearings.

All right. Then the committee went into the stand-alone black sea bass amendment, which is Amendment 56, and this is responding to the SEDAR 76 stock assessment for black sea bass, which indicates that the stock is depleted. We talked about this in March, and there was a letter, on May 30, indicating that black sea bass, and this is from NMFS, will continue to be listed as not overfished and not overfishing, pending adoption of new status determination criteria that have been recommended by the assessment panel and endorsed by the SSC.

I will read a little bit more here. Council staff presented the requested information and updated the committee on additional assessment model projections being developed by the Southeast Fisheries Science Center, which will be reviewed by the SSC at their August 2024 webinar meeting. These projections could affect the SSC's acceptable biological catch recommendations for black sea bass, affecting catch level options that could be considered in the amendment, and the AP chair presented recommendations developed at the AP's March 2024 meeting, and the committee passed the following motions and provided the following direction to staff.

There is lengthy direction to staff here, and please review that. I wasn't intending to read all of that there, and this included some actions to consider there in the document, and incorporating things that we wanted the SSC to review, such as a phase-in approach. All right. **Then the committee made Motion Number 6, which was to approve Amendment 56 for scoping. On behalf of the committee, I so move.** Any discussion? Mike and then Chip.

DR. SCHMIDTKE: I guess, before you all move on that motion, I just wanted to note there's a recommendation from staff to consider holding scoping webinars for this amendment after the September 2024 meeting. There are two really main concerns, one of them being from the standpoint of receiving additional catch level projections, and there is quite a lengthy list that the Science Center is putting together for that August SSC meeting. That's kind of the overall metric, often from which other regulations, other decisions, things potentially being considered put on the table, are kind of measured by, when the public is looking, and they're seeing how much of a cut are they taking, and what are the steps they need to do to meet that cut.

There is some concern with affecting the feedback that you would get in scoping without those projections, as opposed to have those projections available for the public to be aware of, and then there's some from an organizational standpoint of taking out two amendments that are both black-sea-bass oriented, one being Number 36 and one being Number 56, and those public meetings being held via webinar in close proximity to one another, and folks very likely -- I won't say very likely, but it's very possible that we have people showing up to comment on one amendment, and they're actually showing up for a meeting that is a completely different amendment.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. Thank you, Mike, and so just know, in approving this particular motion, that we had originally talked about between now and September, but staff is suggesting doing it after the September meeting, and so any further comments on that? I don't know that we need to change anything, because the motion just said approve for scoping, and it didn't have any timing on it. We had the timing in the direction to staff. Mike.

DR. SCHMIDTKE: I guess there are two routes that you could go. You could either not approve the committee's motion, and you would have to then approve it for scoping at the September meeting, or you could go ahead and approve it for scoping and just include in the direction to staff that this scoping would occur after the September meeting. Either one would work.

MS. MCCAWLEY: I think I like not approving, but Kerry.

MS. MARHEFKA: Well, I'm really going to throw a spammer in the works, as they say, and I just want to ask this, and please -- It can be a quick discussion, but do we really need to keep the black sea bass trap thing now in the framework? Would it make you all's job easier at all to throw it in the overall black sea bass amendment, given the confusion?

I know. I'm sorry, and I'm just asking. You can say yes. You can say yes, and it's been bothering me all week, and I realize it's inappropriate to wait until the last minute, but you brought it up when you said it would be confusing, and so you gave me the window. Don't give me things to think about and not expect me to open my mouth. It can be a quick discussion, and I don't want to derail anything, and I will happily change the motion about the scoping, if you think that's the best way to do it.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Mike.

DR. SCHMIDTKE: I guess, in response to that, moving it out of 36 and putting it in 56 -- I don't think that that would necessarily make it easier on staff workload, just because we've kind of developed the discussion in 36.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Kerry.

MS. MARHEFKA: I would like to amend the motion. Is it substitute or amendment at this point? I forget, but whatever -- Without Joe, we don't know.

MR. CARMICHAEL: It's a motion by the committee. If you don't take this motion up, the motion stops right there. If you would like to make something different, you can make a different motion.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Well, technically, I moved it on behalf of the committee, but we can pretend like I didn't.

MR. SPOTTSWOOD: You didn't get a second.

MS. MCCAWLEY: I don't need a second, because it came from the committee.

MR. CARMICHAEL: You could withdraw your motion, perhaps.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Okay. Would you guys like me to withdraw Motion Number 6? All right. **I would like to withdraw Motion Number 6.** That darned committee. Okay. All right. Then anything else on black sea bass, before we leave that topic? Andy.

MR. STRELCHECK: I am very confused. We withdrew it, and so, in September, we would make a motion to then proceed with scoping? All right. I would recommend we make a motion now that says approve Amendment 56 for scoping, after the September meeting, and proceed at that timing, right, and you're not on the clock with a two-year rebuilding plan, but that is, to me, nuanced, because of our status determination criteria. We have a very depleted stock, that is overfished, or will be determined to be overfished once we adopt those status determination

criteria, and so I think we should be moving swiftly, recognizing, obviously, what Mike was saying about confusion over the two actions. I appreciate kind of giving some separation in space and time, but I would prefer, obviously, to have scoping -- Something scheduled starting after that September meeting.

MS. MCCAWLEY: So it sounded like you're making a motion. Would you like to make a motion?

MR. STRELCHECK: I would. **Approve Amendment 56 for scoping beginning after the September 2024 South Atlantic Council meeting.**

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. Motion by Andy. It's going on the board. Do we have a second? Kerry. It's seconded by Kerry. It's under discussion, and I feel like we've already had a good discussion here, and so this is just taking the other route. Yes, we withdrew the motion, but this is putting it out there for when we plan to do this. Any additional discussion here? **Any objection?** All right. **The motion carries.** Trish.

MS. MURPHEY: So I just want to go back, real quick, to the gag discussion about how the North Carolina codes -- I think you have an old ticket. The gag and the black are broken out, electronically, and also on the trip ticket, and so just you have an old one, and I was just back-and-forth with folks, and so North Carolina's trip ticket program does break out black from gag.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thank you so much for the clarification. First Tim and then Robert.

MR. GRINER: It does electronically, but it does not on the paper tickets. The paper tickets are the same. Those books are still going out just like that, but, electronically, yes.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Trish.

MS. MURPHEY: You must have an old book, because I think -- They just sent me -- I was just looking at pictures of the trip tickets, and they're broke out black and gag, and so --

MR. GRINER: Then they need to get rid of the old books and stop sending them out.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Okay. Robert and then Chip. Chip.

DR. COLLIER: So the analysis that was presented, and thank you, Tim, for pointing that out, that it's a mislabeling and not a misidentification. That was an old analysis as well, and, I mean, it was 1993 to I think 2010, and so things might have changed since then.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thank you. Thanks for that clarification. Anything else on that topic? All right. Going back to the committee report, and I believe we're in scamp and yellowmouth grouper, which is Amendment 55, and so this Amendment 55 is being developed to reorganize the other shallow-water grouper complex, establish the new scamp and yellowmouth grouper complex, and then establish a rebuilding plan, catch levels, allocations, and accountability measures for the new complex. The committee passed the following motions and provided the following direction to staff.

Motion Number 7 for Action 6, which is the recreational season, deselect Alternative 2 and select Alternative 1, no action, and, for Action 7a, the recreational bag limit, select Preferred Alternative 3, and, for Action 7b, which is the recreational vessel limit, select Preferred Alternative 1, no action. On behalf of the committee, I so move. It's under discussion. Robert.

MR. SPOTTSWOOD: When we had this discussion, I believe we had talked about the two aggregate bag limit, or the two vessel bag limit, would exceed the ABC. I'm sorry. The ACL, and we were told that we were not allowed to set the catch that would cross the ACL, and I wanted to ask, and is the ACL equal to the OFL for scamp and yellowmouth?

MS. MCCAWLEY: Allie is going to come up here and clarify it for us, and I think that was the vessel limit and not the bag limit, and I can't -- Maybe it was the two bag limit.

MR. SPOTTSWOOD: I'm sorry, but, regardless of whatever it was, at the end of the action we too, it was going to result in the ACL being exceeded, and so we went back to -- The action we were talking about, the two fish was going to exceed the ACL, and so went with the one fish, because -- At least at the time, it was understood that weren't allowed to set a catch limit that would cross the ACL.

MS. IBERLE: In looking at the decision tool, when we were putting in no season modification, no vessel limit, your preferred for allocations and a two-fish bag limit, aggregate bag limit, there was projected to be a closure in year-one, and then, to clarify, for your ACL, the total ACL is set equal to the ABC. That ABC is for the complex and what came out of the SEDAR 68 operational assessment.

Then the ACL that you were looking at in that tool was the recreational ACL, and so that small number, and it was like 2025 was like twenty-three-thousand-and-change, and that was your recreational ACL, and so that resulted both from your preferred alternative for the total ACL, setting it equal to the ABC, and then your allocation method, and so that's kind of how you got that recreational ACL.

MR. SPOTTSWOOD: Does the ACL, or ABC in this instance, equal the OFL?

MS. IBERLE: No, and I believe that there -- I apologize, and I should know this off the top of my head, but I do not -- I think there's a gap in between your ABC and OFL, because I believe we had discussion on that last June, about why there was such a gap.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Kerry has some insight here.

MS. MARHEFKA: Yes, and Tim and I are pretty sure that we landed at 95 percent, because there was the discussion -- It was Clay or Shep, and I can't remember, that gave us guidance that we reduce -- So you reduce between the OFL and the ABC, by a percentage, and then we always -- We tend to set ABC equal to -- I am probably not the person to --

MR. SPOTTSWOOD: So I just want to clarify. So we could have set a two vessel aggregate limit, and exceeded the ACL, but not necessarily have run afoul of the OFL, right, and so I just want to make -- Because I think we avoided -- We stopped discussion there, because we were given guidance that we could not do that.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Allie.

MS. IBERLE: Obviously, it's, you know, you all's decision on which bag limit, just going into that knowing that there is projected to be a closure in 2025. However, you do have an AM in place for the recreational season. Your current preferred for the AM removes an in-season closure. However, there is a post-season AM where, if the rec landings exceed the rec ACL, then the season is reduced, and so you would kind of be assuming, if the projections were correct, that there would be a season reduction in 2026, if you went with that bag limit.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Tom.

MR. ROLLER: But, if I remember correctly, the two-fish-per-person bag limit would not result in that much of an overage for the second year, and I think it was 7 percent.

MR. SPOTTSWOOD: It's 7 percent in year-one.

MR. ROLLER: 6 or 7 percent, and, I mean --

MR. SPOTTSWOOD: In year-one, and then a 25 percent underage the year after that, and then going up after that, and that was why I was -- You know, I think there's been some discussion too about modulating the vessel limit, and I've heard that maybe the Gulf Council does a fish-and-a-half, to try to get exactly there, and I just wanted to -- I know that may annoy some people, but I just wanted to make sure we were having that discussion and understanding the parameters we can set limits within.

MS. MCCAWLEY: I think it's as simplistic as, when we saw the projections there, and there was an overage in year-one, that we were advised that the council cannot make a selection that in the projections exceeds the ACL, and I think that Robert is saying I don't know that that's true, and I thought it was just that the council cannot exceed the OFL, and I think -- Is that what you're saying? Okay. Tom.

MR. ROLLER: My decision to support the one-fish bag was, to go back to the record, was because we were going to discuss modifying the bag limit in the future, if we were potentially continuing to be under.

MR. SPOTTSWOOD: Through a framework amendment, rather than having a build-in mechanism to adjust this, and that's where I -- You know, I know it's more work, and maybe we're constrained by resources, but that should be something we're told, and not constrained on decision-making alone.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Tom.

MR. ROLLER: I mean, that's why I was okay with either direction. I would have supported two, for that reason, but, given that we discussed going forward with having that, that's why I was supportive of one.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Okay, and so -- Allie.

MS. IBERLE: Since we have this fantastic decision tool, if you are wanting to go with changing the bag limit, and I'm making sure that I'm wording this correctly. If you're wanting to go from a one to a two-fish bag limit within this amendment, there wouldn't be anything else to reanalyze, because we have that analysis here. Now, if you're wanting to go out to a three-fish aggregate bag limit, which is different from the current three-fish bag limit, or higher, that would require additional analysis, which would delay the amendment.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Robert and then Tom.

MR. SPOTTSWOOD: I just -- I'm not suggesting that we change direction, but I wanted to make sure that we understood the parameters within which we made that decision as we move forward.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. Tom and then Andy.

MR. ROLLER: I agree with that, Robert, and I think we're having some good discussion here. I would also add, when you look at the analysis for two fish, we get pretty close to the ACL the following years, and, if that were to -- If this fishery was to rebuild, like we hope it does, that could lead to greater overages, and, being that the AP, and the fishermen, have said they want that longer season -- I was more comfortable with the one fish, given the fact that we could revisit it, because it gives us a little bit of buffer if that fishery does start to rebuild in our pursuit to reduce discards.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thank you for that. Andy.

MR. STRELCHECK: A couple of things here, and so, with the Magnuson Act, right, it's true that we should be setting an annual catch limit so that it avoids, or prevents, overfishing, but you should not be setting an annual catch limit that exceeds the scientific recommendations of the SSC. Now, you are specifying a catch limit on paper that does not do that, but then, if you have analyses, and information, that indicate that that is likely to be exceeded, then, to me, that is directly out of compliance with the Magnuson Act, right?

The other things, that I guess I would want to emphasize, is, one, because you have removed now the fall closure, right, and you're starting this on May 1, right, you have a greater risk of potentially bumping up and exceeding that catch limit, and not being able to constrain harvest effectively, and then the last point, which I made in committee, is you're putting a tremendous amount of credence in the analyses, which I am grateful for, right, because my team does an excellent job doing all these statistics, but there's a lot of uncertainty around those estimates, right, and it may be a 7 percent overage, and it could be a 7 percent underage, and it could be a 25 percent overage, based on the variability we see in landings data, and so I think it's better to kind of take a cautionary approach here, especially with a depleted stock that needs to be rebuilt, and then, if we miss the mark, and we need to make some adjustments over time to allow for additional harvest, we could do that.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thanks. Robert.

MR. SPOTTSWOOD: Andy, I -- This is a highly technical deal for some of us, and so I'm just trying to make sure I understand, because we're saying catch limits, but is it the catch limit, or is the overfishing limit that we are not supposed to set a rule to cross? At least in my -- When I look

at that chart, right, on average, over the three or four years we looked at, we're significantly below the ABC, or the ACL, right, even if it's 7 percent above the first year, and then you drop below, you know, 20 percent, and even more, and so, looking forward, we're setting a bag limit that we know is going to be, over time, significantly below the allowable catch limit.

I understand we, you know, maybe come back and do a framework amendment, but who knows how much time that takes, and at least my interpretation was that we should be trying to shoot as close as we can to the ABC, understanding that sometimes that may go over or may go under, but there's additional buffers in place to account for, you know, variances, or unknowns, which provides the difference between the ABC and the OFL, and perhaps I don't have all of that correct, but I'm trying to make sure that I understand, so that, as we work through this, we can be aiming for the right spot.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Andy.

MR. STRELCHECK: So there's an overfishing limit, and then, when the SSC makes their recommendation, they take into account any sort of scientific uncertainty, and so the acceptable biological catch is then set somewhere below that overfishing limit, typically, depending on the amount of uncertainty we have in the stock assessment.

The council is then bound by that recommendation by the SSC, to set the catch limit equal to or less than the acceptable biological catch from the SSC, but in no way should we be focusing on trying to exceed the catch limit, and try to harvest up to the overfishing limit, and, oftentimes, with a rebuilding stock, right, the overfishing limit is higher than the fishing mortality needed to rebuild the stock as a whole, right, because we have to take steeper reductions, in order to rebuild the stock, based on the timeframes authorized by the Magnuson Act.

MR. SPOTTSWOOD: I guess I'm confused then why, if the SSC makes a recommendation, why aren't they just making that decision, and what is the -- I guess, you know, what is the purpose of this council? I thought we would take that, and consider some of the other factors, and make determinations, but I'm being told that it's just a pass-through decision, and perhaps that isn't the case.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Shep.

MR. GRIMES: Thank you, Madam Chair. Well, they make an ABC recommendation, and this council sets an annual catch limit, and that catch limit cannot exceed the ABC recommendation that you've gotten from the SSC. Now, as -- I think I'm the one who said some of this on the record, relative to this amendment, but the annual catch limit is not to be exceeded, right, and this council tends to treat it as a target, when it's a limit, and, if you exceed that limit, you must have accountability measures that correct that exceedance.

In the case of this one, you have no in-season accountability, and we weren't going to shorten the season, based on the decision, and I think, if you set that up, that's setting it up for an overage, and, you know, even if you have -- You have a projected overage in our analysis, and it's going to be 6 or 7 percent the first year, and, again, that's just a projection, an estimate, and it could be right, and it could be wrong, and, if you feel like it's -- You know, we could make an argument that we think it's overestimating harvest, and we weren't going to get there, and then you could

qualitatively support maybe choosing that option and saying, well, our analysis projects that it's going to exceed the ACL, but, if we have reasons for not trusting that, then maybe it makes sense, but, ultimately, what Andy is saying then, and what I said during committee, is your analysis tells you that you're setting it up to exceed the ACL.

You have no in-season accountability, and that is setting it up for, you know, a shortened season the next year, another overage, and then I believe that Judy is the one that commented that, well, but if we don't harvest that, then that's gone, and I made the comment that, no, it's in the bank, right, and it's not spending that money, and then there's more biomass, and it's rebuilding quicker, and, theoretically, you would get more yield into the future, and you could take action to increase harvest at that time, once you knew whether that was actually occurring, or had a better idea of what was actually occurring.

MR. SPOTTSWOOD: Thank you, Shep. Thank you, Andy.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. Good discussion. I believe that I made this motion on behalf of the committee, but we haven't approved it yet, and is there any more discussion on this motion? this is Motion Number 7. I can't see it on the board anymore. Shep.

MR. GRIMES: Thank you, Madam Chair. I started to mention this in committee, and I wasn't sure really where this would go, but, generally, I do not like having no actions as preferred alternatives in amendments, because then you're presenting something that then is subject to legal challenge, and you didn't actually make any change, and so I would just say maybe we should consider moving these to Considered but Rejected, if we're going to keep them as no action, but I'm just throwing that out. I got that as a recommendation from SERO staff, and I don't know if that will create more work or less work, but I wanted to throw it out there as something to consider. Thank you.

MS. MCCAWLEY: So I'm just going to suggest that we not try to do that today, and I will also suggest that sometimes we leave them in, in case we want to go back and look at them at a later date, and when we're still trying to, you know, work through the document, and so, yes, we also oftentimes pick it before we go to public hearings, so that it indicates to the public that the intent is for no action. All right. Let's -- Continuing with Motion Number 7 here. Okay. **Are there any objections to Motion Number 7, that we've already made here?** Okay. **No objections. The motion carries.** I'm going to continue through the committee report.

All right. **Then the committee made Motion Number 8, which was to approve Amendment 55, as modified, for public hearings. On behalf of the committee, I so move.** Any discussion? **Any objection?** All right. **The motion carries.**

Then the committee went into the private recreational permitting amendment, which is Amendment 46. This considers establishing a private recreational permit and education requirement for the South Atlantic snapper grouper fishery, and the council has developed this amendment over several meetings, with the amendment being most recently reviewed by the Snapper Grouper Permitting and Reporting Technical AP, Private Angler AP, and Outreach and Communications AP at their April and May meetings.

The committee received the AP summary reports from the AP chairs and staff, and then we provided a bunch of direction here, and we actually did not make any motions, and I will just let folks review that direction. Okay. I'm going to continue. Andy.

MR. STRELCHECK: I guess two things. With the Private Angler AP, given that we're kind of holding off and are going to have this discussion in September, would it be the idea to convene them after the September meeting?

MS. MCCAWLEY: I'm putting my hand up like I'm not running this meeting, but so, yes, that's a bullet in there. It says to convene Private Angler AP to complete the review of the actions in Amendment 46, and is that what you mean?

MR. STRELCHECK: No, and the question is timing, right, and do we want to convene them after the September meeting, because one of the things that has come up, right, is how is this going to work, what does it mean, what is the reporting requirements, and it seems like it would make more sense to convene them after the September meeting.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Yes, since we're getting that MRIP presentation at the September meeting. Okay, and so then the bullet up there says to convene the Private Angler AP to complete the review of the actions, maybe we can add "after September meeting" to that.

MR. STRELCHECK: Right.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. Anything else on Amendment 46?

MR. STRELCHECK: Really, it's that second sub-bullet of request feedback from Fish and Wildlife, and so, personally, I don't like how it's worded, because I feel like, you know, we're early enough in the process still that I would like to really get the FWC's kind of viewpoint perspective with regard to the actions and alternatives, right, and what are -- What is your commission willing to accept, and is there any concerns they have, and can you provide on the range of actions and alternatives, and is there, you know, anything that you view would be off the table, that the commission doesn't seem like they would even see as palatable?

MS. MCCAWLEY: Okay. The way it's listed up there, it's looks like -- The way I read it is have the FWC staff come back with that at the December meeting. Since it's a sub-bullet, are you suggesting that's too late?

MR. STRELCHECK: No, and I'm just trying to clarify the intent, and so it's just like would FWC be able, or willing, to accommodate the federal permit requirement, and that's a question, right, and I think it's more of like -- I was just looking for input from the commission, based on the range of actions and alternatives, and any concerns, pros and cons, that FWC would have to bring back to the table, since you're the only state with a State Reef Fish Survey in the South Atlantic right now.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Okay. We will try to come back with that for December. Thank you. All right. Continuing through the committee report, then we had a discussion on snapper grouper commercial fishery management, and we discussed the use of a subcommittee approach to allow

progress on revisions to management of the commercial snapper grouper fishery, and the committee passed the following motion and provided the following direction to staff.

Motion Number 9 is form a commercial snapper grouper management subcommittee that will meet at least twice per year through the development of a commercial management amendment initiated by the Snapper Grouper Committee. On behalf of the committee, I so move. Any discussion? **Any objection.** All right. That motion carries.

There's also the initial membership there of the subcommittee, keeping in mind that we get new committee assignments before the September meeting, and then there's also a list of initial ideas for tasks and topics, and then there's direction that this meeting would occur between September and December. All right.

Then the committee received an update on the research and the spawning special management zones, and then the committee received information from the AP on topics that were not on the agenda. Just to talk a little bit more about what was not on the agenda that the AP brought up to the committee, it had to do with requesting changes to management for deepwater species, and this was a season, and it was recreational, and the committee expressed interest in considering reallocation, changing to seasonal start dates, and regional management approaches for deepwater species. We talked about the date of the next golden tilefish stock assessment, and the committee intends to consider these changes through the amendment that follows after that assessment.

All right, and so then we have a number of timing and tasks there, and I will look to Chip, to make sure to add the timing for those items that are in blue, since we have changed the timing for a number of things here, and so I believe we said the headboat vessel limit comes to December, the black grouper comes to June, and then the scoping webinars are going to be after the September meeting. All right. Can folks look to make sure the rest of the -- So convene the Private Angler AP to complete review of the actions in Amendment 46, and do we want to indicate that that's after the September meeting? Anything else on the timing and tasks? Okay. Would someone like to read that lengthy timing and tasks motion? Carolyn.

DR. BELCHER: I will be nice. **I make a motion to accept the following timing and tasks, in the form of direction to staff: prepare Snapper Grouper Amendment 48, which is the wreckfish amendment, for transmittal to the Secretary of Commerce; conduct Regulatory Amendment 36, which is the gag and black grouper recreational vessel limits and black sea bass on-demand pots amendment, and Amendment 55, which is scamp and yellowmouth grouper complex, public hearings via webinar before the September meeting; prepare Regulatory Amendment 36 and Amendment 55 for council approval at the September 2024 meeting; develop a report examining headboat vessel limits for South Atlantic snapper grouper species, and this is for December 2024; develop a report examining potential different regulations for black grouper in south Florida, with a date of March 2025; conduct scoping webinars for Amendment 56, again the black sea bass assessment response, after the September meeting; convene the Private Angler AP to complete review of the actions in Amendment 46; hold a discussion on MRIP revisioning and improvements at the September 2024 council meeting; prepare Amendment 46 for next review at the December 2024 meeting; convene the Commercial Snapper Grouper Management Subcommittee between September and December 2024 council meetings.**

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. Motion by Carolyn, and seconded by Trish. Any more discussion on the timing and tasks motion? **Any objection to the timing and tasks motion?** All right. Seeing none, Madam Chair, that concludes my report.

DR. BELCHER: At this time, we're at ten o'clock. Tom, I'm just reminding you, and I'm going to go ahead and give folks fifteen minutes to check out, since we're at that point, and we have the workplan left to go over, a quick discussion on upcoming meetings, and then we have the presentation, under Other Business, from the Florida Keys Sanctuary, with Sarah Fangman, and so fifteen minutes, and please hold as hard to fifteen as you can.

(Whereupon, a recess was taken.)

DR. BELCHER: Okay. Working with Chip, or, actually, John Hadley I'm assuming is out in the ether, and so, John, if you would like to take us into the workplan.

MR. HADLEY: Yes, absolutely, and thank you. I assume that Chip is driving, and there's a revised version in the recent documents file. This is the original version of the workplan, and we've tried to -- Staff has been working together, and this has definitely been a group effort, to revise the workplan this week, as the council has, you know, provided direction on timing, and added some items, and moved some items back in the workplan, and so there's -- Yes, that's the version right there. Thank you.

The revised version is in front of you, and this has also been uploaded to the meeting webpage, if you're interested, and you want to follow along on your own machine, laptop, but so this version is an updated version of what was just pulled up, to reflect the council's guidance this week, and I will kind of -- I will run down the workplan revisions, kind of start from the top and run down through the bottom of it, and, again, I want to thank everyone. You know, this has been a full council staff effort, and so thank you, everyone, for helping keep this one up-to-date.

We'll start at the very top there, and we did move the black sea bass assessment response, and so Snapper Grouper Amendment 56, down to the sort of regular items that are being worked on through the FMP amendment process, since there's not necessarily a statutory deadline related to that, and there certainly is a timeliness aspect behind that though, and so I just wanted to show that that's been reflected in the workplan.

It's noted that the wreckfish ITQ modernization amendment will be coming off of our your workplan, since we did have a final vote on that. Snapper Grouper Amendment 46, private recreational permitting and education, that was essentially slid down a meeting, and we added a meeting to that, and so, in the meantime, highlighting that the council is going to have that sort of MRIP revision discussion in September, that is related to Snapper Grouper Amendment 46, but you're not necessarily going to be reviewing an amendment document, per se, and so that's actually -- The timing for that is actually captured further down on the workplan, but I wanted to note that that discussion is occurring there.

Moving down the list there, Snapper Grouper Regulatory Amendment 35, you know, we took the placeholder away from that in future meetings, and it sounds like the council is interested in tackling that through the snapper grouper MSE, sort of that larger amendment discussion, to address topics within the snapper grouper fishery as a whole, and so there are no -- You know,

there was a question-mark there before, and we took away the question-mark, and there's no more time being budgeted for that, but certainly that will be an important part of the snapper grouper MSE work, as it progresses and finishes up towards the end of the year.

Also, I will mention that we added additional color-coding for this, just to help you keep track of what was changed this meeting, and so, if you see anything highlighted in that teal-turquoise color, that is what -- That is just saying, okay, this is what we changed around in the workplan, to help kind of bring your eye to that, and so, going back to the list there, Dolphin Wahoo Regulatory Amendment 3, we have tentatively moved that to the end of the MSE, the dolphin MSE, that is underway, because there is going to need to be an amendment, if the idea is to bring the findings of that MSE into the management process. There will need to be a dolphin wahoo amendment for that, and so we went ahead and added that there.

There is still a placeholder for a discussion of dolphin at the December meeting. That was captured further down in the workplan as well, and so I just wanted to note that, you know, that was an important item for the council's discussion, that you did want to have -- You know, you noted that you want to have that dolphin discussion in December, regardless of the progress of the MSE, and so that hasn't been lost, but we just kind of, you know, moved the workplan around a little bit to reflect, you know, some of the potential change in timing, but that December discussion is still on the agenda.

Moving down for for-hire limited entry, we noted that -- We moved the next sort of official discussion of that to the December meeting, you know, based on the council's discussion at this meeting. You know, you really wanted to see that permit data before deciding how you want to move forward, and I think allowing that discussion to take place in December, instead of September, allows sort of that time-certain portion of your discussion to be incorporated into the workplan.

Again, it doesn't mean that work on the amendment is going to stop on the council staff side, and there are several bulleted items that you just went over that captures the additional work that will take place in the meantime, and, ideally, in December, we'll be able to come back to you with that information, as well as a full sort of, you know, this is what is happening with for-hire permits since 2020 discussion, and sort of detailed information on that, that missing piece of information that several council members mentioned wanting to know, and so that has been pushed back to December.

Then, finally, we added Coral 10 resubmission and the SEFHIER revisions amendment up on the workplan underway, and so those last two items there in that section, and sort of an unknown timing of when the Coral 10 resubmission would be approved, you know, depending on if we need to add in the shrimp FMP and timing, any timing related to that, but that's why you see the approval with the question-marks next to it for each one of those items, but it is captured in the council's workplan. For SEFHIER, again, there is it's added to the council's workplan as well.

Moving down to the FMP workload that is anticipated, and so the next block, if you will, you know, there's a few items there, and this is where things are going to get a little bit tricky into 2025. You have several planned amendments, and then you also have several stock assessments coming to you, and so 2025 has gotten very busy very quickly, and so just something to think about.

You know, I don't think you need to make any decisions today, but it's something to keep an eye on, you know, as the year progresses and you start to think about what is your workload going to look like in 2025, and all of those assessment responses kind of coming in, and the amendments related to that are going to add quite a bit to the 2025 workload.

Notably, the mutton snapper assessment response is on there, again highlighted in the turquoise color, and then, also, we added the blueline tilefish assessment response, and, you know, depending on the timing of the amendments, or of the stock assessments, rather, you know, I think there's some opportunities to combine some of those, perhaps the tilefish amendments, but, given the uncertainty, the exact uncertainty, or the uncertainty in the exact timing of the stock assessments and when those reports will be available -- You know, I think we'll have a little bit more certainty on that discussion later on in the year, but that's sort of your FMP workload at the very top there.

Moving down to the second block for other council activities, you can see, towards the top, are your kind of recurring standard committees, planned committees, and SSC selection. For September, you will notice that an AP selection closed session has been included on there. Moving down the list, there's a few items to highlight. There's the snapper grouper commercial discussion, and so what your subcommittee will be discussing, you know, relating to improvements in the commercial snapper grouper fishery, and that's been noted on there. We've added sort of an update for the December meeting and June meeting. The timing thereafter is sort of to be determined, depending on the progress that that subgroup, subcommittee, makes in their meetings.

Looking down there, there's a whole block of additional new items that are highlighted in blue. The headboat vessel limit amendment discussion is on there for September, and we could bump it to December, and I think the idea was to have at least a little bit of an update discussion in September, to see what you were looking for, and we added the snapper grouper MSE results discussion to December.

I just wanted to note that, you know, the snapper grouper MSE progress update is still on there for the December meeting, and that will include at least initial discussion of how you want to progress with Dolphin Wahoo Regulatory Amendment 3, sort of what I mentioned earlier, and we're still capturing that in the workplan, and it's not lost. You know, that was an important item that the council wanted to highlight, and so it's not being left off of the December agenda, and it's just captured here.

The snapper grouper MSE results were moved to September of 2025, to reflect the update that you got on that effort earlier this week, and then the last two items, the MRIP vision plan and input, that has been included for your September meeting, and that's going to be probably a pretty lengthy discussion, and we blocked off a half-day for that, and then, also, your east coast climate group coordinating efforts, and that discussion is going to be held in September as well, and then last on there are the allocations reviews, and there are several species that, according to the allocation review trigger policy that you recently approved -- There are several species that are sort of up for allocation review, due to that time trigger, and so that's where we'll bring information back to you in September, to take a look at the existing allocations and help, you know, get some guidance from you on whether or not you're okay with those allocations or they need to be looked at in more depth perhaps, and so, you know, that's just addressing that trigger policy that you have approved.

If you look for the remainder of the year, sort of the take-home is that we're looking pretty good for September and December. You know, the roadblock comes next year, particularly once you get into the June and September meetings, and those are very, very full, and so there may be some decisions that need to be made. I think, at this point, you know, a lot of that depends on the timing of those stock assessments, and whether or not they're finished on time, finished early, if there are any complications that lead to some sort of delay, and so that timing is kind of uncertain, but it's just kind of something to keep in mind. You have a very, very busy 2025 ahead of you.

If you scroll down to the very bottom, at the very bottom there, there's sort of -- I think of it as the bullpen, and so this is the -- You could think of it as the harbor, maybe, or the marina, and this is where the additional items that the council has mentioned wanting to address at some time, but there's no certain timing to them, are captured. You can see there's a list of items on there, and it includes upcoming assessment responses, as well as sort of management topics.

We added three items in there, and one is aligning the opening of the recreational seasons for deepwater species, the other is the framework amendment to examine scamp retention limits, and you mentioned wanting to come back to that perhaps in the next few years, and kind of look at whether or not the retention limits are still appropriate, and then, finally, there is the deepwater HAPC expansion discussion that you mentioned earlier this week, and so I just wanted to mention that those are captured on the workplan, but there's just not a time certain next to them, and so that's kind of the workplan in a nutshell, and I'm happy to answer any questions, and I don't know if there's anyone else in the room that wants to add anything to that.

DR. BELCHER: Thanks, John. Kerry.

MS. MARHEFKA: Thanks, John, so much. I love this, and I know I coined it the bad name, but I really do appreciate this spreadsheet a lot. I have a question about the allocation reviews that we're slated to talk about in September. Of course, I remember that an assessment will trigger an allocation review, but it seems like this one might also have to do with like a number of years that it's triggering, because I don't see which -- Are we responding to mutton in -- Which assessments we would be responding to for that. Then my question, and not to John, but to this body, is, if we're doing them not because of an assessment -- If they're being triggered not because of an assessment, but because of a time, and, you know, it's been five years or whatever, is this appropriate for us to look at this in September, before we sort of look at this MRIP stuff, because it seems like we would want to know a lot more about that before discussing allocation changes.

DR. BELCHER: John Hadley.

MR. HADLEY: Great point, and so the allocation reviews -- The species that you would be reviewing, according to your policy, and, as you mentioned, they're largely related, or all related, to, I think, time. They haven't been examined in a long time, and so they met that time trigger within your policy, and so, you know, there is certainly no pressing absolute need that that discussion has to take place in September. If you want to move it to another meeting, we can certainly do that, and that's no problem at all, but I just wanted to sort of try to adhere to that policy and note that there are, you know, several species where that time trigger has been met, but we can certainly move that discussion.

DR. BELCHER: John.

MR. CARMICHAEL: Then, John, correct me if I'm wrong, and I also think part of this is just making sure that you look at allocation, and so you could look at it, and you could decide that, hey, we have these data improvements coming down the line, and potential data changes, and so we're looking at it, and maybe there is an issue, and let's see how that plays on it, and you may say, if there are some that raise your eyebrows, let's look at these when we get the MRIP data, which would be --

They're saying, and what did I say the other day, 2026? So, you would say, you know, we're supposed to get that in spring of 2026, and so, maybe in June of 2026, highlight some species that you want to look at, because that's really the important thing, is, just because you're looking at the allocations, it doesn't mean that you're committing to changing the allocations, but it's just the policy wanted to make sure that you are paying attention to it.

DR. BELCHER: So my question would be to you, Kerry. If it was something that you wanted removed, did you have something that you wanted to be considered in its stead?

MS. MARHEFKA: Well, we're over, I believe, and so I wouldn't try to replace it. I'm comfortable, you know, with the outline that John approached. I just -- I was reading that as sort of the beginning of getting down into the mud and muck of allocation review, and that didn't feel like the appropriate time, but that sort of overview of these are ones that we really need to look at, creating a record of we understand we need to look at this, but here's what is coming in the future, and so we're going to wait, and I am very comfortable with that, and so I would defer to staff, as far as if the timeliness is right for that meeting.

DR. BELCHER: YES, and I was just asking from that standpoint of, because we are in good stead, the idea of putting it off puts it someplace into the red zones in the future, and so, if there was something that was a priority -- That was why I was curious if you had an idea of something that you wanted to put in there that we could have talked about.

MS. MARHEFKA: I mean, I have lots of ideas, but I don't think we want to plan council meetings around my ideas.

DR. BELCHER: That was just -- Like I said, that was just that idea of, if there was something in that list that was -- That someone felt needed to be elevated, and that was where I was going, but, otherwise, yes, I mean, I think that, right now -- My opinion is that the workload looks pretty good for the next meeting. John.

MR. CARMICHAEL: Yes, I think that's right. I would say, in general, we've been fairly successful at pushing the red danger zone and keeping that kind of a few meetings out, which is really pretty good. Some of the things that we mentioned this week are like the two tilefish assessments coming along pretty close, and we may find some synergy there. The other thing would be if some of these assessments could turn out to just require like a catch limit update, and we could do a framework, that would reduce a lot of the process there that you see spreading out with the red and yellow boxes.

As John said, we kind of -- Let's see how those develop, when they're done, and what they require of you, but we may get some savings, and hopefully we can keep pushing that red zone off into the future, and keep it a few meetings out, and I will echo what John said, and, you know, John, thank you, and great job on doing this, and summarizing the many, many changes. It could be hard to take what you had at the start of the meeting and look at this, because, as this meeting has been developing, we've all been making little tweaks to it, to say what this is going to look like, and, at one point, it looked a heck of a lot worse, even starting in like September and December, and so we've been able to move some of these things out and keep it manageable, to the extent we can.

DR. BELCHER: Okay. Other comments, or discussion, on the workplan? Andy.

MR. STRELCHECK: I just want to reiterate my thanks as well to John Hadley and the council staff. This is super helpful. I did have a question with regard to SEFHIER and the update that we requested for September. What is envisioned there?

MR. CARMICHAEL: I think we started an amendment, at this meeting, to formally kick that off, right, and we made that motion, and so I think the thought there is to look at creating an IPT, and start getting that process going, and then, you know, report-out to you guys what we know about it at that stage, and I'm not sure how far it will get going otherwise, given all the other workload, but we wanted to definitely keep that on there, and it's just -- You know, we may not be to the point of an options and scoping document, but we may be looking for some feedback and at least telling you how it has progressed.

DR. BELCHER: Andy.

MR. STRELCHECK: I guess that's probably a good approach. I think my concern, right, is one of the portions of the motion was the Gulf Council, kind of coordinating with them, and they're, you know, starting to get well down the track, and they're going to now have two council meetings between your two council meetings coming up, and so the more we can, I think, coordinate with them, and maybe even bring back some input, in terms of kind of what they're doing, in September I think will be helpful, at least for information.

MR. CARMICHAEL: Yes, and I felt the council gave pretty good guidance on things to start looking at in there, which is why I thought, you know, let's let the IPT get stood up, see when people can actually get together and meet, with all the other stuff, and consider what the Gulf is doing, and look for any initial feedback at September, with hopes of being able to have say options and scoping by December.

DR. BELCHER: Andy.

MR. STRELCHECK: Thanks for that. The other just general comment, and I might be alone in kind of feeling this way, and I felt like, at this meeting in particular, we had a lot of presentations, a lot of informational presentations, where we weren't necessarily reacting to decisions, and I appreciate a lot of those, but I'm not sure it's time best spent for all of us as well, and so then I feel like we get rushed with some of our more substantive discussions, and I just ask, I think, going forward, that we're thoughtful, and deliberate, in terms of kind of balancing those informational

presentations with time needed on the agenda to really get into the details of some of our more controversial actions.

DR. BELCHER: Tim.

MR. GRINER: Thank you for bringing that up, Andy, because that was -- You know, that was a feeling that I had this meeting, strongly had this meeting, that, you know -- I like the presentations, and I appreciate them, but, you know, there's some of these presentations that I can glean just as much from a handout as I could from taking up a lot of time going through a presentation, and so I do think we need to be aware of that.

DR. BELCHER: Other comments? Okay. Moving on, thank you, John, for bringing us this info and walking us through the timeline. The next item on the agenda is upcoming meetings. John Carmichael.

MR. CARMICHAEL: Chip will just show this, and it's the normal list that we give you of everything that is coming up in the future. It's pretty extensive, and, you know, we have a little bit of a break window, in terms of meetings generally, during the summertime, but you see quite a bit going on in August, and particularly with the scopings and various things we added, and then we have our September meeting, and then you get into October, where things get extremely busy, with all of the APs that meet, and the SSC, et cetera, and the CCC meets.

Then I will point out that we created a couple of extra groups that we are planning to meet between the September and December meetings. Bear in mind that December comes up quick, and you've got holidays and stuff in there, and we've got a full load in October, and so the reality is that we'll reach out to groups, and do the best we can to get some of those arranged, but the scheduling reality, particularly with groups that involve council members, is it may be a little bit tough.

I just wanted to point that out, because you can already see October having just about every week with something going on already, but we will do our best to accommodate, and, you know, thankfully, webinar meetings are a really good way to get that stuff done, and we don't have to spend the days traveling, but, with the hearings and then all of that going on, there's going to be a lot going on this fall, as just seems to be the case all the time.

DR. BELCHER: Okay. Thanks, John. Any questions for John? All right. Everybody is clear on liaison reports, or what their assignments are for liaisons with upcoming other meetings and all of that? Okay. All right. Moving on to the last agenda item, it's Other Business. John, go ahead.

MR. CARMICHAEL: I have one bit of Other Business, Carolyn, and thank you. It's our annual awards of excellence, if you will recall, and so now is the time to be submitting, and we'll probably send something out in the next week, and we'll probably be looking at like July 5 to get something in. That would be three weeks, but we would like to get those applications now, and they can be submitted by council members, AP members, and SSC members, and so, if you have someone in mind that you think has contributed a lot to the fisheries and management and mission of the council, then be thinking that.

It's pretty brief, and it's just no more than three pages extolling their virtues, and a couple of letters of recommendation from people that you can find, and then we'll get together and review that, and

we award these at the September council meeting. It's kind of a new thing, and we've done it a few years. We certainly haven't been overwhelmed with applications, and so, if you have somebody in mind, please put in a little bit of effort, and ask maybe one of your other council members or anybody to write a letter, and get it in to me. Again, I will send out the details, and the process, in an email to everybody probably on Monday.

DR. BELCHER: Okay. Thanks, John. We do have a presentation from the Florida Keys. Sarah Fangman is going to do a webinar for us.

DR. COLLIER: All right. Sarah, I'm going to pass presenter control to you.

MS. FANGMAN: Fantastic.

MR. SPOTTSWOOD: Good morning, Sarah.

MS. FANGMAN: Is there any way that we can have you just go ahead and advance the slides, or do you not have them?

DR. COLLIER: Yes, I can advance them. Just give me one second.

MS. FANGMAN: Thank you. There we go. Okay. I will get started, because I am mindful that I am between you and adjournment, and, in light of the conversation you just had about presentations and their value, I'm going to try to keep this really brief, but I wanted to have the opportunity, and I'm so grateful to squeeze into Other Business, and so thank you for that today, and I had intended to be with you in-person this morning. However, yesterday's weather foiled my plans. My flight up there was cancelled, and so I appreciate the opportunity to pivot to a virtual presentation.

I wanted to talk about some temporary emergency rulemaking that we are doing, and thank you. I see that you've got the presentation on the screen. In the Florida Keys, we are already experiencing temperature stresses here. This slide is a little bit busy, and so bear with me. What you're looking at is data from sea surface temperature at a reef in the Middle Keys from 1985 to this year, and the black line is this year's temperature data. The gray lines are last year's temperature data.

What I think is the important take-away here is, and I think most of you probably know, we saw exceptionally warm waters here in the Florida Keys in 2023, and that's that big gray bump on the bottom of the graph, and we are seeing forecasts that are for similarly warm waters this year, and, in fact, temperatures are getting warmer earlier this year. We had our first bleaching warning in late May of this year, whereas, last year, we didn't reach that threshold until mid-June, and so the point I'm trying to make here is, last year, we saw unprecedented temperature stress on our corals, and, this year, we anticipate perhaps seeing something similar, and every indication right now is we're actually ahead of where we were last year.

I think probably everyone knows that temperature stress results in coral bleaching, and these photographs are taken just a few days apart. Last year, we saw a lot of very intense coral bleaching, and, in fact, we saw devastating effects to two species of coral last year, the elkhorn and the staghorn corals.

That inspired us to intervene in ways we could, and we photographed our efforts to rescue some of the material, the genetic material, of those two species that I just mentioned, to bring them onshore and try to keep them in safekeeping, a bit of a Noah's ark, if you will, but the intervention tool that I want to talk about today, and bring your attention to, is something we tried last year for the first time, which was an additional new intervention to temperature stress, and that is moving corals to deep water. That deeper water is cooler for a time, and, over the summer, we actually saw the deep water get as warm, but not as quickly, but, also, that deeper water experiences lower light intensity, and that's important for corals.

The nursery coral that we relocated to this deeper-water site last year experienced double the rate of survivorship as compared to the nursery coral that remained in inshore shallow sites. That demonstrates the value of relocating these nursery corals that we are using to do restoration into the deeper waters, and, recognizing the value of this action that was taken last year, and acknowledging that we are seeing increased temperatures already this year, restoration practitioners in the Florida Keys are preparing to relocate corals to deeper waters in the Upper Keys, in the Middle Keys, and the Lower Keys this year. Last year, it was just in the Upper Keys, and, again, the intent is to protect them from these dangerously stressful conditions.

While the corals were protected from temperature and light by moving them to deeper water, they were still potentially vulnerable to the unintended consequences of fishing actions, fishing impacts, and so, last year, we enacted emergency protections. We established a temporary special use area for this nursery in the Upper Keys that was in effect for sixty days. Our rulemaking allows us to potentially extend once, for an additional sixty days, and we did in fact do that last year.

The prohibitions that apply is you can only enter this area with a permit to do restoration, although you can transit through without interruption. As you can see, it's a very, very small area. It's in federal waters located off of Tavernier Key, and this was the first time we had used this emergency rulemaking in two decades.

This, again, is an image taken this week showing sea surface temperature anomalies, and you can see, in the Florida Keys, we are, as I noted, several degrees above average already this year. That said, the weather that we're experiencing this week, that prevented me from being with you this morning, is actually helpful, because it is able to cool our waters back down, and so, if we see storm events throughout the summer, we may have a different story this year, as compared to last year, and that's, of course, what we're hoping for, but we want those storms to be just the right -- Not too strong, but strong enough to cool the water.

Recognizing that these emergency protections were valuable, and the action was valuable last year, we are proposing to implement emergency protections again this year, and so what this slide does is indicate what's new and what is the same in this action, and so, when we did this in 2023, we had not ever done it before, and so we have learned something, and we are using that to inform this rulemaking.

As I noted, practitioners are proposing to move corals not just in one place in the Upper Keys, but they are also proposing to move corals in the Middle and Lower Keys, and so, in consequence, we are proposing three temporary special use areas, instead of one, this year. Then, this year, we are also going to take public comment, and we're going to do that to inform future management actions, and I'm going to get back to that in a minute.

What's the same with what we are doing this year is, again, it will be a sixty-day, with the potential for one additional sixty-day extension, and we anticipate again needing to use that, recognizing that the summer heat event is going to likely last longer than sixty days, unfortunately, and so we would need that extension. Again, prohibited entry, unless doing restoration activities under permit. However, continuous transit through these areas would be allowed. They are very, very small areas that include a 200-yard buffer around the actual coral restoration site.

In the next slide, I'm going to show you the three locations. This is the one we did last year, again off of Tavernier, and it's very, very small. It's 0.068 square miles. This is a new area, as compared to last year, off of Marathon, in the Middle Keys, again in federal waters off of Marathon, and it's quite small. It's less than 0.07 square miles, and then the next slide is the Lower Keys special use area that we are proposing that is, again, in federal waters, and it's very, very small.

The draft emergency rule is in clearance with NOAA, and it will go to the Department of Commerce following that. In this case, because it is an emergency rule, and time is of the essence, as these waters heat up and the practitioners are preparing to move their corals into deep water, when published, this rule will be in effect.

As I mentioned though, we are taking public comment, and that is to inform potential future action, and I will get to that in the next slide, but what I would like to say is, last year, when we took this action, we conducted targeted outreach to constituents that may be impacting the Keys, and so we reached out to the Florida Keys Commercial Fishermen's Association. We did local radio spots, social media spots, and we have a sanctuary advisory council that we communicated with about that, and we would do the same again this year. In addition, last year, the Coast Guard issued a notice to mariners about this action and has agreed to do the same this year, when this goes into effect.

The last thing that I wanted to talk about is future management and potential rulemaking. As I noted, right now, this is an emergency rule. We're trying to do this as the water heats up and we know our corals are quite vulnerable. That said, we are considering whether or not this tool would be useful in future years, and, if so, we need to do full rulemaking, and so the public comment that we are proposing, as a part of this year's action, would be to inform what we may do in the future if we decide. In this case, if we go forward with a long-term rulemaking action, we would do full rulemaking and establish permanent zones, the restrictions for which would be triggered when and if we see temperature stress, and so on an as-needed and still temporary basis.

We would notice the public through Federal Register and other communication channels, as I noted, if and when we would need that in the future, and all of that is still under consideration. We learned a lot using this tool last year, and we have additional practitioners that are using this tool this year, and I expect we will learn more about the effectiveness of these deepwater nurseries.

It's a lot of work for them to do it, and, if those corals can't survive in those hot waters, should we really be outplanting them, and so this is an ongoing conversation, but I simply wanted to acknowledge that, if we, and the practitioners, believe that this is a very effective tool, as we try to protect these corals and maintain the genetic material that is the basis of our future restoration, we would do full rulemaking that includes an environmental and economic analysis, additional public notice and comment, and we would continue to coordinate with other agencies, in

consultation, and, of course, importantly, that last bullet is we would be consulting with the fishery management councils, through the 304(a)(5) process.

That is the end of my presentation, and I'm happy to take questions, if there are any, and I will also just say that we are willing to meet with the council staff, or APs, to discuss this going forward, and so thank you very much, again, for the time.

DR. BELCHER: Thank you, Sarah. Questions or comments for Sarah at this point in time? Laurilee.

MS. THOMPSON: Thank you, Sarah. That was great. I mean, what you guys are doing down there is incredible. You said that the coral grew twice as fast when you moved it out into the deep water, and I assume that you moved it back into shallow water, but have you -- What would happen if you left it out in the deep water, so you don't have to keep moving it back and forth? Would it survive, or does it get enough light?

MS. FANGMAN: Great question, and forgive me if I miscommunicated. The coral survived better, and we had twice the survival, and not necessarily twice the growth, although that would have been nice, and, in fact, what our partner practitioners observed was there is essentially a time limit to how long you can have those corals at-depth. They are not naturally down there. That's not where they thrive, and so, in fact, as the time drew longer for their placement in deep water, they actually started declining, and so it was very important to get them back into the natural habitat where they belong, which is in the shallower waters where they normally exist.

However, doing that, these are animals, and they have to be acclimated, and so it's a process. You're correct that we did move them back, as soon as we felt that it was safe, based on the temperature coming back down in the shallower waters, and it was important that we did that, because we saw them starting to exhibit stress, being down in those deeper waters, where perhaps they're not able to feed in the same as they do, and I'm not entirely sure what it was about it, but they just got tired of being deep, if you will, but they do need to be moved back into shallower waters, and I hope I answered your question.

DR. BELCHER: Thank you, Sarah. Other questions or comments for Sarah? Okay. Thank you, Sarah, for doing the presentation for us today.

MS. FANGMAN: My pleasure. Thank you.

DR. BELCHER: Chip.

DR. COLLIER: Sarah, when you selected these locations, was it based on distance from where the coral are currently, or were you trying to avoid areas where fishermen aren't potentially using? Thinking about both sides of this, you're going to be impacting fishermen, but also trying to minimize impacts to the corals as well.

MS. FANGMAN: Both. We were identifying places that we felt were suitable habitat, that were logistically feasible to move these corals, because, as I mentioned, this is a massive effort to do this, and trying to identify areas that are the least disruptive to the recreational and commercial fishing industries that may be in those areas.

That said, we are also still learning, and that is why I note that we are thinking about a potential full rulemaking, to do something more permanent. However, where those locations should or could be is still a subject of conversation, because current patterns, temperature patterns, are things that will inform whether those places that we've picked this year are the right ones. That is why it's important to get public comment now, because, again, these places we've selected may be, from the perspective of the fishing community, the wrong ones, from their activities, and so that will be very helpful for us to hear going forward.

DR. BELCHER: Any other questions for Sarah? Laurilee.

MS. THOMPSON: I don't know, and this might be really dumb, but, you know, the areas are really, really small where you guys are doing that restoration, and have you thought about maybe putting like a big plexiglass wall around your area, and then trying to do something to cool the water inside the area where you have the corals, so you don't have to move them back and forth? I would think that the fishing community should be supportive of your efforts, because, if you lose the coral down there, then you're going to lose your fisheries too, and so I would think that they would do everything they could to help you.

MS. FANGMAN: I appreciate that sentiment, and I tend to agree with you, and, in fact, last year, we did not hear any pushback on our one small area, and so I think perhaps that was a reflection of the sentiment that you just expressed. That said, from my perspective, there are no dumb ideas, in terms of how to manage this really challenging issue, and we haven't necessarily considered the suggestion that you just made, but there are other things that we are looking at, like shading, like spraying at the surface, because we can tell that, by doing that, when the water is really flat calm, which is a lovely day from the perspective of boating, but it's terrible from the perspective of a coral, because the sunlight just penetrates.

In fact, there is early evidence to suggest that, by spraying water, and, you know, taking a pump, and just spraying water over a reef habitat, that actually diminishes the light intensity, and so we've got a lot of what may seem like wild ideas that we are considering right now. The problem is pilot testing them and getting them up to scale, and that's the challenge, and we're trying to do this as quickly as we can, given the level of mortality we saw last year with several of these species.

DR. BELCHER: Robert.

MR. SPOTTSWOOD: Hi, Sarah. It's Robert. Laurilee, you brought something up relating to, you know, the loss of this habitat, and so we -- When I say "we", Monroe County, FWC, and the sanctuary are working together. We got \$15 million from the State of Florida to work on creating, effectively, alternative habitat, in order to support the marine ecosystem life that may be impacted by loss of corals such as this, and so it was a good comment, and I thought that was a good thing to share with everybody.

DR. BELCHER: Okay. Again, any further questions or comments for Sarah? Okay. Thank you again, Sarah.

MS. FANGMAN: Thank you.

DR. BELCHER: I'm looking around the table for other business. Tom Roller has a piece of other business.

MR. ROLLER: I am going to make this really brief, and I just wanted to -- I would have brought this up in the Mackerel Committee, under Other Business, but we don't have a Mackerel Committee meeting. A month ago, I was forwarded a letter from the West Palm Beach Fishing Club regarding their concern with the state of the false albacore, also known as little tunny, or apparently bonito in south Florida, and I'm just going to read a couple of lines from it.

In recent years, we've seen a notable decline in the local abundance of bonito. There may be multiple explanations for this decline, and we're hoping that researchers and additional stakeholder input can help. Perhaps not coincidentally, we've seen a significant increase in commercial hook-and-line fishing for bonito in our area, and, to close, they said the West Palm Beach Fishing Club urges the FWC and NMFS to further investigate the issue. In our view, the bonito deserves to be managed, and the FWC and NMFS need to be on the same page regarding any future bonito regulations, since the species is regularly caught in both state and federal waters. In our view, it is important to get ahead of an emerging issue like this, rather than react to a problem once it has occurred.

As many of you know, this is a very important issue for me, and my State of North Carolina, as we pursue rulemaking for both commercial and recreational limits in the State of North Carolina. It's a very important recreational fishery for us, as well as a growing commercial fishery, and I just wanted to let the council be aware of this, and I hope that this letter can be forwarded to everybody here. Thank you, Madam Chair.

DR. BELCHER: Thanks for that, Tom. Any other business that needs to come before the council at this time? Okay. Seeing none, I just want to thank everybody for your patience and understanding as we managed to get through this very packed agenda this week, and kudos to staff, who have helped us navigate through a lot of this, and I know that there was a lot of changing of direction and all, but thank you for sticking through it with us this entire week. I hope everybody has safe travels heading home, and best of luck to Spud and Laurilee in their next ventures, and hopefully they won't go too far away. I look forward to seeing everybody in September in Charleston, and so we are adjourned.

(Whereupon, the meeting adjourned on June 14, 2024.)

Certified By: _____ Date: _____

Transcribed By
Amanda Thomas
July 30, 2024

Thursday
6/13

2024 COUNCIL MEMBERS

Voting

Dr. Carolyn Belcher, **Chair** ✓
GA DNR - Coastal Resources Division
One Conservation Way, Suite 300
Brunswick, GA 31520
(912)264-7218
Carolyn.belcher@dnr.ga.gov

Trish Murphey, **Vice 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

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

Gary Borland ✓
422 Highwater Court
Chapin, SC 29036
(561) 290-9274 (cell)
GborlandSAFMC@gmail.com

Tim Griner
4446 Woodlark Lane
Charlotte, NC 28211
(980)722-0918
timgrinersafmc@gmail.com

Judy Helmey ✓
124 Palmetto Drive
Savannah, GA 31410
(912) 897-4921
JudyHelmey@gmail.com

Kerry Marhefka ✓
347 Plantation View Lane
Mt. Pleasant, SC 29464
(843)452-7352
KerryOMarhefka@gmail.com

Becky Curtis
Guy DeBeck
Dr. Michael Travis
Rick DeVictor

Ken Brennan

Jessica McCawley ✓
Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission
620 South Meridian St
Tallahassee, FL 32399
(850)487-0554
Jessica.mccawley@myfwc.com

Tom Roller ✓
807 Deerfield Drive
Beaufort, NC 28516
(252) 728-7907 (ph);(919)423-6310 (c)
tomrollersafmc@gmail.com

Robert Spottswood, Jr. ✓
robert@spottswood.com
(305) 294-6100
Assistant:
Carina Primus-Gomez
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

Laurilee Thompson ✓
P.O. Box 307
Mims, FL 32754
(321) 794-6866
thompsonlaurilee@gmail.com

Spud Woodward ✓
860 Buck Swamp Road
Brunswick, GA 31523
(912)258-8970
Swoodwardsafmc@gmail.com

Dr. Clay Porch
Dr. Kelsey Banks
Monica-Smit-Burnello

Sonny Gwin
Kris Dlett
Dr. Renne Riley
Jennifer Lee

Thursday
6/13

SOUTH ATLANTIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL
2024 COUNCIL MEMBERS (continued)

Full Council

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 Cameron C. Box
Seventh Coast Guard District
909 SE 1st Ave.
Miami, FL 33131
(305) 415-6781(ph); (786)457--6419(c)
Cameron.C.Box@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

Thursday Fall Council
6/13

SOUTH ATLANTIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL
COUNCIL STAFF

Executive Director ✓

John Carmichael
john.carmichael@safmc.net
843-302-8435

web

Deputy Director - Science ✓

Dr. Chip Collier
chip.collier@safmc.net
843-302-8444

Deputy Director - Management

Myra Brouwer
myra.brouwer@safmc.net
843-302-8436

Citizen Science Program Manager ✓

Julia Byrd
julia.byrd@safmc.net
843-302-8439

Admin. Secretary/Travel Coordinator

Open Position
Rachael Silvas ✓
843-571-4370

Quantitative Fishery Scientist web

Dr. Judd Curtis
Judd.curtis@safmc.net
843-302-8441

Fishery Economist & FMP Coordinator web

John Hadley
john.hadley@safmc.net
843-302-8432

Habitat and Ecosystem Scientist ✓

Kathleen Howington
kathleen.howington@safmc.net
843-725-7580

Fishery Scientist I ✓

Allie Iberle
Allie.iberle@safmc.net
843-225-8135

Public Information Officer

Kim Iverson kim.iverson@safmc.net
843-224-7258

Administrative Officer ✓

Kelly Klasnick kelly.klasnick@safmc.net
843-763-1050

BFP Outreach Specialist web

Ashley Oliver Ashley.Oliver@safmc.net
843-225-8135

Fishery Scientist II ✓

Dr. Mike Schmidtke
mike.schmidtke@safmc.net
843-302-8433

Communication and Digital Media Specialist

Nicholas Smillie ✓
Nick.Smillie@safmc.net
843-302-8443

Staff Accountant web

Suzanna Thomas suzanna.thomas@safmc.net
843-571-4368

Fishery Social Scientist ✓

Christina Wiegand christina.wiegand@safmc.net
843-302-8437

Citizen Science Project Manager web

Meg Withers
Meg.withers@safmc.net
843-725-7577

SEDAR

SEDAR Program Manager web

Dr. Julie Neer
Julie.neer@safmc.net
843-302-8438

SEDAR Coordinator

Position Open
843-225-8424

Friday
6/14

SOUTH ATLANTIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

2024 COUNCIL MEMBERS

Voting

Dr. Carolyn Belcher, **Chair** ✓
GA DNR - Coastal Resources Division
One Conservation Way, Suite 300
Brunswick, GA 31520
(912)264-7218
Carolyn.belcher@dnr.ga.gov

Trish Murphey, **Vice 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

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

Gary Borland ✓
422 Highwater Court
Chapin, SC 29036
(561) 290-9274 (cell)
GborlandSAFMC@gmail.com

Tim Griner ✓
4446 Woodlark Lane
Charlotte, NC 28211
(980)722-0918
timgrinersafmc@gmail.com

Judy Helmey ✓
124 Palmetto Drive
Savannah, GA 31410
(912) 897-4921
JudyHelmey@gmail.com

Kerry Marhefka ✓
347 Plantation View Lane
Mt. Pleasant, SC 29464
(843)452-7352
KerryOMarhefka@gmail.com

Jessica McCawley ✓
Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission
620 South Meridian St
Tallahassee, FL 32399
(850)487-0554
Jessica.mccawley@myfwc.com

Tom Roller ✓
807 Deerfield Drive
Beaufort, NC 28516
(252) 728-7907 (ph);(919)423-6310 (c)
tomrollersafmc@gmail.com

Robert Spottswood, Jr. ✓
robert@spottswood.com
(305) 294-6100
Assistant:
Carina Primus-Gomez
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

Laurilee Thompson ✓
P.O. Box 307
Mims, FL 32754
(321) 794-6866
thompsonlaurilee@gmail.com

Spud Woodward ✓
860 Buck Swamp Road
Brunswick, GA 31523
(912)258-8970
Swoodwardsafmc@gmail.com

Dr. Kelsey Banks

Sonny Gwin

Monica Smit-Brunello

Rick DeVictor

Dr. Clay Porch

Sarah Fangman

Friday
6/14

SOUTH ATLANTIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL
2024 COUNCIL MEMBERS (continued)

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 Cameron C. Box
Seventh Coast Guard District
909 SE 1st Ave.
Miami, FL 33131
(305) 415-6781(ph); (786)457--6419(c)
Cameron.C.Box@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

Friday 4/14

SOUTH ATLANTIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL
COUNCIL STAFF

Executive Director ✓

John Carmichael

john.carmichael@safmc.net

843-302-8435

Deputy Director - Science ✓

Dr. Chip Collier

chip.collier@safmc.net

843-302-8444

Deputy Director - Management

Myra Brouwer

myra.brouwer@safmc.net

843-302-8436

Citizen Science Program Manager

Julia Byrd

julia.byrd@safmc.net ✓

843-302-8439

Admin. Secretary/Travel Coordinator

Open Position

Rachael Silvas ✓

843-571-4370

Quantitative Fishery Scientist

Dr. Judd Curtis

Judd.curtis@safmc.net web

843-302-8441

Fishery Economist & FMP Coordinator

John Hadley

john.hadley@safmc.net web

843-302-8432

Habitat and Ecosystem Scientist ✓

Kathleen Howington

kathleen.howington@safmc.net

843-725-7580

Fishery Scientist I ✓

Allie Iberle

Allie.iberle@safmc.net

843-225-8135

Public Information Officer web

Kim Iverson kim.iverson@safmc.net

843-224-7258

Administrative Officer ✓

Kelly Klasnick kelly.klasnick@safmc.net

843-763-1050

BFP Outreach Specialist

Ashley Oliver Ashley.Oliver@safmc.net

843-225-8135

Fishery Scientist II ✓

Dr. Mike Schmidtke

mike.schmidtke@safmc.net

843-302-8433

Communication and Digital Media Specialist

Nicholas Smillie

Nick.Smillie@safmc.net

843-302-8443

Staff Accountant web

Suzanna Thomas suzanna.thomas@safmc.net

843-571-4368

Fishery Social Scientist ✓

Christina Wiegand christina.wiegand@safmc.net

843-302-8437

Citizen Science Project Manager web

Meg Withers

Meg.withers@safmc.net

843-725-7577

SEDAR

SEDAR Program Manager web

Dr. Julie Neer

Julie.neer@safmc.net

843-302-8438

SEDAR Coordinator

Position Open

843-225-8424

FULL COUNCIL - ROLL CALL VOTE

Date: June 11, 2024

Meeting Location: Daytona Beach, FL

Issue: Final approval SG 48 Wreckfish FTA

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

SAFMC June 2024 Council Meeting

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

Report Generated:

06/17/2024 02:49 PM EDT

Webinar ID

270-060-715

Actual Start Date/Time

06/13/2024 07:31 AM EDT

Staff Details

Attended

Yes

Interest Rating

Not applicable for staff

Attendee Details

Last Name

Baker

Barbieri

Barrows

Bianchi

Blankinship

Bonura

Brennan

Brennan

Brouwer

Bublely

Buntin

Bunting

Byrd

Cermak

Chansky

Chen

Cheshire

Coggins

Curtis

Curtis

DARDEN

Dale

Dancy

DeVictor

Dixon

Dover

DuBeck

Dukes

Emory

First Name

Scott

Luiz

Katline

Alan

Randy

Vincent

Kenny

Ken

Myra

Walter

Jesse

Matthew

Julia

Bridget

Brian

Leyi

Rob

Lew

Becky

01Judd

TANYA

David

Kiley

Rick

Michael

Miles

Guy

Amy

Meaghan

Every	Langford
Fangman	Sarah
Finch	Margaret
Fletcher	Brad
Flowers	Jared
Franco	Dawn
Franke	Emilie
Gentner	BRAD
Gervasi	Carissa
Glazier	Ed
Gore	Karla
Green	Matthew
Guyas	Martha
HILDRETH	DELAINE
Hadley	John
Harrison	Alana
Hart	Hannah
Haymans	Doug
Helies	Frank
Helmey	Judy
Hemilright	Dewey
Hollensead	Lisa
Huber	Jeanette
Hudson	Joseph
Iberle	Allie
Kellison	Todd
Keppler	Blaik
Kittle	Christine
Klasnick	01Kelly
Knowlton	Kathy
Larkin	Michael
Lazarre	Dominique
Lee	Jennifer
Lee	Max
Levy	Mara
M	Charlotte
M Borland	Gary
MCCLAIR	GENINE
Malinowski	Richard
Mallory	Ryan
Marhefka	00Kerry
Masi	Michelle
Matter	Vivian
McCoy	Sherylanne

McGovern	Jack
McWhorter	Will
Mehta	Nikhil
Mendez Ferrer	Natasha
Murphey	Trish
Neer	Julie
Newman	Thomas
O'Shaughnessy	Patrick
Oliver	Ashley
Package-Ward	Christina
Patterson	Cheri
Plant	Dan
Poholek	ariel
Potter	Caroline
Potter	Caroline
Ramsay	Chloe
Records	David
Reeder	Kelly
Roller	00Tom
Runde	Brendan
Sabo	Mary
Sawicki	Kim
Scerbo	Sabrina
Seward	McLean
Silvas	Rachael
Smarrito	Michael
Smit-Brunello	Monica
Spurgin	Kali
Stemle	Adam
Stephen	Jessica
Stephens	Haley
Sweetman	CJ
Travis	Michael
Vecchio	Julie
Walia	Matt
White	Geoff
Williams	Erik
Withers	Meg
Woodward	00 Spud
colby	barrett
collier	chip
foss	kristin
gloeckner	david
iverson	Kim

laks
moss
oden
sandorf
thomas
thompson
vara
young
zales

Ira
david
jeff
scott
suz
laurilee
mary
Jerome
bob

SAFMC June 2024 Council Meeting

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

Report Generated:

06/17/2024 02:53 PM EDT

Webinar ID

270-060-715

Actual Start Date/Time

06/14/2024 07:33 AM EDT

Staff Details

Attended

Yes

Interest Rating

Not applicable for staff

Attendee Details

Last Name

First Name

Baker

Scott

Barrows

Katline

Bianchi

Alan

Bonura

Vincent

Brennan

Ken

Brouwer

Myra

Bubley

Walter

Buntin

Jesse

Bunting

Matthew

Byrd

Julia

Chansky

Brian

Chen

Leyi

Curtis

01Judd

Dale

David

DeVictor

Rick

Dieveney

Beth

Dilley

Jonelle

Dixon

Michael

Dover

Miles

Dukes

Amy

Emory

Meaghan

Fangman

Sarah

Finch

Margaret

Gentner

BRAD

Glazier

Ed

Gore

Karla

Green

Matthew

Guyas

Martha

HILDRETH

Hadley
Harrison
Helies
Helmey
Hudson
Iberle
Klasnick
Knowlton
Larkin
Lazarre
Ledet
Lee
Levy
M Borland
MCCLAIR
Malinowski
Marhefka
Masi
Matter
McCoy
Mehta
Mendez Ferrer
Murphey
Neer
Newman
O'Malley
O'Shaughnessy
Package-Ward
Potter
Potter
Ramsay
Records
Roller
Sawicki
Seward
Silvas
Smarrito
Smillie
Smit-Brunello
Spurgin
Stein
Stemle
Stephen

DELAINE

John
Alana
Frank
Judy
Joseph
Allie
01Kelly
Kathy
Michael
Dominique
Vicki
Jennifer
Mara
Gary
GENINE
Richard
00Kerry
Michelle
Vivian
Sherylanne
Nikhil
Natasha
Trish
Julie
Thomas
Rachel
Patrick
Christina
Caroline
Caroline
Chloe
David
00Tom
Kim
McLean
Rachael
Michael
Nick
Monica
Kali
Sarah
Adam
Jessica

Stephens
Sweetman
Travis
Walia
Wamer III
White
Wiegand
Williams
Withers
Woodward
foss
gentner
iverson
laks
moss
sandorf
thomas
thompson
vara
zales

Haley
CJ
Michael
Matt
David
Geoff
Christina
Erik
Meg
00 Spud
kristin
brad
Kim
Ira
david
scott
suz
laurilee
mary
bob