

SOUTH ATLANTIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

COUNCIL SESSION II

**World Golf Renaissance
St. Augustine, Florida**

June 12, 2026

Transcript

Council Members

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Attendees and Invited Participants

Shepherd Grimes
Dr. John Walter
Sonny Gwinn

C.J. Sweetman
Rick DeVictor

Observers and Participants

Other observers and participants attached.

The Council Session II of the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council convened at the World Golf Renaissance in St. Augustine, Florida on Friday, June 12, 2025, and was called to order by Chairman Trish Murphey.

MS. MURPHEY: I guess we'll just go ahead and get started. Everybody is here, and so the first thing I would like to do is recognize a couple of folks here that this is going to be their last meeting. Sonny, it's your last meeting, and we are going to miss you, and thanks so much for all your time, your insights, and I think we're going to miss you. I don't know if anybody else would like to say anything to Sonny for his time here. Go ahead.

MS. HELMEY: Well, Sonny, we appreciate it, and we also appreciate all your stories that you told us about your fishing and everything, and we want to continue to have a relationship with you over the telephone, so we can find out some more fishing secrets.

MS. MURPHEY: Let me get John, and then Andy.

MR. CARMICHAEL: Sonny, it's been a pleasure with you over the years. We appreciate you coming to all of our meetings, and taking the longer trips to come to some of them, and, you know, it's certainly been enjoyable learning about your fishery, and we wish you the best in your future shrimp fishing endeavors, and so maybe we can keep some hooks in you through our Shrimp AP, or others, and continue to keep our relationship alive, and so thank you very much for all your service over the years.

MS. MURPHEY: Andy.

MR. STRELCHECK: I just wanted to say thanks, Sonny, for just your collegial attitude, always there to answer questions, have a drink at the bar, and I learned a lot about Mid-Atlantic fisheries, and I will note that I attend three council meetings. You only attend two, but you're well on your way to becoming a regional administrator, and so I look forward to you applying to the next opening.

MS. MARHEFKA: Sonny, I just want to personally thank you. I think you've been really generous with your knowledge, and I think that highlights why it's important to have liaisons. I mean, you've been generous personally to me about your operation that you have with your family, and I've watched you at both councils, and you just share a wealth of information, and that's like the really important part of this, and so you will be very much missed, and thank you for everything you've given to this council.

MS. MURPHEY: Thank you so much, Sonny, and let me know. I'll come shrimping with you.

MR. GWIN: Thank you, Madam Chair, and thank you, everybody. It's been a wild ride, and definitely an education, and, yes, I hope to still stay involved. I'm hoping to get my son involved, because he's the next generation that's coming up, and it's definitely been an education, and thanks, everybody. You all do a really good job, and good luck, and God bless.

MS. MURPHEY: Thank you, Sonny, and then we also have another council member to recognize, Robert Spotswood. This is also his last meeting, and so we've got a plaque for you that says, "For his exemplary service and contributions to the conservation and management of South Atlantic

fishery resources as a member of the council”, and so thank you so much for being a member of our council. We hate to see you leave, but we just really appreciate your time, and let me give you your --

MR. CARMICHAEL: You know, Robert, it's been a quick turnaround here on you. It's been too short, but I certainly appreciated, you know, learning about the fisheries in far south Florida, and a lot of the issues that you face, and I think you brought a lot to the table, and so I wish you the best, because I know you're continuing the fight for the environment down there, which will benefit us in the long run too, and so keep it up.

MS. MCCAWLEY: I just want to say thank you for your service. Sorry I conned you into doing this, but I appreciate all of your innovative ideas. Thank you for all that you're doing, you know, here at this council, but, like John said, in other venues as well. I'm certain that we will be working together on lots more projects in the future, and I know we didn't have a celebration at this meeting, but party in the future.

MS. MURPHEY: Again, thank you, Robert, and thank you for continuing the fight for our environment, and our fisheries, and keep on fighting for us. Andy.

MR. STRELCHECK: Yes, and I agree. Robert, the time was too short, and you know, typically, you know, it's pretty steep learning process. You came in and hit the ground running, and I really appreciated your innovative ideas. We didn't always agree on things, but I learned a lot from you, from your knowledge and perspective, and one of the things I always comment with council members is this is a pretty extensive process.

It takes a lot of time away from your family, and I recognize that. You have a beautiful family, young kids, and I know a lot of days spent away from them, so I just appreciate the time you put into the process, and your contributions to it, and we'll miss you.

MR. SPOTTSWOOD: Thank you, Andy, and thank you, everybody, for the nice comments. It has been a fast couple of years, but I think I've got three more kids now than when I started, and so the family is growing pretty quick, and, you know, a lot of other things going on, but I really, really appreciate everybody around the table, and our ability to come here, talk about hard issues, test each other, challenge each other, challenge previous thinking. I think there's still some more of that to do, and a lot of good things have really started to happen. I'm really optimistic about the future, and our ability to handle some of these issues, and so thank you all everything that you do, and continue to do, and I look forward to staying involved with all of you. Thank you.

MS. MURPHEY: Thank you, Robert. We'll go ahead and move into our agenda. I do think we will have some Other Business regarding Spanish that Dewey is going to bring up, and so we'll just -- At this point, we'll just go ahead and go into the workplan, and if -- You know, we'll see how -- If it's better to bring up Spanish during the workplan or at the end, and so we'll just go ahead and turn it over to John Hadley for our workplan.

MR. HADLEY: All right. Well, thank you, everybody, and this is the workplan, the revised workplan, for the week is in front of you, and, you know, a few items were moved around, and, as usual, I'll kind of make the rundown from top to bottom, as far as what has changed this week and is sort of of note.

Starting there at the top, as far as the snapper grouper MSE-related amendment, we moved that back, as far as really starting work on the document portion of that. You'll probably see bits and pieces of the MSE over the next several meetings, but, as far as the writing portion of the amendment, and developing actions and alternatives, we pushed that back a bit. One of the reasons for that is to try to encompass the new red snapper stock assessment into the MSE, but, you know, while that's in the works, there certainly is other work to be done on the MSE, but I just wanted to note that that timeline was shifted back a little bit.

Moving down one item -- Well, there's a few -- At the very top there, that sort of active amendment workload, as you'll see in December, there are four amendments scheduled for a final vote, and so a final vote of approval by the council, and that's Amendment 44, 60, 39, and 40, and so that's -- Having four approvals at one meeting is a lot for you guys to get through in a meeting. It's a lot for staff to prepare ahead of time, and so bringing that to your attention, and, you know, we can discuss it now, or we can discuss it in September, but I did want to note that that's sort of an upcoming logjam, so to speak, at the December meeting, as far as those four amendments all coming due for a final vote.

Moving down, with Snapper Grouper Amendment 61, the timing of the discussion for approval for public hearings of that amendment, as you'll recall, that was -- That discussion was moved to this discussion of the workplan, and that -- Sort of the piece there is whether or not to have it ready for public hearings in September, versus December. As I had mentioned when we were discussing that, as far as the IPT's viewpoint on this, it's that it would be beneficial to have a little bit more writing time on that, and so have a public hearing document ready for you in December instead of September, but still maintaining that March 2027 final vote, if that's okay with the council.

Then, moving down, and that sort of takes care of that top, some of the issues on that top part of the workload, and I will note Dolphin Wahoo Regulatory Amendment 3 was moved from there to the sort of list of other amendments, sort of the -- I think of it as the bullpen, so to speak, further down in the document, but it was moved off of the active workplan, per the motion that was approved by the Dolphin Wahoo Committee yesterday.

Moving down for the -- As far as the other items, sort of the planned amendments, black grouper, the black grouper MSE amendment, you had an assessment response scheduled for -- I believe it was for December, and that was moved back to June of next year, and, as you recall, when Chip was going over that presentation, you've really -- You've kind of gone through step one in the MSE. However, step one does not include a catch level recommendation, and so additional time is needed to develop that MSE to come up with a potential catch-level recommendation.

We discussed it, and likely, since it has to go -- That needs to be developed, and it also needs to go through SSC review, and you're probably not looking at starting that amendment until June of next year, and so that timeline was moved back as well.

I'll also mention, while I'm still up here in the top of the workplan, the SERO priorities have been updated, and so, as you know, each meeting, the primary and secondary priorities of the agency and Regional Office are updated, and so they're up -- They're added there for you to review, as far as the active amendments, and then, also, further down in the document, there's a table noting

SERO priorities for rulemaking. That sort of handles the amendments underway, or planned, and so --

MS. MURPHEY: Go ahead, Andy.

MR. STRELCHECK: Thanks, and I'm fine if we want to wait until the end, but I thought it might be good to discuss these kind of in chunks. With regard to black sea bass, because we're going to miss the winter season, timing I don't think is as critical to get that approved in December, and so I could see that schedule sliding a meeting, to free up having to approve four actions, and it's still a priority, but it would be moved to the March meeting for approval. Then I thought we talked about, during committee, that, Amendment 61, we were going to go to public hearings, and I guess it's in December, and is that right?

MR. HADLEY: Yes, and that was the approval for public hearings in December, but, again, that was -- That decision, I guess, was moved to the workplan.

MR. STRELCHECK: So that's already on there. Thanks.

MS. MURPHEY: Go ahead, John. Go ahead, Kerry.

MS. MARHEFKA: Maybe I'm misunderstanding, or losing my mind, but I don't see on here an assessment response for SEDAR 90.

MR. CARMICHAEL: I think our thought was on that, initially, was that potentially caught up in that top line, the long-term snapper grouper response that's supposed to be driven by the assessment and MSE. Now, if we get the results, there is a possibility that you could do a faster, smaller effort to just change the catch level, which is something we are considering, but we would like to make sure that we get to that point in December.

There's a peer review planned in December, and that's hinging on getting the FES numbers on time, but we certainly hope the Science Center will do everything in its power to make that peer review schedule, and it's certainly been discussed at the steering committee a number of times, the importance of making that, you know, scheduled peer review, but as I said, it depends on the FES. We did ask that the FES be expedited for that stock, and it was -- We're told that's not something that they can do, because it's an everything batch effort, and it's not a single-species effort, but we are watching that.

Then, when we get a sense of how that's going, we can decide if it's something that you wish us to expedite to get the catch level changed, and, if so, we are already thinking internally about a potential SSC meeting in January to review it, and get the catch level recommendation, and bring that to you in March. It kind of will depend on the nature of it.

If it's something where we can simply just change the catch levels, then that's something we can consider doing, and so we would kind of like to let that process play out before committing too hard to it, and so we could be looking at squeezing in say a framework action to adjust the catch levels for red snapper, and that's all that would focus on. Is that clear as mud?

MS. MARHEFKA: I understand it. I'm not sure I'm comfortable with it, but I understand it. I want to think about it a little.

MS. MURPHEY: John.

DR. WALTER: Thanks, and, from the Science Center perspective, we're pretty familiar with the need, and the schedule, and the desire there. The other thing that's a need is that we're going to need the SRFS data to be integrated with FES, and so there's two steps there. We need the FES revisions, and then SRFS data needs to be -- To calibrate it back in time, and so we need to ensure our state partners can also meet that schedule.

There's another request that we have, because it's going to be a tight timeframe, and we don't -- We want to avoid, as much as possible, back and forth between multiple SSC meetings. We only really get one shot at an ABC, and, to do that, it would be really helpful to get any potential management actions that might affect an ABC projection, and to get a heads up on that, if at all possible, from the council, so that we don't have to do multiple iterations.

We often have to do multiple iterations of the ABC projections as it goes between the council and the SSC, based on some assumptions about maybe descender device use, management actions, and so the more that that could be front-loaded, in terms of what its effect on the projections would be, the better we can give what might be a near final ABC for that SSC meeting that would get to the March council meeting.

My other comment is January -- Because we'll get the CIE review report probably early January, or mid-January, if we're lucky because that's -- December 14th to 18th is the CIE review. We probably won't get it before the new year, and so we won't really be able to work on the recommendations, and so, if we could have that SSC meeting in February, it might give us enough time to incorporate whatever recommended changes are, and then, if that February SSC could review it, and then get it hopefully in time for the briefing book for March, and it's going to be tight. We're committed to try to make that timeframe, but there's a lot of moving parts, and so thanks.

MS. MARHEFKA: Yes, and so I have spent the last two days getting fully educated on sort of math, if that's possible to get in two days, and sort of the flaw in some of the argument in my way of thinking about how we have, you know, certainly handled discards and things like that in the past.

On the other hand, one thing that I've come to realize is there is an appropriate and fair way to look at it. It is not now, and I'm not asking for that, and so everyone -- No one has to freak out. I'm not making a motion about that, but it would fully be my intention that, coming out of SEDAR 90, for this council to have a management-level discussion, because it is in this body's purview to get that ABC and decide, from a management perspective, sort of how to go from ABC to ACLs and handle allocations, and so that cannot be done in a framework, and so, you know, I would just like to say that that is something I am thinking very strongly about.

I don't find that the long-term plan is necessarily appropriate. I know there are other things for red snapper, but I would just like to remind everyone, at this moment, at this time, the facts on the table are that this body manages red snapper in federal waters, and I would like for us to continue

to plan for that, and, if it changes, then that's what happens, and, you know, great, and we have a lot more time on our hands to talk about other things, but, at this time, I would like us to anticipate that that's where we're going, and, personally, I foresee needing to take something other than a framework action for the results of SEDAR 90.

MS. MURPHEY: Go ahead, Robert.

MR. SPOTTSWOOD: Kerry, I appreciate waiting for that, and I'm hopeful that, when we get there, we can start looking at the fishery, both the rec and the commercial needs as a whole, and the goal here really being to reduce those dead discards, or get a handle on them, and figure out how to convert those into landings in a fair way for both of the fisheries, and that's where some of -- You know, a little bit of my frustration comes.

I agree, this council has to solve that, and we also need to solve the dead discard issue, because that's an issue we created. Rec fishermen are only fishing in accordance with the laws we set, and I think we can change that, whether it's through the aggregate limits or whatever else we're looking at, but I encourage everybody here to be -- To look at the fishery as a whole, and let's figure out how to get more fish before we start talking about how we're splitting them up, and I think that can be done. I think we're on our way, and I think the data is starting to show that that's possible, and so I appreciate you all continuing to work on that. Thank you.

MS. MURPHEY: Thank you, Robert. John.

MR. CARMICHAEL: Kerry, thanks for that. I think we can accommodate what you're saying, certainly within that top line for snapper grouper, if we decide, and so I think the -- We have the flexibility, right, and we know we could do a quick framework, if we decide that's what we need to do immediately, and then we can modify what's been that placeholder for that long-term response. Maybe it's not as extensive as has been talked about in the past, but maybe it's a first do this, and then look at, you know, maybe other things as well. I think we can accommodate that.

We'll have a couple of places along the way where we're going to kind of get a check on progress. The first will be at your September meeting, with the critical thing being was the FES delivered on time, and that's really critical, and so it's supposed to be late August. Hopefully, by our September meeting, we're able to tell you whether or not that came through, and I expect that Florida won't be much of a hold up in terms of getting the SRFS to them, and so, yes, that should be good, I'm hoping.

Then, of course, in December, we'll know whether or not the peer review, and so I think we have to continue to track this. We'll keep you informed of how that goes along, and then, from there, we'll figure out what's our best way to squeeze in red snapper, but I think it's pretty clear that is the top priority amongst all these projects to get done. Is there anything else on that, or other stuff? We can talk some about the load.

MR. HADLEY: I had a really quick point to help, I think, hopefully address some of Kerry's concerns, and it's that the workload is pretty full through the end of the year. However, there's a lot of leeway starting in March, and so however direct -- You know, whichever way the council wants to go with that, there's space, so to speak, to address it.

MS. MARHEFKA: Listen, and I don't know the path forward, and, obviously, a lot of the paths forwards are happening outside of this room, and I'm not naive to that, but my concern is another year, another fishing season when we're looking at the same thing, and absolutely nothing has changed, and that doesn't help any of us, and, you know, I look to brighter minds than me to figure out that situation.

Again, what I don't want to have happen is for us to be distracted by things that are happening that are outside of our control, and I'm guilty of having that happen, and have, for now, this body to understand that we are the steward of this resource, at this moment, and what can we do, because I personally don't want to spend next March, like whatever iteration of a number that we're working off of, go through this again, and so I'll leave it at that. We're not certainly going to solve it here, but I feel heard and so thank you.

MS. MURPHEY: Thank you, Kerry, and you are heard.

MR. CARMICHAEL: You know, the real thing to bring to your attention is December 2026. There's four A's, and that means final amendment approval. What happens after final amendment approval is the Regional Office and our staff complete the document. The chair has to review the entire document, deem it all appropriate, et cetera, and then we submit it.

Our goal has always been that something approved in December gets submitted before the March meeting. I'm pretty sure that, with four of those, along with potentially doing public hearings, it's not going to happen between December and March, and some of these may slip. These A's may slip a bit, depending on how the next meetings go, but, you know, I don't think, you know, and Andy gave us some leeway there, I think, and he was right on the ropeless black sea bass pot, and so, if we can push that out a little bit into the year, I think that will help an awful lot, and we think the sunseting of SMZs is going to be a fairly small document, a simple action.

I think that gets us to something that's fairly manageable, but it definitely puts us in a place of, you know, we have a full workload for the rest of this year. We don't have the bandwidth to add anything new during 2026, and I expect, with these couple of shifts in red snapper, that we're probably full through March 2027, and we may even, by the end of this year, have to think about some of those things below the light green line, as to whether or not they actually start in March 2027 as planned, but, you know, we're good for September, it looks like, and I believe, with what we discussed here, we have a plan for December. Then, you know, next year again, of course, is always a full year, and there's a number of assessment things to deal with, which are going to be tough, and have to be done.

MS. MURPHEY: Andy.

MR. STRELCHECK: Yes, and, I mean, I really appreciate the comments being made around the table, and, with red snapper, like Kerry, I've given a lot of thought to it this week, right, and there's things that, you know, are still ongoing, and outside of our control, but then there's things that we need to be thinking about that are inside our control, and part of that is how do we respond to the assessment, and how quickly we're able to react to it, and things we maybe can front load, given some of the complexities of just delivering that assessment, and completing it, and getting it through the review process.

Then I also look at, obviously, what's on our agenda, and, you know, we're going to get to, for example, discussing state management coming up. I see that kind of rolled into that long-term snapper grouper response, right, and I'm concerned, if we're going to wait until June to start talking about state management, that that's potentially too late to even set it up for a 2029 season, if that's the way the council wants to go, right, and so my encouragement to this council is to start conversations around that long-term snapper grouper management response sooner rather than later.

You know, things like state management, if we're going to go down that path for consideration, you're going to take a lot of meetings, a lot of conversations, a lot of socializing. The other aspects of this, that maybe are outside our control, but I think would be good for the council to be looped into, is data collection improvements, right, and we've spent a lot of time focusing on, you know, the limitations of the data.

We're going to have, obviously, new data that's going into the assessment. There's been a lot of science and information collected on red snapper, but there's also a lot of good data that's coming in for other snapper grouper species, and so having some of that information before the council, sooner rather than later, I think will also benefit us, in terms of some of this broader snapper grouper response beyond red snapper.

MS. MURPHEY: Thank you, Andy. Jimmy.

MR. HULL: Thanks for all that, Andy, and good conversations from Kerry, and from Robert, and I'm going into the scheduling, and the idea of taking the ropeless black sea bass gear approval out of December and pushing it into March of 2027, and so that's going to basically eliminate a 2027 season too, that would be in the wintertime for -- I mean, it's -- You're not going to get the best time of year to -- If its approval goes through, it's going to be much later in 2027. I guess that's better than nothing, but the -- If there's any way that we could get the approval done in December, I think that would be better.

MR. CARMICHAEL: Jimmy, I think what Andy was saying is that, if it's approved in December of 2026, it won't make the 2026-2027 winter fishery, you know, but, if we approve it in March, we can still make the 2027-2028 winter fishery.

MR. HULL: Okay. Thanks.

MS. MURPHEY: Anything else? Let me make sure I understand what we've done, and so we are pushing -- So we're not going to have four approvals for public hearing now at next -- We're going to push -- It looks like two, because we're pushing black sea bass pots out, and then -- What was the other one? I thought we might be pushing 61 one more out. The FMU, were we pushing that? Go ahead.

MR. HADLEY: That was switching public hearings from September to December, but we're still maintaining that approval in March.

MS. MURPHEY: Okay, and so we're good? We're good now, or --

MR. CARMICHAEL: Yes, Trish, and I think that we're good, and so we will -- Black sea bass pots shift to March 2027 for approval, and I think we would still talk about it in September, as we're planning to, you know, but we'll see how staff goes, but I think we would like to maintain the momentum there, and, you know, continue to talk about it, and I see Myra nodding.

That would give us the final approvals on the sunseting the SMZs, which I said is a fairly small one, but then give us two bigger ones dealing with there, with the -- What is it? The yellowtail and the commercial one, 61, which we think that that's probably manageable, but we may have to consider how we go about, you know, like scheduling those public hearings and stuff, because remember you're over the holidays, and we're already talking about an SSC meeting potentially for red snapper, and so we just may have to -- We may have to do some juggling on the schedules, once we see how it all plans out, and think when we do some of those activities.

Then are there Lines meetings in that quarter as well penciled in, as I recall, and so I have to -- You know, I have to give you guys a shoutout on that. That is a full week of most of our staff, and so that's a really big thing as well, and so definitely don't -- You know, don't underplay the importance of those meetings, and what it -- The burden that it's going to put on staff, as well as council members, for a full week, and so that's going to knock a week out of that quarter as well.

MS. MURPHEY: Anything else? Carolyn.

DR. BELCHER: Apologies for coming in late, but, the SSC meeting for red snapper, was the plan to do that virtually or in-person?

MR. CARMICHAEL: Given the topic, we would like to do that in-person, and so we're just going to see how the whole project plays out and decide when the time comes.

DR. BELCHER: Yes, because I was going to say that I would advocate for an in-person on that one.

MR. CARMICHAEL: Yes, and that's what we would like to do.

MS. MURPHEY: Anything else for -- Okay, and so we'll go ahead and move on, John.

MR. HADLEY: All right, and so we'll address the bottom-half of the workplan here and just note some of the changes for the week. We added a short closed session for September, and then also note that the SECAD Committee had been meeting in March and September, and so we're -- That is switched to a June and December meeting schedule, and so that's kind of switched a little bit, and that matches a little bit better with the SSC schedule, typical meeting schedule, and so just noting that.

As far as additions, we added, in March, a discussion on how to address the Sunday sale topic, as well as modifying abbreviated framework procedures. Both of those items came up during the week, and so that kind of information discussion, and then how to address those in an amendment, that discussion is scheduled for March. The Gulf SEFHIER update, that's put on there for March as well.

There was a Blueline Tilefish Subcommittee update added to September, and then there will be several updates in September as well regarding SERFS, resilient fisheries, and perhaps the shrimp workgroup, and so that is it.

At the very bottom there, you can kind of see the bottom line, so to speak. It's a pretty full meeting in September, a very full meeting in December, and looking at a 9.5, and so on target for September, on the high side for December, but, you know, that's something that we could always see how it plays out after the next meeting.

As mentioned, you know, really quickly scrolling down, here's a list of your other amendments that are anticipated, or have been deprioritized, and so that's a note that Reg Amendment 3 has been moved down there, and so it will remain on the workplan, but it will be sort of down here in the other amendments.

Then last, but not least, at the bottom there, there is the SERO priority amendments undergoing rulemaking, if you're curious about what is in the hopper, so to speak, on the rulemaking side, and so, with that, if there are no additional comments on the workplan.

MS. MURPHEY: All right. Thank you, John. I wonder if this might be the time to discuss Spanish mackerel, while we're on the workplan. Dewey, do you want to go ahead and talk about that, while that's -- While we've got this open?

MR. HEMILRIGHT: Absolutely, and so I've been looking at the Spanish mackerel, and the massive under-harvest over the last five years, four years. In 2023, there was 21.5 percent under-harvest. In 2023 to 2024, a 35 percent under-harvest. In 2024 to 2025, a 36 percent under-harvest, and, in 2025 to 2-26, 11.8, and the reason for the 11.8 in the last year is the northern region was able to get transfers from the southern region to the tune of 325,000 pounds. Had that transfer not happened, you would probably be looking at the same thing, at under-harvest.

Given this, what can we do in the future, on some type of rollovers, or harvest control rule change, or how do we do this, given that it appears like that, you know, some migratory patterns have changed with fishing, some different things like that, where both the southern and northern are able to continue to utilize their quota, but that we don't leave so many millions of pounds, which I think -- Well, close to a million pounds in some years, of fish on the table, that could be caught,

When you look at the last year, had it not been for the 325,000 pounds that came from the southern zone, you would have that underage again, and so we're underperforming, and so my question is why can't we roll over some, and how does the harvest control rule affect not being able to do that?

MS. MURPHEY: Robert.

MR. SPOTTSWOOD: I don't know, Trish, if you know, or John, and how did the transfer -- What was the process for the transfer from south to north that Dewey just mentioned?

MS. MURPHEY: I'll let Jessica explain it.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Yes, and there's a process in the FMP that allows transfer. It involves discussions with the state agency people between the northern and the southern zone, and so the

request goes back and forth in email, then, ultimately, it's put in a letter, and then we coordinate with NOAA Fisheries on the actual transfer of the amount.

MR. SPOTTSWOOD: In prior years before last year, was that controversial, or we never -- Had the question had just not been asked?

MS. MCCAWLEY: We've made transfers in a number of years, and not just last year, and, last year, we actually transferred twice, which is not something that we've normally done, but we've made transfers in a number of other years in the past.

MS. MURPHEY: It's been -- We've asked some in the past, and we have not asked for some in the past, and we didn't -- Go ahead, Jessica.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Well, I was also going to say that there's a lot of other things that kind of come into play here. There's a rule that allows us, right now, to stay open in state waters when federal waters are closed at a 500-pound trip limit, because of, you know, just trying to kind of keep the fish trickling in there towards the end of the season.

I mean, we've also talked about other things, like -- To get to some of the things Dewey is talking about, in addition to rollover, changing the start of the fishing year, but we also talked about this before, and thought that we needed to wait until we had the new Spanish mackerel numbers, and so we were making a conscious decision to wait for this. It also has to go through ASMFC, and ASMFC comments on this, and takes action through their channels as well.

MS. MURPHEY: But we've had -- Yes, we've had discussions in the past for transfers. Can I -- Andy, is it okay if I let him answer the rollover question, real quick?

MR. CARMICHAEL: Yes, and so the transfers happen between the states and stuff. We're not involved in that at the council level. The rollover question, and the ABC control rule, the rollovers are allowed in the ABC control rule.

We modified the ABC control rule for snapper grouper and dolphin, and there may have been some of those others in there, but not for CMP, because that's a joint plan with the Gulf Council, and we couldn't do it just through our own comprehensive, and it would have made it take longer, and I think -- If I'm wrong, Christina, please come up and say the actual truth. We do plan to do that, but rollover is not part of the ABC control rule of the CMP species, and it has to be part of that to be able to do it, and so that is something we intend to do, but it's not in there now.

MS. MURPHEY: Go ahead, Dewey.

MR. HEMILRIGHT: So how do we fix this? You know, we're going to -- Jessica mentioned about waiting for the new stock assessment, which probably is three years away before it comes on the table, realistically, or maybe two-and-a-half years, and so I'm just looking at the available quota from the last stock assessment that says this is what you're allowed to catch. We're underperforming massive amounts that could, you know, put more seafood on the plates of the consumer, and it just seems like the hold-up possibility is in the transfer, or not transfer to the Gulf or different things, and so how do we fix this? The short story.

MS. MURPHEY: Okay, and I'm going to go ahead and go to -- Andy had something, and then I'll go to Christina, or okay.

MS. CURTIS: I was just going to note -- So the next Spanish mackerel assessment is scheduled to start at the beginning of 2027, and so this council would probably be -- If everything stays on schedule, would be looking at results maybe in December of 2027, I believe, and, just as a note, in March, you guys requested that we hold a Mackerel Cobia Advisory Panel meeting, and so the intent is still to hold that in the fall, and then I believe it's on the workplan for the Mackerel Committee to meet in March of 2027.

MS. MURPHEY: Thank you, Christina. Andy.

MR. STRELCHECK: Yes, and so thanks for bringing this up, Dewey, and so, first, I want to say, you know, I appreciate the states working together last year. I think that process went pretty seamlessly, and it worked well. In terms of, quote-unquote, a fix, right, I mean, I do think that we could go back and look at allocations amongst the states to see if there has been changes, and, you know, if necessary, make changes.

The other suggestion, and I forget who made it, but I think starting the fishing year November 1 allows Florida essentially to fish their whole Spanish mackerel season. They'll know what's largely been caught by the time that North Carolina and other states start fishing on mackerel that migrate northward, and so any shift then between the states would have more certainty.

Right now, what would happen is North Carolina is fishing their fish, but Florida still has a large portion of their season that would be open, and when mackerel will be available, and so there's more risk to Florida to essentially release those fish, with the potential that they will need them for commercial harvest in Florida later in the year.

MS. MURPHEY: That has been our -- In past discussions, is that has been their concern, when we have had other discussions of transfer, and so I hear a solution in changing the fishing season, or fishing year. I hear that as a solution, and I see Dewey's hand.

MR. HEMILRIGHT: (Mr. Hemilright's comment is not audible on the recording.)

MS. CURTIS: It is in the binder, but I believe, unfortunately, a fishing year change would require a plan amendment. We ran into this issue with cobia ten or so years ago, but I believe the fishing year change requires a plan amendment.

MS. MURPHEY: So it sounds like the solution is a full plan amendment, which I guess -- Okay. It sounds like it's a full plan amendment, which I'm sure takes a fair amount of time, and adds to the workplan, but I'll give it to John.

MR. CARMICHAEL: It depends, Trish. You know, if it's a single-action thing, and you guys decide what it is you want to do in like one meeting, and you don't throw other things onto it along the way, then, yes, we can do it pretty quick. It's not that much longer than the framework.

MS. MURPHEY: Well, I guess I'm corrected.

MR. CARMICHAEL: So I think it is possible, and I would say it would go in there, and that last line, Number 16, for the non-catch level Spanish mackerel measures, we would put that in there, and then shift all of that other stuff back, but, you know, the minute that it starts to add more stuff, it gets hard, and, Christina, this would require Gulf approval, and so that will make it take a little bit longer than what we would do, and it would probably take a year, and ASMFC is engaged as well, but I don't think they would have to do a whole lot for this part.

MS. MURPHEY: Go ahead, Christina.

MS. CURTIS: So that's correct. A full plan amendment would require Gulf approval, which means it does extend it slightly. Historically, if the plan amendment has only affected the Atlantic stocks, the Gulf has sort of taken the South Atlantic Council's lead, and there hasn't been any consternation, and so it's just a matter of meeting schedules and going back to the Gulf to get them to sort of support everything the South Atlantic Council is doing for the Atlantic stock. We would likely collaborate a little bit with ASMFC, though they are not in any way obligated to make changes to their plan based on changes we make to ours. It's more of a courtesy thing.

MS. MURPHEY: Thank you, Christina. Jessica.

MS. MCCAWLEY: I agree with everything Christina said, but Bob Beal has said around this table, including earlier this week, that, if we were to make changes to CMP in any way, that ASMFC would start working on changes for rules in state waters for species like Spanish mackerel, and I just want to put some caution out there, because it seemed like the past, or recent, discussions about Spanish mackerel, that some of the ASMFC members would be seeking to remove that 500-pound limit, where it allows the state waters to stay open when the fishery is already closed, and so just some caution there.

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

MR. ROLLER: So, you know, obviously, we talked about this last meeting as well, is the idea to address some of these non-catch-level items, right, but I am cognizant to what is the most important thing here, right, and we know that changing the fishing date is something that a lot of our fishermen have been bringing up to us, right, and I do have some concern waiting for the next assessment, as has been stated, because we know that's a long period of time.

I also remind the council there are some very issues that we keep hearing about that could be added to, and I just -- You know, John, I know your comment that we've got to be careful what we add, but, you know, I bring up the king mackerel tournament landings. We continue to hear about this from fishermen, and so there are a few non-catch-level items that could be addressed in an amendment that are very salient to our fishermen right now, and so I just wanted to bring that up. I would also point out, you know, we do have a tentative AP meeting for mackerel, I believe, this fall.

MS. MURPHEY: John, did you have more to add, or any more discussion? Dewey.

MR. HEMILRIGHT: So it sounds like we got a few things to worry about. You've got the Gulf, the Atlantic States, all these things, and, you know, I'm for seeing to test the system, just how

inflexible it is with a simple year change, and so how can we move forward with an amendment to change the year?

MS. MURPHEY: Go ahead, John.

MR. CARMICHAEL: I think we said we could start an amendment. The earliest we can consider starting anything new is March, and we could start an amendment to make that single thing, and we think, despite the complexities of ASMFC and the Gulf, if we limit it to that one action, we can get it done in a year.

I'm concerned that some of these other actions, and I understand the issues, and like, you know, Tom mentioned the bag limit sales, which is huge, but I would be afraid that that would be the kind of issue that might slow it down, just because of the passions that surround that type of thing, you know, and so, as always, I will caution that, if you want to get something done quick, you've got to keep it tight, and so that's where we are, Dewey. I think we could do it in a year, if we have this one action, and we could start it in March, and then we have the concerns that you all just have to weigh, that Jessica raised, about how ASMFC may respond.

MS. MURPHEY: Dewey.

MR. HEMILRIGHT: Well, I'm for -- I just want to check the system, and how long does it take for a year change, and I think it would be beneficial to both Florida and North Carolina, and also the harvesting of the fish, that is the, you know, commercial allocation, or quota, and that can put more fish on the plate of the consumer, and is in direct response to the President's EO of Seafood Competitiveness and Restoring America's Fisheries.

It would be interesting, given John's comments on what he's looking at, or sees or whatever, but, I mean, this is -- We know we live in a crazy process, where it takes a year, or eighteen months, to change a starting date that both the north and the south would agree on, and so I'm all for it. Do you need a motion?

MS. MURPHEY: Let me -- Go ahead, Tom.

MR. ROLLER: Just based off of my last comment, you know, I agree with you, Dewey. I think the idea of, you know, testing the system to see if changing a fishing year is a good thing, though I'm just going to throw a little bit of word of caution. If we put a mackerel amendment on there, and we don't say address tournament landings, we are going to receive a lot of criticism. We've received a ton of public comment from that, and so I just want to state it out there, that I -- It's going to be hard for us not to put that in there and talk about it.

MS. MURPHEY: Any other comments? Charlie.

MR. PHILLIPS: Thank you, Madam Chair, and, kind of back to Dewey's point that it just takes so long sometimes, and, you know, I talked to Jessica about this yesterday, or the day before, and, you know, we've got joint amendments with the Gulf, and we want to do things over here that have nothing to do with the Gulf, and they ditto it, and check it off, but it would -- It might behoove us to see if there's some conversations we can have so we can streamline some things, so we don't have to take up their time, or they take up our time when they want to change stuff that doesn't

have anything to do with us, and some things like that, and that's just one example, but, if we could start figuring out a way to streamline some stuff, that would be good for us, and it would be good for staff, and it would be really good for fishermen.

MS. MURPHEY: Thank you, Charlie. John.

MR. CARMICHAEL: I think, Charlie, we -- You know, we do, right, because we've talked about frameworks, and abbreviated frameworks, and regulatory amendments, and we have a lot of things, and it just seems like, for whatever reason, you know, however many years back in the past, the council at that time chose certain actions to put in those faster tools for us, and they didn't choose some of these actions that we're trying to deal with now to put in those faster tools.

That's really why our hands are tied, and then, when it comes to the regular amendment, you know, we have -- The reason it takes so long is Magnuson, and working with other councils add things to it, but I will say that, you know, we are having the governance workshop, as some of you are aware, and it's really oriented along the Atlantic coast, but the other councils to our north do have a lot of experience in various types of joint management activities.

We're going to learn a lot about those, and they're looking at some ways to work more efficiently, and we're looking at ways to work more efficiently with like the Mid-Atlantic, when it comes to things like blueline, and I fully expect that we could take some of the lessons learned there and transfer them over to what we do with the Gulf.

Maybe we get together with the Gulf at some point and talk about some of the issues we have with joint management of species, whether it be within some of the snapper grouper stocks, or within the CMP stocks, and maybe we do find a way that we can do things quicker, so we're not, you know, trying to -- Having to just go through that box-checking exercise, essentially, where we're good with what you're doing, and you're good with what we're doing with the little part that's just us, and not have to do this multi-meeting thing.

I think you're absolutely right, and, you know, I think what we're seeing here is some places where the system really is being overly restrictive to responding, and we think about dealing with an environment that's changing, and the need to be a lot more rapid and efficient in our responses that we talk about, and it seems like clearly this is a plan that needs some thought about how we can set ourselves up to be much quicker, because it is absolutely frustrating.

I'll say I think Tom is right, you know, and the bag limit sales is such a hot topic. You open Pandora's Box of mackerel, and that's going to come up, and that's going to potentially throw a monkey-wrench into the works for sure, and so we should think about that. Maybe we just roll up our sleeves and say we're going to work through it, even if it takes a little bit longer to get to the season change, you know.

MS. MURPHEY: I had Jessica, then Tom, and then let's go ahead and start wrapping this up. Then Andy.

MS. MCCAWLEY: So John Carmichael was kind of getting to why I had raised my hand, which was the procedure, and the process. At this meeting, there was a motion made that snapper grouper

and CMP, that there would be a -- And dolphin wahoo would do an abbreviated framework procedure and list out, you know, the items that could go through there.

I'm not saying that fishing year is going to get on the list, but I feel like that is a vehicle for this discussion, starting to have that discussion, and, since CMP is a joint amendment with the Gulf, you could get into what are the items that could go through a faster process versus an FMP process. That, you know, motion was made at this meeting, and that discussion would start -- I was trying to look through the list here, to figure out the timing of it, and I couldn't find it. John Hadley, where is it on there, to see how fast that would move, because I think that that is getting to some of the things that Charlie is suggesting, is like how to move the process faster, how to change the speed of the process, including the process that works with the Gulf.

MS. MURPHEY: You're going to answer Jessica's question, and then I'll go to Andy.

MR. HADLEY: So, that has not -- We have a placeholder for that for the discussion in March, and so we don't have the full amendment laid out yet, because there were two -- There is the Sunday sale item, which is comprehensive, and then also the abbreviated framework topic, which is comprehensive, and so we had a placeholder discussion in there. We can build it into the -- Go ahead and build it into the workplan, but, as far as where it's captured, it is captured for discussion in March, kind of to kick it off.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Yes, and, just to that point, I would suggest, just me, that piece, maybe it can move a little bit faster. Maybe it could come -- I know that September is full, and I know that December is full, but maybe it goes on the list for December, and then we reassess December's priorities in September. It's just March seems a little far away for this thing that could really help us.

MS. MURPHEY: Thank you, Jessica. Andy.

MR. STRELCHECK: Yes, and I just wanted to echo Jessica's sentiments, and agree. I think, you know, looking at this globally, we have this other motion that was made earlier in the week. Trying to address, obviously, ways to streamline and speed up our procedures, obviously, is a good thing. I think, in the interim, and kind of addressing Dewey's concerns, is, you know, we'll work with the states again this year to see if there's opportunities to transfer quota amongst the states, and what that looks like to maximize harvest.

One thing I will note, and I forgot to point this out earlier, is, obviously, a lot of Spanish mackerel are caught in state waters, and so that is also part of our challenge with kind of predicting when the catch limit will be met, and we have lags in reporting that, obviously, impact some of our projections, and we have to make some assumptions based on what we've received, versus what we haven't received, and so it's just always a moving target, Dewey, in terms of the challenge of actually hitting that annual catch limit exactly. Certainly we can work with the states as well on that, and see if there's any refinements, or improvements, we can make to the state water reporting of landings.

MS. MURPHEY: Thank you, Andy. I would like to go ahead and wrap this up, and so, if I'm hearing everything right, we could start an amendment to address the year, but probably, to keep it tight and quick, we would have to keep it tight to one, but there's concern that we probably need

to address the tournament sales, which will elongate it, and it is a joint amendment with the Gulf. It also opens up for ASMFC to do things, so just to throw those scenarios out. Dewey, I turn to you, if you want to make a motion or --

MR. HEMILRIGHT: **I'll make a motion, and the motion would be we look at both the start date change and the tournament sales, king mackerel tournament sales, and whichever -- Somebody help me out with it.** Whichever -- However we can get this to the start, whether it be our earliest possible time of getting this on our docket, or our work schedule. I know there's a -- I know there's -- Well, if I get a second.

MR. ROLLER: I'll second it.

MS. MURPHEY: Tom seconded, and so discussion.

MR. HEMILRIGHT: You know, I hate being hamstrung by the tools in the toolbox, and the time period, but there ain't nothing else we can do at this time, but so whenever we can get this going on our work schedule, and we'll keep it to these two things, no matter how much we get going down the road, unless there's Spanish mackerel falling out of the sky, or something else, and we're going to stick to these two things, and so that's, you know, kind of all I had to say.

MS. MURPHEY: Thank you, Dewey. Kerry.

MS. MARHEFKA: I'm curious if -- Because we had the mackerel port meetings, and the Mackerel AP has met a lot without us taking action, can those -- can all of that information be considered scoping, and we can go straight to a document?

MS. MURPHEY: Go ahead, John.

MR. CARMICHAEL: Myra can help me out, but scoping is no longer something that we have to do, based on the revised NEPA guidelines, and, if you're happy that you've heard enough, you can jump right in.

MS. MURPHEY: Thank you, John. Kerry.

MS. MARHEFKA: To that, I don't know if it needs to be -- If it can be direction of staff, or needs to be in the motion, and, if it's direction of staff, then I highly recommend that we feel like we have heard from the public what the needs are, and talked about these issues, and to skip scoping and go straight to what I guess what would be a draft amendment, or draft -- Draft actions and alternatives.

MS. MURPHEY: Thank you, Kerry. Any -- Christina.

MS. CURTIS: So just a quick question. In thinking about sort of an order of operations, and where this ends up going on your workplan, some guidance on whether or not you want the AP to meet this fall, before, in theory, you've seen any of this, or if you would like the AP to meet in the spring, after you have seen some actions and alternatives.

MS. MURPHEY: Any thoughts on when the AP should meet, given Christina's -- Do you want to continue to -- Do you want to hold off until the spring or have them continue to have them meet in the fall? Go ahead, Tom.

MR. ROLLER: You're speaking about the AP, right?

MS. MARHEFKA: Yes.

MR. ROLLER: Our traditional AP meeting is in the fall, right, for mackerel, but we switched it up, and it is, you know, TBD on the agenda. I would say I know they've talked about it a lot, but they may have other things to talk about, and so I'm not going to say I'm indifferent, though I'm sure they're going to want to see something.

MS. MURPHEY: John.

MR. CARMICHAEL: So my suggestion would be, given that ASAP, looking at our workplan, is March, our plan would be to bring a draft amendment in March, and that means your AP should meet this fall, because, otherwise, March is -- You know, April comes after March, and so why don't we have them meet, and we will bring a draft amendment to you in March, with hopes that we've captured much of what you want.

MS. MURPHEY: Got it. Okay. Tom.

MR. ROLLER: Real quick, if we do meet the AP in the fall, you know, we can present this to them, and we can hear their thoughts. I know they've spoke about it at length, but we can hear their thoughts on these two things, and also see if there's anything else they want to bring up.

MS. MURPHEY: We do have a motion on the table. Any discussion on the motion? Robert.

MR. SPOTTSWOOD: Discussion around the topic for the motion, and so really a question for Andy and Shep. If it's appropriate to come back to this, just let me know, but I was just looking into what management measures potentially the Regional Administrator may be able to take, and I was curious if there's -- What's the distinction between the Regional Administrator's ability to open and close, or reopen seasons, versus adjust the fishing year?

MS. MURPHEY: Andy.

MR. STRELCHECK: The fishing year is explicitly specified, right, and so it's March 1 through the end of February, and so I do not have the authority to change that, but I can open and close fisheries based on when seasons are set, and whether or not we've met the quota, or, if we've determined the quota wasn't met, I can -- We need to reopen the fishery to allow for harvest of that quota.

MR. SPOTTSWOOD: Okay. Thank you.

MS. MURPHEY: Dewey.

MR. HEMILRIGHT: To Robert, it takes, through the process of reporting, and lag reporting, and late reporting, it takes a month or two of getting the necessary data to make that decision, even though there's only a -- You know, it's only a handful of dealers, and there's state dealers, but there's all that lag, regrettably, in the system that that takes probably closer to two months. That's been my experience on certain species, and so that's why -- You know, fishermen need something like next week, and not two months from now, you know, and so just to help further the point.

MS. MURPHEY: Thank you, Dewey. Robert, and then I would like to get back to this motion.

MR. SPOTTSWOOD: Yes, and, Dewey, I was only asking the question. I was trying to see if there was a way without the year-long full amendment process, if there was a way the Regional Administrator could take the action to adjust the season, and trying to push a little bit there for you.

MS. MURPHEY: Thank you, Robert. Charlie.

MR. PHILLIPS: Thank you, Madam Chair, and, if we're going to be directing staff to look at a possible amendment, and we're looking at options for tournament sales, we may very well want to do it, you know, so we allow the states to decide if they're, you know, viable or not in that state, if it's going to cause localized depletion somehow, things like that, because I think South Carolina doesn't do it, and we do. We don't pack very many, but we do, and then, if you really have an issue in North Carolina, and the state decides it is an issue, and they want to close when the other states can do what they need to do, I think that we need to make sure that's part of this discussion.

MS. MURPHEY: Okay. Let's -- Anything more on this motion? Did you have anything more on this motion, and then we'll call the question.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Yes, and just one more thing on the motion, and so I guess I would say, if the amendment just sticks to those two things, I think I'm good with it. My concern is, when we start bringing in all these other pieces from the port meetings, I really wanted that to come in after the new Spanish mackerel stock assessment.

If we start down this path, and we have to bring in those numbers from the previous Spanish mackerel stock assessment, that there were all these issues with, and there were these FES issues, and so I would -- If we're going to throw the kitchen sink in here, I would rather those -- All those other items come, you know, after we get that Spanish assessment. If it just sticks to this, then I think I'm okay with this getting in front of the assessment, but, since I don't really know, I'm thinking about abstaining on the motion, and so I just wanted to explain what my vote was, and why.

MS. MURPHEY: My understanding is the intent of this motion is just to address the fishing year and the tournament sales, and so I don't know if that helps, but that's the intent of that motion. I don't think -- It is not to bring in the kitchen sink, and you're right that there's some things that depend on that assessment, and so I agree with that, and so I'm going to go ahead and -- **Any objections to this motion? Any abstentions? We have one abstention, two, three abstentions. Is that it? Four abstentions. The motion still passes.**

All right. Thank you everyone for the good discussion, and so we will move on to the committee reports, or do we need to talk more about directions to staff before we go to committee reports? Are we done with the workplan? I think we've beat this workplan to death. All right. Well, then now we'll go ahead and go -- Does anybody need a break? Let's take a break and come back at 9:45. Is that okay?

(Whereupon, a recess was taken.)

MS. MURPHEY: We're going to go ahead and get started, and we'll start with the closed session report, and so the council met in closed session on Monday, June 8, 2026 and discussed the following items. This is advisory panel appointments, and the council reviewed applicants for the open seats on Habitat & Ecosystem, Law Enforcement, Mackerel Cobia, Snapper Grouper, Spiny Lobster, and Citizen Science Projects Advisory Panels and provided the following draft motions as recommendations for consideration by the council during open session, and so if anybody would like to make this first motion. Jessica.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Before I make the motion, I wanted to let people know one of these seats is for our FWC DMFM Habitat person, and I had to get that name. It is now in there, and so you might hear a new name, and it's because I was able to get that before we got to Full Council. **I move that we appoint Shannon McAskill, Derek Detwieler, Christian Commander, Cameron Brinton, and Eric Weather to the Habitat & Ecosystem AP.**

MS. MURPHEY: Do I have a second? Carolyn. Any discussion? **Any objection? Motion approved.** We have a second motion. Anybody care to make that motion? Amy.

MS. DUKES: Thank you, Madam Chair. **I move to appoint Matthew Troy and Kellie Ralston to the Habitat & Ecosystem AP.**

MS. MURPHEY: Do I have a second? Carolyn. Discussion? **Objections? Motion approved.** Draft Motion 3. Charlie.

MR. PHILLIPS: **Madam Chair, I move that we appoint Spud Woodward to the Law Enforcement AP.**

MS. MURPHEY: Do I have a second? Carolyn. Any discussion? **Any objections? Motion approved.** Motion 4. Tom.

MR. ROLLER: **I move that we reappoint Kevin Aman to the Mackerel Cobia AP.**

MS. MURPHEY: Do I have a second? Amy. Any discussion? **Any objection? Motion approved.** Next motion. Jimmy.

MR. HULL: **Madam Chair, I make a motion to appoint Stephen English to the Mackerel Cobia AP.**

MS. MURPHEY: Do I have a second? Charlie. Any discussion? **Any objection? Motion approved.** Next motion. Tom.

MR. ROLLER: **I move that we reappoint Chris Kimrey, Joe Matthews, Andrew Fish, John Polston, and Chris Militello to the Snapper Grouper AP.**

MS. MURPHEY: Do I have a second? Jimmy. Any discussion? **Any objections? Motion approved.** Next motion. Tom.

MR. ROLLER: **I move that we appoint Robert Johnson, Tim Griner, George Beyer, Stephen Gross, Jeff Hudson, and Vincent Bonera to the Snapper Grouper AP.**

MS. MURPHEY: Do I have a second? Jimmy. Any discussion? **Any objection? Motion approved.** We have next motion. Amy.

MS. DUKES: Thank you, Madam Chair. **I move to appoint Jeff Marinko to the Spiny Lobster AP.**

MS. MURPHEY: I have a second by Charlie. Any discussion? **Any objection? Motion approved.** The next motion. Amy.

MS. DUKES: **I move to appoint Kevin Spanik to the Citizen Science Projects Advisory Panel.**

MS. MURPHEY: A second? Charlie. Any discussion? **Any objection? Motion approved.** All right, and then we have directions to staff for the Habitat & Ecosystem AP to provide correction -
- We have already done that, basically, but the Florida Coastal Zone Management seat has been corrected, and we now have a member on that seat.

Law enforcement, we're going to re-advertise the open commercial and recreational seats for the appointment at December, and, for the Snapper Grouper AP, we're going to revisit the possibility of adding a for-hire representative from North Carolina at a future meeting.

Then we discussed term limits for AP members. The council was asked to discuss AP member term limits and provide clarification on how to account for AP member three-year term limits in years when the AP did not meet. The council provided the following guidance with the intent of reviewing revisions to the AP policy at a future meeting, and so we added Spiny Lobster to the list of APs that are exempt from term limits, and, for APs that do not meet annually, we will not count years when an AP does not meet against the three-year terms for AP members.

Terms for AP members are intended to last at least three AP meetings. Council staff will check in with AP members three years after the date of their appointment, just to confirm that they are willing to continue to serve on the AP for the remainder of the term, and this is not intended to replace the reappointment process, but will ensure that AP members are still engaged in the fishery and the management process, and then there's an example given there.

We also revised the term limits to allow the council flexibility to appoint AP members for additional years once an AP member's term limit has been met, and this will allow the council to exercise judgment to maintain specific expertise on an AP in circumstances when the applicant pool does not allow replacement of that expertise. The council clarified that the three consecutive three-year term limits will remain in place unless the council provides rationale to make an exception.

Next, we have the appointments for the SSC and the SEP, and the council reviewed applicants for open seats on the SSC and the SEP and provided the following draft motions as recommendations for consideration by the council during open session. We have a draft motion on the table. Anybody care to make that motion? Amy.

MS. DUKES: Thank you, Madam Chair. **I move to reappoint Walter Bubley, Jie Cao, Christina Package-Ward, Amy Schuler, Steve Turner, and Jason Walsh to the Science and Statistical Committee.**

MS. MURPHEY: Do I have a second? Carolyn. Any discussion? **Any objections? Motion approved.** We have a second motion. Carolyn.

DR. BELCHER: **I propose the following motion to reappoint Jennifer Sweeney-Tookes to the Social and Economic Panel.**

MS. MURPHEY: Do I have a second? I have Charlie. Any discussion? **Any objections? Motion approved.** We have one more. Anybody want to make this motion? Carolyn.

DR. BELCHER: **I move that we appoint May Lehmensiek and Robert Lorenz to the Social and Economic Panel.**

MS. MURPHEY: Do I have a second? I have Charlie. Any discussion? **Any objection? Okay. Motion approved.** Then, for SEDAR panel appointments, the council reviewed SEDAR panel appointments and provided the following draft motions as recommendations for consideration by the council. I have a motion. Carolyn.

DR. BELCHER: **I move that we appoint Marcel Reichert to the SEDAR 94 Florida Hogfish Review Panel.**

MS. MURPHEY: Do I have a second? Charlie. Any discussion? **Any objections? Motion approved.** The second motion. Tom.

MR. ROLLER: **I move that we appoint Jim Gartland, Jared Flowers, and Jeff Buckel to the Data Workshop Panel for the next Spanish Mackerel Assessment.**

MS. MURPHEY: Do I have a second? I have Amy. Any discussion? **Any objection? Motion approved.** Additionally, the council discussed member attendance to SEDAR 94, which is Florida hogfish, and SEDAR 90, which is South Atlantic red Snapper, and SEDAR 104, which is the dolphin MSE. We also reviewed the 2025 Law Enforcement Officer of the Year nominees, and the council reviewed nominees for the 2025 Law Enforcement Officer of the Year. The motion is presented as a recommendation. Who would like to make this motion? Amy.

MS. DUKES: Thank you, Madam Chair. **It's my distinct honor to make the motion to present the 2025 Law Enforcement of the Year Award to Special Agent Kevin Mitchell with NOAA OLE.**

MS. MURPHEY: Okay. Do I have a second? Charlie. Charlie seconded. Any discussion? **Any objections?** Okay. **Motion approved.** Then, under Other Business, the council identified some topics for future discussion, including potential changes to the online public comment process, the interaction of state and federal partners when gathering data for update assessments, opening membership on the Executive Committee to additional members, and changes to the state rotation of the chair to better accommodate interested members holding non-agency seats. We have a draft motion for timing and tasks. Anybody care to make that motion? Charlie.

MR. PHILLIPS: **Madam Chair, I make the motion to send notification letters to the appointees and email notifications to applicants not selected.**

MS. MURPHEY: Do I have a second? I'm sorry. Okay. It's a long week.

MR. PHILLIPS: Sorry, and I didn't read the bottom. **Conduct an orientation for new AP, SSC, and SEP members, and prepare revisions to the AP policy for review at the September 2026 meeting, and present the 2025 LEOY award during the September 2026 meeting.**

MS. MURPHEY: Thank you, Charlie. Now do we have a second? Jimmy. Any discussion? **Any objections?** **Motion approved.** That concludes our meeting summary for closed session. I've got John.

MR. CARMICHAEL: Yes, and I just -- Now that we're in open session, the issue came up about membership on the Executive Committee, and so I wanted to get on the record what the Executive Committee membership really is, and so this is in your handbook, on page 30, and it specifies the following: The Executive Committee is composed of the council chair, the vice chair, the immediate past council chair, and two other council members named by the council chair in consultation with the vice chair. If this composition results in less than five members on the executive committee, the council chair, in consultation with the vice chair, shall appoint the appropriate number of individuals to assure membership of the Executive Committee is five. The council chair serves as committee chair, and the council vice chair serves as committee vice chair. The Executive Director serves an advisory committee.

I will point out that, come September, when we do elections, and, on page 1, it describes the elections, and it basically says we elect a chair and a vice chair annually. That's it. That's all it says. There's no, you know, rules specified in there at all about that, but, considering that we know that our current chair will be vacating that position, after having served two years, and will also no longer be a council member, thanks to their well-earned retirement coming soon thereafter, we will be having a different chair, as well as the past chair position would require a new person.

Now, if someone who is on the Executive Committee now becomes vice chair, that would still leave two vacancies on the Executive Committee, and, if someone else becomes vice chair, that would leave potentially three vacancies on the Executive Committee, and so I think it's pretty clear that there is going to be some changes coming to that, and we may not need to do anything more, and I will say, if we add an extra seat, it will require a change in the handbook, and we will have to go through that, but I just wanted to make sure folks were clear like what's actually listed in there and how things are going to play out come September.

MS. MURPHEY: Thank you, John. Tom.

MR. ROLLER: I wasn't planning on addressing this now, but I'm going to, and I'm going to try to keep this as brief as possible. Also, I'm not trying to upset anybody. I just want to have a discussion. The council process is a stakeholder-driven process, with stakeholder involvement, and, given my experience at CMOD, and liaison to other councils, and a lot of people have spoken to me, as well as it's been my opinion, that, when we look at the makeup of the council, like the Executive Committee, given the definition in the handbook, of which I was aware when we discussed this before, it makes the appearance that the state agency folks here at this table seem to have the predominant leadership role.

I know that is a reflection of the last decade plus, when we've had the only chairs on this council have been from the state agencies. I understand why that has happened, but I have to ask the question of whether our tradition of rotating chairs is serving the stakeholders on this council, and I would argue at this time it is not, simply for the fact of, if you think about other councils, and their stakeholder chairs, when we look around the room, when we look around that historically, when someone comes into this process, you're not going to want a first-term or second-term council member as chair.

People need time to learn the process, to run committees, to be engaged with APs, and to really learn the specifics of this, and I would just make the argument that continuing that tradition simply makes that really, really difficult, right, and is therefore reflected in the makeup of the Executive Committee.

I am not going to sit here and make an argument that we should make any changes to this right now, but just I want to kick the apple cart, and have a little bit of that discussion, and make sure people understand that, and if we can say continue with this tradition, and we continue having just the way the cards fall, and we continue to have a -- Looking near into the future, that we have state agency people as chairs, I think that we therefore need to consider different changes to the handbook for the Executive Committee, and so this is what I'm trying to discuss, and, like I said, I'm not trying -- It's not personal, and I'm not trying to upset anybody. I just want to have this discussion about how our process is reflective, how it is serving the stakeholders who are engaged in this process.

MS. MURPHEY: Thank you, Tom. Any other discussion on this? All right. Dewey.

MR. HEMILRIGHT: When I look at the Executive Committee, I believe anybody should be able to serve on that Executive Committee if they volunteer to choose on there. I only think that it meets a couple times a year, the Executive Committee, and, you know, as far as timelines for discussion or something, if something is put across somebody's email, and they don't respond in a time certain, then it goes on, whether it's looking over paperwork, or looking over something that's before the Executive Committee, but I believe anybody should be able to serve on the Executive Committee, and I don't think it would outweigh, or weigh -- I think it does it better, the word ain't "justice", but I think it just does it better if people can serve on the Executive Committee that choose to. I think it makes a better process.

MS. MURPHEY: Thank you, Dewey. Any other discussion on this issue? Do you want to -- Go ahead.

MR. CARMICHAEL: Well, you know, the elections are coming up in September, and I think it's good. I think it's a good discussion. It's good to remind kind of how it plays out, because the two things are linked, as we've shown, and I think it's good for folks to think about this going into it, you know, and, if you decide to change the composition of your Executive Committee, I think, yes, absolutely, you can do that, but you may want to see, like, yes, does the pendulum shift a little bit, in terms of chairs and vice chairs.

I looked back about as far as I could, and we've had like -- Back to 1993, we've had eighteen, you know, appointed folks who were chairs, and we've had sixteen state folks who were chairs. In the recent years, as Tom has noted, and we've pointed out, it has been mostly the state folks, and, yes, it has really gone in an interesting sort of wave pattern, where at times it's all the non-state folks, and, you know, certainly something to think about.

We can talk about it some more if you want. If you have some specifics, you know, maybe we have a brief closed session in September, and we could talk about maybe some more details, if you've got other concerns, you know, but I just wanted -- Because it had come up, and Shep reminded us that we should discuss this in open session, and I wanted to make sure that, you know, we provided some context into where that is on the Other Business.

MS. MURPHEY: Thank you, John. Carolyn.

DR. BELCHER: So just a question for Tom, because the other part of the rotation, right, is the states, and so we rotate amongst the states. Is that something also that should be reconsidered, because we've generally tried to advance through so that every state sits once every five years.

MS. MURPHEY: Go ahead, Tom.

MR. ROLLER: So, since you asked that question, yes, I think we do have to consider it. I like it, in theory, because it's collegial. It gives us all representation, and I think there's a lot of benefits to it, but, at the same note, when a council member is appointed, you can look at the rotation and say, well, that person can never serve as chair, considering the fact that, most likely, that council member is going to serve in their third term, if they get there, or maybe late in their second term, depending on the person. I think that that's something we have to consider. Does that make sense what I'm explaining?

DR. BELCHER: Yes, and I just wanted to make sure that, if we were focusing on one thing, there are other rotations that we consider as part of that, and I just wanted to make sure that that was something that was -- I was asking just to see what your thoughts were on that as we have those conversations.

MR. ROLLER: Yes. Absolutely, and I'm putting it in terms of we have to think about how this process serves the stakeholders who are in it, correct, and I think there are creative ways to approach this that potentially gives every state, you know, a say in this process, and makes sure it is fair and collegial in that fashion.

MS. MURPHEY: Go ahead, John, and then I've got Jessica.

MR. CARMICHAEL: Yes, and just, as I said, the rotation is not a hard-and-fast rule, and it's not something specified in any of our guidance, and so it is something that can be changed, and, in fact, looking back, there was a significant period of upheaval in the late 2000s, and going into the 2020s, where things got significantly off track from the rotation previously, and it was because of circumstances that happened with various individuals, and terms ending, and people not being reappointed, and it was kind of a very uncertain time in the council, but, you know, the rotation definitely, at times -- When I went back to 1993, it's not always -- It was not always followed consistently. It's been followed much more consistently, I would say, since like 2000, or actually since Jessica took over as chair, without actually having served as vice chair at all, and so there are times when it changes.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Yes, and John was kind of getting to what I was going to say, but, if we're going to have a closed session discussion at the next meeting, I would like to get into some of the circumstances that got this this off track, and, also, another thing that that we could get into is we used to have a lot different committee structure, a lot more committees, but the council decided that they wanted to have fewer committees.

We used to have a Budget Committee, and we used to have a Personnel Committee, and we used to have a SEDAR Committee, and we had all these different committees, and so we redid the committee structure a few years ago, at the request of the council, and so part of this maybe needs another discussion, but I think some of those discussions at least need to start in closed session.

MS. MURPHEY: All right. Thank you, and so it sounds like we will continue this discussion under closed session in September, if that's okay, Tom. Okay. Great. All right. With that, we now conclude the closed council session, and I'll move into the Full Council I summary.

The council met in open session on Monday, June 8th and Tuesday, June 9th. The council adopted the agenda for the week and approved minutes for the March 2026 meeting. We had a litigation update from Shep Grimes, our NOAA General Counsel. Basically on May 5, 2026, the Southeastern Fisheries Association Incorporated and multiple commercial fishing industry representatives filed a civil complaint to the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia, of the District of Columbia, against the U.S. Secretary of Commerce and the National Marine Fisheries Service.

The plaintiffs challenged the May 5, 2026, issuance of exempted fishing permits to North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, and Florida under the Administrative Procedures Act. The EFPs exempt anglers fishing off the respective states from specific federal regulations governing the recreational harvest of red snapper from the EEZ in the 2026 fishing season. The challenged EFP to Florida authorized its fishing season to begin on May 22, 2026, with other states' EFPs authorizing their season to begin July 1.

The court held a hearing in D.C. on May 20, 2026, and, on May 21, 2026, at six o'clock p.m., the plaintiff's motion was granted, preventing the EFPs from taking effect, and then NOAA and National Marine Fisheries Service officials immediately notified officials with the respective state agencies, including all the state representatives on the council, and on June 2, the Florida Fish and Wildlife Commission filed a motion to intervene in the case.

With that, we'll go into the reports. The council received reports from various representatives, and here are some of the highlights. The for-hire reporting, the Gulf liaison reported that the Gulf Council is moving forward with re-establishing the SEFHIER program and making improvements to how the for-hire data are collected in the Gulf. The South Atlantic Council had paused work on an amendment to make similar improvements in June 2025. The council discussed requesting a presentation from the Gulf to learn about proposed improvements and then consider re-initiating work on the South Atlantic amendment in the near future.

Council members asked whether the Southeast Regional Office would have the capability to support the modifications to program to the program. The Regional Administrator indicated that there is some congressional interest to fund this program, and, additionally, the council pointed out the proposed changes would not entail a regulatory burden, since the intent is to improve data collection.

The Council Coordination Committee met in Homer, Alaska in May, and the council received highlights on those discussions, and the 2027 meeting of the CCC will be hosted by the South Atlantic Council, and the meeting will take place on May 11th through the 13th, 2027 in Charleston, South Carolina.

We heard on the Lines of Communications, and staff reviewed the council goals and objectives for Lines of Communication and encouraged review of the full North Carolina Lines meeting report for information useful when discussing topics on the meeting agenda. North Carolina council representatives then gave their perspectives on the Lines meetings that were held in March and what each council member took out of the interactions that they had with stakeholders. Meeting in meetings in South Carolina and Florida are planned for later in 2026 and early 2027.

NMFS gave some updates. The Regional Office will be hosting recreational roundtables. They will be hosting recreational roundtables likely in September of 2026. Issues from the Coast Guard not issuing Certificates of Inspections were resolved, and the Regional Office is largely caught up with issuing permits. Three positions in both Protected Resources and Habitat have been authorized, as well as an economist position.

Reinitiation of Section 7 consultation on the FMP for Corals in the Gulf and the South Atlantic, they're expected to be completed in 135 days from May 18, 2026. Two assessments, red snapper and black sea bass, are expected to be completed by the end of the year and are awaiting the Fishing Effort Survey estimates for both, and NOAA will be conducting studies on shark depredation in the coming months.

On the commercial electronic logbook amendment, public comment on rulemaking is open until June 26th. The reporting application in eTRIPS mobile, or eTRIPS online -- I'm sorry. The reporting application is eTRIPS mobile or eTRIPS online. Challenges with the multifactor authentication constitute a significant hurdle for implementation, and voluntary testing will begin in late 2026, with possible implementation in early 2027.

We heard on the Shrimp Futures project. The Shrimp Futures projects are scheduled for November 2026 and February 2027. Those are the Shrimp Futures workshops. The project does not include the rock shrimp fishery. Delays in project development due to staffing issues, government shutdowns, and length of time for approving the initial economic snapshot report. The project is

not intended to address the myriad of issues the shrimp industry is facing. Georgia will be releasing a comprehensive report by the end of the year that can be made available to inform this project.

Then, the risk-value matrix, NMFS still sees value in proceeding with the data and information that was being put together earlier in the year. Smaller working groups are being put together with NMFS and council staff. Matt McPherson and his group are doing social value surveys and gathering data, with assistance from other NMFS staff and council staff.

The SSC and SEP raised some concerns about the economic valuation approach and some other issues, but had no specific recommendations. The Science Center addressed most of the issues, including the council letter. Some of the work will influence the national process, and the council will continue to work underlying concept in the products that we regularly use and continue trying to determine the non-monetary value of fisheries.

We had an MRIP update. Dr. Richard Cody provided updates on the Fishing Effort Survey follow-up study findings and implementation status, the anticipated estimate publication schedule, and the National Academies' peer review. In addition, Tim Sartwell provided a brief overview of the status of the Recreational Angler Partnership Improvement Directive, or RAPID.

The 2026 calibration model was built on what was done in 2018 effort survey changes, and calibration results will not be a simple reflection of the 2024 study results. The revised design will allow for monthly estimates in the future. Currently, the framework and survey administration are in place, but wave-level estimation is being maintained for the time being, due to availability of resources, and we will get to monthly level as soon as possible.

Calibrated estimates going back forty years will be available in summer of 2026, and that would be in August, and then RAPID. Dr. Neil Jacobs launched RAPID on February 11, 2026. It is in the transition process. It's not a replacement for MRIP. Shifts from the centralized federal system to a shared governance model focused on active co-design with regional, state, and federal partners.

A small steering committee has been formed. A core team of six members will coordinate RAPID activities and help facilitate the regional workshops. Workshops are planned for late summer, or early 2026, and strengthening the review process to increase transparency and has launched a more robust procedure for reviewing recreational fishing catch and effort estimates, and state partners have responded positively to this, and, as well, the ASMFC will be taking the lead to in kicking off the workshops, and have hired a facilitator, and Bob Beal requested that councils work with his staff to assist with the workshop planning. We have a timing and tasks motion. Is there somebody who would like to make that motion? Charlie.

MR. PHILLIPS: I'll read it all this time. **Madam Chair, I would like to make the motion to direct staff to do the following: request a presentation on the for-hire data collection amendment from the Gulf Council staff for a future council meeting; work with ASMFC to assist with RAPID workshops; convene a third in-person meeting of the shrimp workgroup.**

MS. MURPHEY: Do I have a second ? Carolyn. Andy.

MR. STRELCHECK: Just maybe questions. Gulf Council staff, and certainly SERO staff could also give that presentation, and save the time for Gulf Council staff, but, if you want to hear directly from them, I certainly understand that as well.

MS. MURPHEY: Thank you. Any more discussion? John.

DR. WALTER: The line that talks about Shrimp Futures, it states that the project is not intended to address the myriad of issues the shrimp industry is facing, and I'm wondering if the "not" should be removed, because it is intended to address those. I think the statement was it's not going to solve all the issues, but it is certainly intended to canvass the industry, and determine what those issues are, and identify what potential solutions could be.

MS. MURPHEY: That makes sense. Thank you for that correction. Yes, and that sounds good, and so thank you. Any other discussion on this motion? **Any objections to this motion? Motion approved.** That is the Full Council report, and we will move on to -- We're moving on to Snapper Grouper. Are you ready for Snapper Grouper, or would you like -- Okay, and so we'll move on to Jessica to give the Snapper Grouper report.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. Thank you, Madam Chair. The committee approved -- So the Snapper Grouper Committee met earlier this week and approved the minutes from the March 2026 meeting and the agenda for the June meeting. The committee received updates from SERO on the following amendments that have been submitted to NOAA Fisheries: blueline; gag and black grouper vessel limits; black sea bass on-demand gear; black sea bass short-term management measure; wreckfish commercial e-logbook, and scamp and yellowmouth grouper.

Then the committee got an update on exempted fishing permits. The committee received a briefing from SERO on the existing EFP applications. A previous EFP application from Cultimar Technologies, Inc. was open for comment through May 11th and is currently under review by NOAA Fisheries. As a reminder, ongoing litigation concerning red snapper state management EFPs was described in Full Council.

Update on joint South Atlantic and Mid-Atlantic subcommittee on blueline tilefish, staff reported on a meeting of the joint South Atlantic and Mid-Atlantic subcommittee on blueline tilefish that occurred May 1. The subcommittee reviewed current and previous decisions for regional ABC levels and cross-jurisdictional allocation and management strategies for other stocks. The subcommittee also directed staff to gather information for review at the next subcommittee meeting, which is tentatively planned for July 2026.

Vermilion snapper allocation review report, at the March meeting. the committee reviewed current sector allocations and recent landings information for vermilion snapper in accordance with the council's allocation review guidelines, and a draft summary allocations report was developed based on the committee's discussion and presented to the committee for approval. The committee had no additional edits to the draft report and passed the following motion.

This is Motion Number 1. Approve the allocation review report for vermilion snapper, and, on behalf of the committee, I so move. Any discussion? **Any objection?** All right. **That motion carries.**

Then the committee went into the wreckfish ITQ program review. At the March meeting, the council directed staff to begin work on the next review of the wreckfish ITQ program. Council staff presented a draft outline of the review, including how Snapper Grouper Amendment 48, which was the ITQ program modernization, will be addressed, given that it's been submitted for secretarial review, but not yet implemented. The council was comfortable with the proposed outline, including the addition of a section that would describe the actions proposed in Amendment 48, the council's rationale, and their status.

Snapper Grouper AP report and Scientific and Statistical Committee report, the Snapper Grouper AP vice chair and SSC chair presented recommendations for snapper grouper species from each body's respective meeting in April 2026.

Then we went into the commercial management measures, which was Amendment 60. The commercial subcommittee met April 20th and 21st, and the committee chair summarized discussion points and directions to staff from this meeting. The Snapper Grouper AP vice chair presented the AP's recommendations on Amendment 60 from their April meeting, and SERO staff presented additional analysis on potential trip limit changes, and the committee had the following discussions and passed the following motions.

The committee discussed changes to the purpose and needs statement, stating references to increased access should be removed, and the committee will review the revised draft language and have further discussion at Full Council, and so you all need to look at this, you know, a little bit more closely. The purpose and need are there on the screen. I don't -- I'm not going to read it to you, but please raise your hand if you have comments after you read it. Kerry.

MS. MARHEFKA: Thanks, and I will admit that I forgot that we were coming back to this, and so I'll out myself on that one. I like the new wording. I think we are very close. I'm just curious if other committee members feel -- I think the "access" in that original statement was referring to new entrants into the fishery, and so, because it wasn't spelled out that way, that's what made me uncomfortable, and so I'm wondering --

I always get confused whether something belongs in the purpose or the need, and I always find them a little the same, but I think somewhere it might be important that the one of the two-for-one -- One of the reasons we did the two-for-one was to make it easier for new entrants to enter the fishery, and I'm looking for someone to wordsmith that better than me, or, Myra, you can put it where you think it's appropriate.

MS. BROUWER: Well, I'm wondering if this increase of flexibility is maybe capturing what you're talking about, and if you're comfortable with that.

MS. MCCAWLEY: I saw a hand. Kerry, can I go to other hands? Charlie.

MR. PHILLIPS: Kerry is 100 percent right. You know, with these, I do see extra single permits being -- Going on the market, and so it will allow for new entrants to get in, probably at a lower price than a corporate permit is going for, but whether we need to, you know, put increased flexibility, and some other wording there or not, and you could -- You could actually, I guess, put "increased flexibility", "accessibility", "adaptability", and you could actually -- You could add that word, and I don't know that it's going to make a whole lot of difference, but I guess you could.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thank you. Dewey.

MR. HEMILRIGHT: I would put “potential”, because potential is -- Potential to increase the flexibility, adaptability, and economic profitability, and it's a potential for that. I don't know if that's the right word, but, to me, it's -- All this other stuff is -- I mean, it has the potential to do this.

MS. MARHEFKA: Yes, and I just want to say this this was a sticking point, and is important I think to have this discussion, is because, when we go back to Amendment 8, that was -- Again, that was a whole different body. They put in this two-for-one, and they gave no future council guidance on when that two-for-one should end, and so I'm not thinking of this in terms of where we are now. I'm thinking what can we put in here so that, when thirteen different people are sitting at this table, and they're faced with this, will they understand what our intent was.

How that wording -- I was going to suggest something like lower the barrier to entry for new entrants, or something like that, but just so you guys understand my intent is to be concise for the for the future versions of us.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thank you. Robert.

MR. SPOTTSWOOD: You know, Kerry, is the goal here really to put, or activate, most of those licenses, to make sure they're actually being used, and is that one of the thrusts and focus here, and not just lowering barriers of entry, but making it so that people are actively actually using those licenses and picking them up?

MS. MARHEFKA: Not in this document. That's a discussion we've had around this document, but we have purposely moved it into other discussions, and so this particular document does not do that.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. We have some language typed up there on the screen. Can you guys look at that? Jimmy.

MR. HULL: I think it sounds good, but there's some extra words in there that probably need to be removed, and so, in the second line, after “permits” and “to potential” -- Get rid of “to” or make the word “to potentially”. There you go.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Mike.

DR. SCHMIDTKE: I think, at this point, if you see the pieces are there, and you're okay with the IPT having license to, you know, do the actual wordsmithing, but if you see -- You know, I heard the note that you want a statement on access with regard to lowering the barrier to entry, a description that, you know, that these ideas would be potentially increasing, you know, flexibility and all these things, the IPT can take those notes, and we can work them into a sentence that hopefully makes sense.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Charlie.

MR. PHILLIPS: Thank you, Madam Chair. I really don't think we need "potentially". I think we are definitely increasing flexibility, and definitely lowering the barrier to entry and economic profitability. I don't think there's -- I don't think this is potential. This is real, and I probably would not put "potentially" in there.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Andy.

MR. STRELCHECK: Another thing I'll comment, and I'm certainly comfortable with Mike and the IPT making edits, and so the intent here is clear, but, by saying we're going to maintain the current number of permits, you still have the potential, even eliminating the two-for-one, for permits to terminate over time, because it's still limited access, and so I don't think it's our intent that we're going to cap it at this existing number, and so we probably need some wordsmithing on the maintaining as well.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Kerry.

MS. MARHEFKA: To that, I think what we were trying to get across is that the two-for -- Eliminating the two-for-one was not in any way an attempt to expand the fishery. You know, we want to let all of our stakeholders know this isn't a play to increase the commercial fishery, you know, the size and number of the commercial fleets. This is an attempt to sort of -- This is the lowest we want to -- You know, the two-for-one doesn't need to eliminate any more commercial capacity, but I just want to make that clear, and that's why that was important to me to have that in there, because I wanted all of our stakeholders to know that this amendment was not, you know, an attempt to try to increase the capacity of the commercial fishery.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. I think we've got some good edits there. As you heard from Mike, the staff, and the IPT, can go back and edit this further. Jimmy, did you have another comment? Your mic is on. Any more comments on the purpose and need, and you see that some clarifying guidance was added that eliminating the two-for-one is not intended to expand the fishery or size of the commercial fleet. Okay. Anything else on the purpose and need before we leave this topic? All right. Thank you for that discussion.

All right. **Then the committee made Motion Number 2, which was to select Alternative 2 as preferred for Action 1, and, on behalf of the committee, I so move.** Any discussion on this motion? **Any objection?** All right. **That motion carries.**

Then, under Action 2, which was the revise the bottom longline gear stowage requirements and species that may be harvested while gear is onboard and stowed, we had a number of points there that are underneath that that were part of that discussion. We discussed at-sea notification requirements, versus prior to leaving the dock, and noted that the at-sea notification provides a time stamp.

For Alternative 3, which is the at-sea notification, generalize the alternative language to describe communicating with NMFS prior to switching gears, and current available methods can be described in the discussion, but are not needed in the alternative text, as approved communication methods may change over time.

For Alternatives 2 through 4, change bottom longline stowage requirements to either have hooks not baited or have the longline stowed below the deck. This would allow a wider variety of longline configurations to participate in the added flexibility from this action, and there's a note there about golden tilefish longline configurations are different from shark longline configurations, because some vessels don't have the space to stow the gear below the deck.

For Alternatives 2 through 4, it was clarified that wreckfish would be allowed to be possessed on vessels with bottom longline gear, but wreckfish would still not be allowed to be caught using the bottom longline gear. SERO discussed the interpretation of this action as regulatory or deregulatory, and it will come down to the cost-benefit analysis, that we'll see at a future meeting, and council members also directed staff to coordinate with HMS to identify any overlapping regulations and provide discussion of those in the amendment.

All right. **Then the committee made Motion Number 3 to select 1,750 pounds gutted weight for both seasons as the preferred alternatives. This is Subalternatives 2b and 3b for Action 3. On behalf of the committee, I so move. Any discussion? Any objection? All right. That motion carries.** The committee noted that the greater amberjack season two trip limit was most recently changed in 2023.

Then the committee made Motion Number 4, which was to select 1,500 pounds gutted weight for both seasons as the preferred alternatives. This is Subalternatives 2a and 3b for Action 4, and, on behalf of the committee, I so move. Any additional discussion? Any objection? All right. That motion carries.

Then we made Motion Number 5 to remove Subalternative 3a, which is 1,250 pounds gutted weight for season two, from Action 4. On behalf of the committee, I so move. Any additional discussion? Any objection? All right. That motion carries.

Then the committee made Motion Number 6, which was to select Alternative 1, no action, as the preferred alternative for Action 5, and this is the one for red porgy. On behalf of the committee, I so move. Is there any additional discussion? Any objection? All right. That motion carries.

The committee also reviewed Actions 6 through 8 considering revised commercial trip limits for hogfish, red grouper, and triggerfish, and the committee decided to not select preferred alternatives for these actions prior to public hearing. Some concern was noted for the recent stock trajectory for triggerfish, based on the SERFS index.

The committee then made Motion Number 7, which was to select Alternative 2, 600 pounds gutted weight, as the preferred alternative for Action 9. On behalf of the committee, I so move. Any discussion? Any objection? All right. That motion carries.

Then the committee made Motion Number 8, which was to add an action to Amendment 60 that requires that all snapper grouper commercial harvest is sold to a permitted dealer. On behalf of the committee, I so move.

Just to kind of add to the discussion here, I'm going to read the bullets below that before we take a vote. The requirement it was discussed should apply to all snapper grouper commercial harvest,

regardless of the permit type, and so it seems that current requirements may already state that, if sold, federal snapper grouper harvest must be sold to federally-permitted dealers, but it is being investigated. The Gulf regulations are being investigated by the council and NMFS staff, as well as General Counsel. The requirement to sell all commercial harvests in the Gulf doesn't seem to be explicitly stated, and so draft language differs from the Gulf, but we're trying to more clearly align this in both the Gulf and the South Atlantic to the direction of the committee's motion. Any additional discussion? **Any objection?** All right. **That motion carries.**

MS. BROUWER: The draft actions and alternatives that you see on your screen is what we were able to come up with since this came up during committee, but, as the bullets state, I think this is going to need to be looked at by, you know, a few more people, and we'll have to bat it around at the IPT, but we wanted to make sure that you -- Since you're going to public hearings with this, that this is agreeable to the council to include in the document for your public hearings, and I see Mike is at the table, and so he may have more to add.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Mike.

DR. SCHMIDTKE: No, and I think you covered it right there. The fact that we're going to public hearings immediately after this meeting, and you won't have another chance to review it, we want to get as much direction as possible that this action, and the alternatives that are included there, are kind of capturing the intent of what you want, and so this is -- Since this will be going public, and you won't be able to see it again before it does.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. Thanks for that clarification, and so let me try to -- You guys can read it too, but, in blue there, it would be adding an action that requests that all harvest by vessels with a commercial permit must be sold. Draft Alternative 1, no action, is all commercial harvest of snapper grouper is not required to be sold, but, if sold, it must be sold to a permitted dealer. Then Draft Alternative 2 is all commercial harvest of snapper grouper is required to be sold to a permitted dealer. Kerry.

MS. MARHEFKA: I'm having such a hard time, and I know our intent. The first thing that I'm going to say that I'm having a hard time with is that we probably -- If this goes in there, we're going to need to go back and look at our purpose and need again, because I don't think the intent -- Like this is just sort of out of the blue, and it doesn't explain what our intent with this was, and I'm becoming more uncomfortable with it, because I don't know what -- It feels like there could be a lot of unintended implications, that we haven't had time to think about, but, then again, if it's just going out in public hearing, maybe that's fine, but I would think, at some point, we would have to look at the purpose and need, because this doesn't address what we were trying to get at.

MS. MCCAWLEY: I agree with all that, and then I'm kind of torn between -- Because it's going out for public hearing, and so you would get some feedback, and so, if there were some circumstances that we haven't thought of, you would get feedback on that. I've got other hands. Can I come back to you? Okay. Robert, then Dewey, then back to Kerry.

MR. SPOTTSWOOD: Kerry, I got a little confused too looking at it, because I'm starting to try and think, well, what other uses are there for commercial harvest and not being sold, and are people keeping fish personally, or are they donating it to food kitchens, and food banks, and like what are the unintended consequences here that I'm not sure I understood.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Dewey.

MR. HEMILRIGHT: One, I've got the public comment, but I think the unintended consequences is not accounting for the catch, because even -- You know, not accounting for the catch by logbook or some other means, or whatever, even if you're permitted, but I would go out to public comment. I think we're going to have some good comment, and then, when it comes back to the table, then we can decipher on what the comments are, because, you know, I wonder what happens if you decide to keep them fish for personal -- You know, personal eating, or something like that, and what do you have to do? Is there something on the logbook that says I can eat these, and I'm filling them out, but I think the whole thing is to account for the catch.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Mike, then Kerry, then Robert.

DR. SCHMIDTKE: For the situation that you've described, Dewey, about, you know, kind of personally use, personal consumption, from what I understand, in talking to NMFS staff that work with the Gulf on this, is that they would sell to, you know, to their federally-permitted dealer. The fishermen would sell to the federally-permitted dealer and then buy back the fish that they would be keeping for themselves. That's kind of how the paper trail would go with that.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Yes, and one more thing to note, before I go back to the hands, and so, on Florida trip tickets, there is a code for I'm keeping these for personal use, and so there might be a -- There might be another way around this. I had Kerry, then Robert, then back to Dewey.

MS. MARHEFKA: You guys are getting at one of my things, is, you know, what if Mark wants to bring home fish, and it's easy for me, and we're our own dealer, but -- Amy has mentioned, several times, that like there are cases in which the dealer is like I don't want that fish, and it happens.

MS. DUKES: It happens.

MS. MARHEFKA: It happens, and I had one more thing, but, with all of that said, it's this kind of conversation I'm hoping we will get from public hearings, and so I'm comfortable leaving it in the document. I think what's important is not -- There's this unsaid thing and the unsaid thing is what we're trying to ensure is -- Or what we're trying to encourage is that people that own the snapper grouper permits are professional commercial fishermen, and not fishermen who just have enough money to buy the permit and, you know, catch over the bag limit.

The fish that is caught commercially is intended for the American seafood consumer, minus the maybe five pounds that comes to my house a year, which is probably even generous, and the reason we put this in here is because we want -- That's commerce fish, and we want it to remain commerce fish, and so I don't think that there's anywhere, as we have it now, that explains why we had that discussion.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. I have Robert, then Dewey, then Tom.

MR. SPOTTSWOOD: Kerry, I don't want to be pessimistic about it, but some of the folks that maybe are getting commercial permits in order to catch more fish likely have somebody at a fish

house or something that they could log that, and just keep those fish anyways, just thinking through that process, but you can deal with that.

Another question I had was not just if somebody rejects it, but if you have spoilage, or loss, and is the real purpose here trying to account for all the fish that are caught commercially, whether or not they're actually sold to a dealer at the end of it, and it seems almost like a reporting piece. Jessica mentioned Florida has a box you can check if you're keeping it for self-consumption, but that seems to be the purpose that we're trying to get to.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Before we go back to the hands, we also have codes in Florida for no sale donation and other types of dispositions. Tom, and then Trish.

MR. ROLLER: My understanding of this motion was as Kerry explained it, and I'm definitely supportive of that, because I know -- I do know a fair number of people who have these permits to simply harvest more fish, and I want to point out that North Carolina just had recent legislation that requires our commercial fishermen to report all fish to a dealer, and get a trip ticket regardless of what their usage, and so that's personal consumption, and that's donation, and that's any reason they were harvested. They must be included on a trip ticket.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. Thanks for that, and so let me try to wrap up the discussion, and so it seems like we're saying this blue text should stay in there. This is kind of the new action that goes with our previous motion, plus Myra has captured a bunch of our discussion here below that, and so this is just kind of showing us this action before it goes out to public hearing. Myra, do we need another motion to add this action, or is it good enough that we already had Motion Number 8? I'm going to pass it back to you.

MS. BROUWER: Yes, and I believe that motion captures what you intended.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Okay. Everybody good? Okay. All right. The committee also discussed items that were removed from Amendment 60, and then these items had to do with the commercial trip limit and possession, which we're calling Sunday sale, and then the speed of changing trip limits and bag limits, and we're going to have a separate motion for that.

The committee made Motion Number 9 to approve Draft Amendment 60 for public hearings. On behalf of the committee, I so move. A couple more points. The committee requested that staff develop and post online a video presentation about Amendment 60. The committee requested a mixture of webinar and in-person hearings, potential locations, and they're listed there: Northern and southern North Carolina; Charleston, South Carolina; and also during the, or maybe in lieu of having one, do it at the September council meeting. Then three locations across Florida, with the northernmost location being close enough that it can be accessed by Georgia stakeholders, and staff discussed the possibility of states and council members hosting in-person hearings, during which the staff-prepared video presentations would be played, and staff would be available online to assist and answer any questions. Further discussion needed on these hearing formats.

I will say this having the staff-prepared video, playing that presentation, and then having staff available online to answer questions has broken down a lot in Florida, at a number of these meeting locations, based on the wi-fi at the particular location, and so sometimes it just goes down, and then whatever council member is there is left to play the presentation and answer the questions,

and so, at that point, it's not always maybe as effective as we originally intended, and so I just wanted to bring that up, to use some caution in that particular option. I would just put some caution out there, but we're still under discussion on this motion. Would you guys like to have some more discussion on these points? Trish.

MS. MURPHEY: I was just going to say that we could probably just have one meeting in central North Carolina, instead of southern and northern.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thank you. Myra is capturing that. Kerry.

MS. MARHEFKA: To that, and we can't force you to do anything, but I think the thinking behind the southern North Carolina was that it might encompass -- If you're in like Brunswick County, it might -- We might get Brunswick County and the Horry County -- You know, you might get the Little River guys too, but that's the only reason I was thinking that area. I don't think -- The Southport guys aren't going to come to Morehead City. There's a big portion of the fleet in Southport, and sort of where Tim is in Shallotte, and so that's -- That was just my concern with that, but it's your state, and so --

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. Any more discussion on this? It can also be figured out after the meeting. Okay. So any more discussion on Motion Number 9? **Any objection to this motion?** All right. **That motion carries.**

All right. **The committee then made Motion Number 10, which was to recommend to the Full Council to initiate an amendment that would modify commercial trip limit and possession requirements for the Snapper Grouper, Coastal Migratory Pelagics, and Dolphin Wahoo Management Plans. On behalf of the committee, I so move.** Any additional discussion? This is the Sunday sale, I think is what we were calling it, and so that's what this motion is. **Any objection to this motion?** All right. **That motion carries.**

The committee then made Motion Number 11, which is to recommend to Full Council to initiate an amendment that would consider the revision of abbreviated framework procedures for the Snapper Grouper, Coastal Migratory Pelagics, and Dolphin Wahoo Management Plans to allow management measures such as trip limits and bag limits to be changed the abbreviated framework process. On behalf of the committee, I so move.

As part of the discussion, I just wanted to note the blue text down there, that staff had started looking into abbreviated framework procedures for the reef fish in the Gulf Council, and these abbreviated framework amendments can only be used for trip and bag limits if the trip limit change is not more than 10 percent of the prior trip limit, or if the bag limit change is not more than one fish, and so just letting you know what the Gulf has. Tom.

MR. ROLLER: I just want to point out that I spoke with Christina on this, and just a reminder to the council that, if we include CMP in this, it would have to go to the Gulf, and it could potentially slow it down, and so I just want to make you all aware.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thank you for that. I feel like we discussed that in the committee too, but I appreciate you bringing it back for us. Any more discussion on this motion? **Any objection to this motion?** All right. **That motion carries.**

Then we got into snapper grouper fishery management unit revision, which is Amendment 61. The Snapper Grouper FMU currently consists of fifty-five species, many of which are unassessed or have low landings. The council is considering changes to the species composition of the FMU through 61 to streamline management of the fishery.

In doing so, the council has selected fourteen species to evaluate whether they continue to need management under a federal plan. The council has indicated that these species could be removed from the FMU altogether or could be designated as ecosystem component species. The committee reviewed summary comments from the Snapper Grouper AP, and the committee provided input on purpose and need statements and actions in the amendment, and then the committee provided the following motions and direction.

Motion Number 12 is approve the purpose and need statements. On behalf of the committee, I so move. Any additional discussion? Any objection? All right. That motion carries.

The committee then made Motion Number 13, which was to approve all actions, as revised, for inclusion in Amendment 61. On behalf of the committee, I so move. Any additional discussion? Any objection? All right. That motion carries.

Then the direction to staff is listed there on the screen, to include Draft Actions 1, 2, 3, and 5 for further consideration in Amendment 61. Draft Action 2, which is designated as EC species, to add the bar jack to that list under that action. Draft Action 3, which was the commercial and for-hire permit requirement, remove the word “unlimited” in reference to SG 1 permits, and include both existing and potential new ecosystem component species in consideration of the action.

In discussion of the action, note that maintaining the commercial permit requirement in Alternative 2 is being considered for the purposes of this multispecies fishery to help with enhanced data collection, bycatch mitigation, and to address other ecosystem issues by continuing to prohibit problematic gears that may damage habitat. These reasons are consistent with guidance provided in the National Standards.

The committee also gave direction to not include Draft Action 4, which was the commercial trip limit, for further consideration, and Draft Action 5, which was the recreational aggregate bag limit, include cap in the context of EC species bag limit, and the bag limit for EC species would be separate from limits for managed species. All right.

The committee then moved into the headboat vessel limits, which is Reg Amendment 38. Reg Amendment 38 proposes headboat-specific-per-passenger vessel limits for black grouper, gag, scamp, and yellowmouth grouper. The council received a background presentation that described how the proposed vessel limit would be implemented and additional considerations, such as amendments for these species currently in the rulemaking phase.

Staff noted that a per-six-passenger limit for headboats operates as originally intended only when a vessel limit is already in place. Scamp and yellowmouth grouper doesn't have a vessel limit currently in place or proposed in Amendment 55.

The committee discussed applying a per-six-passenger vessel limit for all recreational vessels that carry more than six passengers, and it was ultimately decided to move forward with the intent that this limit be applied to headboats only. The committee discussed how to define a headboat, noting the Coast-Guard-issued COI definition may not include all vessels participating in the Southeast Region Headboat Survey.

Staff then reviewed a decision document, including initial actions and alternatives, and the committee made the following recommendations and motions. Direction to staff is draft language to identify headboat vessels for the purposes of per-six-passenger vessel limit for review at the September meeting; remove Alternative 2 from Action 1; include additional subalternatives under Action 1, Alternative 3 that provide options for a maximum number of fish per vessel; and then Alternative 3 is now Alternative 2, and so the information is listed there.

Then the committee made Motion Number 14, which was to move Action 2 to Considered but Rejected, and this was the vessel limit for scamp and yellowmouth grouper. On behalf of the committee, I so move. Any additional discussion? Any objection? All right. That motion carries.

Then the committee went into evaluating the sunset of the spawning special management zones, which is Reg Amendment 39. It addresses the sunset provision for South Cape Lookout, Georgetown/Devil's Hole, and Warsaw Hole spawning special management zones. Staff reviewed a decision document with an initial set of actions addressing the sunset provision for each SSMZ.

The committee made the following recommendations and direction to staff: recommend that the System Management Plan Workgroup discusses future sampling of the SSMZs and modify the purpose and need statements, and you can see our edits there to the purpose and need statements. It was also suggested to add an alternative for Actions 1 through 3 that extends the sunset provision by five years, and so you can see what that looks like under Action 1 there. Any additional discussion on spawning SSMZs? Kerry.

MS. MARHEFKA: I think it was David Moss, at public hearing, threw out the seven-year option, and, if it doesn't add a whole lot more workload, I think that's interesting to look at, because our consternation with five years is that it's too short to get, you know, our process through, and, with ten years, it's that it might not be critical enough to get eyes on it, and get money into research, and so the seven made sense to me at that time, and if -- I don't want to add a burden to the staff, but --

MS. MCCAWLEY: Okay. Tom.

MR. ROLLER: I'm with you there, Kerry, and I guess my question is do we replace five with seven, or do we just add seven? I would suggest we do whatever is the easiest for staff.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Okay, and so it seems like we are adding some direction to staff here, and so it's not exactly adding a seven-year option, and it's replacing the five-year option with a seven-year option, and is that right? Okay. All right. I see thumbs-up, and heads nodding yes. Okay. Andy.

MR. STRELCHECK: I certainly heard that comment, and I think the rationale makes sense to replace the five-year option with the seven-year option.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. Any other discussion? All right. Then the committee moved into yellowtail snapper and mutton snapper, which is Amendment 44. The Joint Snapper Grouper Amendment 44/Reef Fish Amendment 55 is in response to SEDAR 79 for mutton and SEDAR 96 for yellowtail, where both assessments indicated that stocks are not overfished or experiencing overfishing.

The amendment will establish the stock OFL and ABC and jurisdictional apportionment between Gulf and South Atlantic Councils, establish regional ACLs, and modify South Atlantic sector allocations for each species. Staff reviewed an updated decision document, including catch levels, preliminary analysis, and June 2026 Gulf feedback. The council made the following motions/recommendations.

Motion Number 15 is select Alternative 3b for Action 1 as the South Atlantic preferred alternative. On behalf of the committee, I so move. Any discussion? Any objection? All right. That motion carries.

Then the committee made Motion Number 16, which was to select Alternative 4. We had some debate, during the committee meeting, whether we needed to select 4b. It has been determined that we need to select the exact alternative that the Gulf did, and so this would be select Alternative 4b for Action 2 as the South Atlantic preferred alternative, and, on behalf of the committee, I so move. Is there any additional discussion? Any objection? All right.

Then there was direction to staff to determine appropriate language for no action alternatives for Actions 3 and 4. Staff consulted the writing guidelines and will remove the current Alternative 1, which is non-viable, from Actions 3 and 4. This will shift alternatives, but the preferred for each of these would now be Alternative 1. Since these are viable, staff will analyze them and include them in the document. All right.

Then the committee made Motion Number 17, which was to move Alternatives 5 and 6 to Considered but Rejected for Action 3. On behalf of the committee, I so move. Any additional discussion? All right. Any objection? All right.

The committee then made Motion 18, which is to select Alternative 2 as the preferred alternative for Action 3, and, on behalf of the committee, I so move. Any additional discussion? Any objection? All right. That motion carries.

Then the committee made Motion Number 19, which is to move Alternative 4 and Alternative 6 to Considered but Rejected for Action 4. On behalf of the committee, I so move. Any additional discussion? Any objection? All right. That motion carries.

Then the committee made Motion Number 20, which is to select Alternative 2 as a preferred alternative for Action 4. On behalf of the committee, I so move. Any additional discussion? Any objection? All right. That motion carries.

Then we went into black sea bass pot nearshore closed areas and commercial trip limit modifications, which is Amendment 40. This was initiated in March to evaluate whether to allow

fishing for black sea bass with pots equipped with on-demand retrieval systems in nearshore areas that are closed seasonally to protect North Atlantic right whales, and explore whether a reduction in the commercial trip limits for pots is warranted to ensure landings remain at or below the commercial annual catch target proposed in Reg Amendment 37, which is under review.

The committee received feedback from the Snapper Grouper AP that a reduction to the trip limit for pots would not benefit the fishery, because trips would no longer be profitable. The committee directed retaining only the action to reopen seasonal closed areas in the amendment and modified the purpose and need accordingly.

The committee discussed possibly considering a separate catch level for the pot sector of the commercial fishery in Amendment 56, which will address the completed stock assessment, and will be developed once that assessment is finalized.

The committee provided the following guidance: because the fishing year starts January 1, reword the alternatives to reflect this better, and also note that the spawning season closure, which was from Amendment 37, would be February and March; add an option for a pot season that would be open from December through January to pots with on-demand gear, and traditional roped pots would be allowed outside the closed area. There's some edits there that we made in committee to the purpose and need. All right. Any additional discussion on black sea bass? Okay.

Black grouper MSE update, staff provided the committee an update on the southeastern black grouper management strategy evaluation, which was initiated in response to data limitations identified during SEDAR 48. The current phase of the MSE focused on developing an indicator to monitor stock status and inform future management decisions. Development of the MSE is nearing completion, and the results are scheduled for review by a joint SSC subgroup composed of members from the Gulf and South Atlantic Councils SSCs in October 2026.

Then, under Other Business, the committee discussed a request for the Science Center to evaluate total removals of red snapper and compare that to sector allocation percentages applied to landings. The committee decided not to make that request at this time, due to ongoing litigation concerning red snapper, pending revised MRIP-FES recreational catch estimates, and the ongoing SEDAR 90 stock assessment.

We also have a timing and tasks motion here, and would someone be willing to make that timing and tasks motion? Then, before you make it, look at Amendment 61 there, which is the FMU, and we talked about this I believe under the workplan discussion, about changing the timing for this, and so this would be consideration of public hearing approval, instead of in September, at the December meeting, and so I just wanted to note that, if someone is willing to make the timing and tasks motion. Myra.

MS. BROUWER: So another thing I think you all did was move the black sea bass amendment to maybe March, and so I would suggest making that change in this motion as well.

MS. MCCAULEY: Yes, and can you type that in for us? Okay. That's been added. Would someone like to make the timing and tasks motion? Jimmy.

MR. HULL: Yes, Madam Chair, and I would like to make the following motion. **Direct staff to do the following: continue development of the wreckfish ITQ review for discussion at the September 2026 meeting; continue development of Amendment 60; conduct public hearings prior to and at the September 2026 council meeting; continue development of Amendment 61 for review at the September 2026 meeting and for consideration of public hearing approval at the December 2026 meeting; continue development of Regulatory Amendments 38 (headboat vessel limits) and 39 (spawning special management zones) for review in September 2026; continue development of Amendment 44 (yellowtail and mutton snapper) for consideration of public hearing approval in September 2026; prepare Regulatory Amendment 40 (black sea bass closed areas) for approval for public hearings at the March 2027 meeting; and, finally, request data for black grouper MSE from the Southeast Fisheries Science Center.**

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. Do I have a second? Seconded by Charlie. Any additional discussion on the timing and tasks motion? **Any objection to the timing and tasks motion?** All right. **That motion carries.** Is there any other business to come before the Snapper Grouper Committee? Andy.

MR. STRELCHECK: Just a general comment, and this applies well beyond the red snapper Other Business item, and, you know, to me, it's not necessarily an accurate reflection, how it's described here, that we just discussed this, and there was a motion that was put on the table. The motion was voted down, and I would really recommend the council capture that in future discussions, even if there are disapproved motions, and show the vote counts, because I think that's a better record of what occurred.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thank you. I think that's how the Gulf does it as well, and so I appreciate the comment. All right. Madam Chair, that concludes the Snapper Grouper Committee report.

MS. MURPHEY: All right. Thank you, everybody. Do we want to keep moving on or -- Keep going? Okay. It's 11:20, isn't it? Let's go to Dolphin Wahoo and Kerry. Thank you.

MS. MARHEFKA: Thanks, Madam Chair, and I think this will be much quicker. Yesterday, or a million years ago, depending on what it feels like to you, the Dolphin Wahoo Committee met. NOAA's Southeast Fisheries Science Center is conducting a management strategy evaluation for the Atlantic dolphin fishery. The goal of the project is to develop an index-based management procedure that may provide catch level and management advice that best achieves the multiple management objectives of this fishery.

The outgoing chair of the council's SSC provided a summary of the group's discussion on the dolphin MSE at their recent meeting. Afterwards, the Science Center staff updated the committee on progress of the dolphin MSE and the results of recent modeling efforts.

The committee had an in-depth discussion, and tutorial, I might editorialize, on the MSE and provided the following direction: in future modeling efforts, capture regulations applicable in Florida state waters in the Atlantic and apply them off Florida only and to the entire Atlantic EEZ; updates on catch level recommendations and associated annual catch limits should occur every three years.

The committee is interested in the ability of the MSE to show localized changes to the dolphin fishery and model potential regional management changes, with a sub-bullet that there are varying regional management needs and viewpoints on the dolphin fishery. The committee wanted to include static tactical management measures, including vessel limits and size limits, in the management procedure, and was in agreement with the proposed performance metrics for the management objectives. There was an interest in exploring a P* of 45 percent.

Under modifications to the minimum size limit, recreational retention limits, and reducing for-hire captain and crew bag limits, AKA Reg Amendment 3, it includes measures that would extend the applicable range of the twenty-inch fork length minimum size limit for dolphin, modify recreational retention limits, and remove captain and crew bag limits. Development of the amendment has been paused pending initial results of the dolphin MSE.

Council staff then reviewed the committee's previous guidance on draft actions and requested guidance on the timeline for developing Reg Amendment 3. The committee discussed how to proceed with this amendment, offering the following guidance and motion.

Committee members discussed the need to pursue development of Reg Amendment 3 at this time, discussed whether we should pursue development of Reg Amendment 3 at this time. There were varying opinions. It was noted, during the dolphin MSE modeling results, that it showed a sufficient biomass level, and that management measures were shown to have little anticipated impact on the spawning stock biomass.

With that information, the committee made the following motion not to continue to work on Regulatory Amendment 3 at this time, and, on behalf of the committee, I so move. Any discussion on that motion? Any objection to the motion? The motion carries with one objection, but it is approved by the committee. We had no items under Other Business, and I need someone to make the motion for timing and tasks for Dolphin. Tom.

MR. ROLLER: I move that we direct staff to do the following: request that the Southeast Fisheries Science Center staff continue development of the dolphin MSE.

MS. MARHEFKA: It's seconded by Jessica. Any discussion on that motion? **Any objection to the motion? Seeing none, the motion carries.** That concludes my report, Madam Chair.

MS. MURPHEY: Thank you, Kerry. Then we'll move to our last report of Outreach and Communications. Tom Roller.

MR. ROLLER: Thank you, Madam Chair. First of all, you know, Ashley has transitioned into this new role, and I just want to thank her for the great job she did with the AP, as well as with this committee, and so, on June 11th, the Outreach and Communications Committee met here, and the first thing we did was approved the agenda for the June 2026 meeting and the minutes from the December 2022 meeting.

Scott Baker, chair of the Outreach and Communications Advisory Panel, provided a summary of the AP meeting held on May 5th and 6th, 2026 in Charleston. The committee received a presentation from council staff and discussed the draft outreach communications goals, objectives,

and strategies with support to continue as modified. The committee also received an update from Return 'Em Right staff on the program and its planned expansion to the South Atlantic.

With the advisory panel, the Outreach and Communications AP met on May 5th and 6th in North Charleston, South Carolina to discuss this draft outreach and communications goals and objectives, strategies to engage the Marine Resource Education Program graduates, council workshop participants and the public in the council process, Lines of Communication, staff outreach efforts for the South Atlantic red snapper exempted fishing permits, and the Sea Grant Reef Fish Fellowship, the citizen science program, and other relevant topics.

Scott Baker, AP chair, presented a summary of the meeting and the AP's recommendations. The committee noted the following: the Gulf Council's voicemail public comment tool is an innovative, cost effective, and approachable way for stakeholders to provide public comment, and there is interest in this tool to be explored for in the future for the South Atlantic. Also, there was support for having a simple next-step materials for MREP alumni on how to get more involved in the council and the fisheries management process.

The outreach and communications goals and objectives, with council outreach and communications staff obtaining new roles, a framework has been developed to guide the council's broader outreach and communications efforts. Staff provide an overview of the four outreach and communications goals and the related objectives and strategies, which were developed with input from the Outreach and Communications AP.

the committee was supportive of the goals objectives, with the following modifications: add “fisheries management process” to Goal Number 1, to read as follows: “provide consistent, understandable, and accessible information on the fishery management process, council regulations, and stakeholder input opportunities”, and also remove the word “track” and “strategies”, C and D, from Goal 4, Objective 4.3.

Additional feedback included explore cost-benefit analysis on the different topics, or different types, of public engagement, for example in person versus virtual. This could possibly be added as a strategy to Goal 4, Objective 4.3.

Consider an ambassador program, similar to Best Fishing Practices Master Volunteer Program, and showcase South Atlantic Council outreach and communications efforts at the 2027 Council Coordination Committee. Ensure the goals, objectives, and strategies remain a living document that adapts to changing management and outreach and communications priorities, and, finally, recognize advisory panel members as valuable stakeholder partners and incorporate them into outreach activities when opportunities arise.

Then we had the Return 'Em Right expansion to the South Atlantic. Nick Haddad, staff from the Return 'Em Right program, provided an overview of the Gulf-originated program and its plans for expansion to the South Atlantic. The program, which was launched in May of 2022, has since provided best fishing practices training and gear to over 51,000 Gulf reef fish anglers.

In June of 2025, the Open Ocean Trustee Implementation Group Final Restoration Plan 4 approved the expansion of the Return 'Em Right program. As of May 2026, South Atlantic anglers are

eligible for gear after completing the educational module. A marketing push was planned for June 2026.

However, Return 'Em Right is considering potential alternative launch dates for this initiative, due to the recent injunction of the South Atlantic red snapper exempted permits. The committee supported Return 'Em Right expanding to the South Atlantic and expressed the importance of collaboration with the council and South Atlantic states. There was no further motions needed, and with that, Madam Chair, I conclude my report.

MS. MURPHEY: All right. Thank you, everybody. I think John had already gone over the South Atlantic meeting schedule earlier, and so I think we can skip that, and so we do have other business to discuss or anything? John.

DR. WALTER: I just have one minor announcement. Just on the assessment technical teams, I think that the SSC report had said that those technical teams would not be convened, and I just wanted to clarify the record, that the goal was for the center to still convene those teams. It just wouldn't be a council-appointed process, and so we're going to reach out to people on that, and get some guidance and advice from council staff, as to bringing in some SSC members, to help us in an advisory role, on the stock assessments that are done outside of SEDAR.

I think that meets most people's goals of ensuring that that gets the review, and it helps us to get that technical expertise and guidance, and I think it maintains the SSC's role that they were concerned about in their report, and so we're going to do that with the black sea bass assessment that is going to go outside of SEDAR, and so, if you're an SSC member who might have interest in black sea bass, we will probably be reaching out to you, and so I just wanted to clarify that. Thanks.

MS. MURPHEY: Thank you, John. Well, with that, I will adjourn the June 2026 -- Hang on a minute.

DR. BELCHER: I thought John has some close-out, some close-out for -- Sorry. That's what happens when you come in late.

MS. MURPHEY: All right. Officially we have adjourned the June 2026 South Atlantic Fishery Management Council meeting. Boom.

(Whereupon, the meeting adjourned on June 12, 2026.)

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Certified By: _____ Date: _____

Transcribed By
Amanda Thomas
July 10, 2026

SAFMC 2026 Council Members

FC 2 Fri. 6/12/26

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

Shep Grimes

Rick Devictor

Sonny Gwin

John Walter

CJ Sweetman

FC 2 Fr. 6/12/26

SOUTH ATLANTIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL STAFF

Julia Byrd ✓
**Citizen Science Program
Manager**

Myra Brouwer ✓
Deputy Director - Management

John Carmichael ✓
Executive Director

Dr. Chip Collier ✓
Deputy Director - Science

Christina Curtis ✓
Fishery Social Scientist

Dr. Judd Curtis ✓
Quantitative Fishery Scientist

John Hadley ✓
**Fishery Economist & FMP
Coordinator**

Kathleen Howington web
**Habitat and
Ecosystem Scientist**

Allie Iberle ✓
Fishery Scientist I

Kelly Klasnick ✓
Administrative Officer

Dr. Julie Neer
**SEDAR Program
Manager**

Ashley Oliver ✓
Outreach Coordinator

Emily Ott
SEDAR Coordinator

Dr. Mike Schmidtke ✓
Fishery Scientist II

Nicholas Smillie ✓
**Digital Media and
Communication Specialist**

Rachael Silvas web
Travel Coordinator

Suzanna Thomas ✓
Staff Accountant

Meg Withers web
**Citizen Science Project
Manager**

June 2026 Council

Attendee Report: Meeting

Report Generated:

06/15/2026 08:31 AM EDT

Webinar ID	Actual Start Date/Time	Duration	# Registered
942-313-427	06/12/2026 07:33 AM EDT	3 hours 58 minutes	251

Staff Details

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

Attendee Details

Last Name	First Name
snapperwhackerhard@gmail.com	
Alkire	Carolyn
Aukeman	Trip
Barger	Jeff
Barile	Peter
Barrows	Katline
Bean	Charles
Bernier	Quinn
Beyer	George
Bianchi	Alan
Blough	Heather
Bonura	Vincent
Boots	Benjamin
Bradshaw	Christopher
Brouwer	Myra
Brown	Hunter
Bruger	Catherine
Bubley	Walter
Bunting	Matthew
Burgess	Erika
Byrd	Julia
Cermak	Bridget
Collier	Chip
Crispe	Miriam
Crosson	Scott
Curtis	Judd
Curtis	Christina
DeVictor	Rick

Dyar	Ben
Flemming	Robert
Flowers	Jared
Floyd	Brad
Foss	Kristin
Gloeckner	David
Gore	Karla
HEMILRIGHT	DEWEY
Hallas	sara
Harrison	Alana
Helmey	Judy
Horstead	Adrian
Howington	Kathleen
Huber	Jeanette
Hull	Jimmy
Iberle	Allie
Iverson	Kim
Jacoski	Greg
Kersting	Anne
Klasnick	01Kelly
Klibansky	Lara
Knowlton	Kathy
Lazarre	Dominique
Lee	Jennifer
Levy	Mara
Lou	Jenny
Mackesey	Brendan
Marhefka	Kerry
Marinko	Jeff
Mehta	Nikhil
Merrifield	Mike
Mitchell	Kevin
Murphey	Trish
Newman	Thomas
Offner	Tia
Package-Ward	Christina
Peterson	Cassidy
Phillips	Charlie
Records	David
Reichert	Marcel
Roller	Tom
SEWARD	MCLEAN
Salmon	Brandi
Schmidtke	Michael

Silvas	Rachael
Sinkus	Wiley
Smart	Tracey
Starling	Savannah
Stephen	Jessica
Stephens	Haley
Stephenson	Sarah
Sweetman	CJ
Thomas	Suzanna
Vecchio	Julie
Walia	Matt
Walsh	Mick
Walsh	Jason
Walter	John
Whitmer	Morgan
Williams	Erik
Willingham	Darrin
Withers	Meg
gwin	earl sonny
sandorf	scott
vara	mary
zales	bob
Aines	Alex
Alhale	Sydney
Atkinson	Seth
Bailey	Adam
Baker	Scott
Barbieri	Luiz
Batsavage	Chris
Beal	Bob
Bertoline	Sue
Blum	Catherine
Bogdan	Jennifer
Borland	Gary
Brantley	William
Bremer	Nik
Brogan	Gib
Califf	Julie
Callaway	Lillie
Carruthers	Tom
Cheshire	Rob
Clawson	Jessica
Cody	Richard
Cox	Jack

Dash	Mark
DiJohnson	Alex
Dobbs	Jeffrey
Drexler	Michael
DuBeck	Guy
Dubniczki	Hayden
Dukes	Amy
Emory	Meaghan
Farrell	Delaney
Favale	Julianne
Figueroa	Alena
Franco	Dawn
Freeman	Chase
Friedrich	Tony
Gahm	Meghan
Gardner	David
Gervasi	Carissa
Graham	William
Gray	Alisha
Griffin	Aimee
Griner	Tim
Hackney	Heather
Haddad	Nick
Hadley	John
Hart	Hannah
Haymans	Doug
Hilliard	Bob
Hubbard	Nolan
Hutt	Clifford
Hyman	Alexander
Jones	Christopher
Karnauskas	Mandy
Keppler	Blaik
Kersting	Anne
Kinman	Charles
Kittle	Christine
Kittle	christine
Krebs	David
L	M
L	Michael
LaVine	Britni
Larkin	Michael
Lavine	Craig
Law	Alexander

Lazo	Sarah
Lazo	Sarah
Leach	Scott
Lee	Max
Lima	Anthony
Lloyd	Victor
Locke	Charles
MCCLAIR	GENINE
MCGOVERN	Jack
Mackesey	Brendan
Malinowski	Richard
Marks	Rick
Masi	Michelle
Mathis Jr	Robert
McMahan	Trevor
McPherson	Matthew
McWaters	Mark
Mcclees	Matt
Meehan	Sean
Mehlhorn	Anna
Moller	Alexandra
Moore	Jeff
Moss	david
Muffley	Brandon
Neer	Julie
Neidig	Carole
Nicholson	Shaun
Norcross	Jennifer
O'Donnell	Kelli
Oliver	Ashley
Ott	Emily
Owens	Marina
O'Meally	Conor
PRENTICE	CHRIS
Palmrose	Kristin
Parsell	Steven
Pease	Thomas
Perkinson	Matt
Pike	Hannah
Porch	Clay
Ramsay	Chloe
Rathke	David
Redd Jr	Larry
Remsberg	Loren

Reynolds	Kris
Riley	Richard
Robbins	Megan
Robertson	Charlie
Rose	Tyler James
Rule	Erica
Runde	Brendan
SCOTT	TARA
Sartwell	Tim
Scalise	Timothy
Schlick	CJ
Shaw	Kristi
Shervanick	Kara
Soltanoff	Carrie
Spurgin	Kali
Stasser	Katie
Stemle	Adam
Stevens	Molly
Sweeney Tookes	Jennifer
Sweeney Tookes	Jennifer
Talton	Trista
Taylor	Alexandria
Tenore	PARIS
Treece	Andrea
Turley	Brendan
Vaz	Ana
Walsh	Michelle
Wamer	David
Westcott	Lauren
Whaley	Dave
White	Geoff
Wilke	Kate
Williamson	Veronica
Wilms	Olivia
Wilms	Sean
Woodstock	Matt
Woodward	Spud
Wynn	Chris
Zalys	Todd
Zapf	Daniel
adisa	sylvia
bonura	Vincent
evans	joseph
oden	jeff

reese
spottswood
zurbrick

dylan
000Robert
james