

SOUTH ATLANTIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

COUNCIL SESSION II

**North Charleston Marriott
North Charleston, South Carolina**

September 19, 2025

Transcript

Council Members

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

Dewey Hemilright
James G. Hull, Jr.
Kerry Marhefka
Charlie Phillips
Tom Roller
Andy Strelcheck

Council Staff

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

Kim Iverson
Kelly Klasnick
Ashley Oliver
Dr. Mike Schmidtke
Rachael Silvas
Nicholas Smillie
Suzanna Thomas
Christina Wiegand

Attendees and Invited Participants

Monica Smit-Brunello
Sonny Gwin
Dr. Walter Bublely
Dr. Clay Porch

Rick DeVictor
Chris Schieble
Kathy Knowlton
Kristen Foss

Observers and Participants

Other observers and participants attached.

The Council Session II of the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council convened at the North Charleston Marriott, North Charleston, South Carolina on Friday, September 19, 2025, and was called to order by Chairman Trish Murphey.

MS. MURPHEY: All right, everybody. I'll go ahead and call Full Council II to order. It's Friday. Yay. I know we've had a lot of work, a lot of stuff going on, and so thanks to everyone that's hung in here. I know it costs everybody a lot of time from their lives, and so I appreciate everyone that's here. First, I guess I'll turn it over to John, to do chair and vice chair elections, and so, John.

MR. CARMICHAEL: Just a reminder that, in September, our handbook says we elect our chair and vice chair. It says we do elections annually, and then people can serve up to two terms, and so we elected last year, and so the first term would be Trish, ending one year as chair, and Jessica ending one year as vice chair.

We could go through whole elections, but, if you would like, we could just give confidence in your current leadership. There's also, I think, the possibility to just continue with the existing leadership in a simple motion, and move on with it, and then we may come back around to you, to ask if maybe you just want to have folks serve two-year terms, given where we are, and the amount of business we have to do, and the -- You know, the time that it takes to get up to speed on these jobs, and so, with that, I'll put it out there and see if anybody has any thoughts, or would start to maybe make a motion on our leadership.

MS. MURPHEY: Kerry.

MS. MARHEFKA: I don't know if someone else was planning to say it, but I would like to vote in full confidence of our current leadership team of Trish and Jessica. I make a motion that we retain our current leadership of Trish Murphey as chair and Jessica McCawley as vice chair of this council.

MS. MURPHEY: Do I have a second? Tom. Tom seconds. Any discussion? Charlie.

MR. PHILLIPS: Thank you, Madam Chair. Yes, and I totally agree, and, to John's point about getting up to speed, it does take a little while to get up to speed, and, yes, two years is generally a good timeframe, and, if we have to do it every year, because of the SOPS, it takes ten minutes. We can make that work, and somebody may have termed out in the middle of an office too, which is another reason to still keep doing it every year, but, yes, I totally agree. Thank you.

MS. MURPHEY: Thank you, Charlie. Any other discussion? **Any objections? Motion approved.** Thank you, guys, for having confidence in us. We've been trying, and so, thanks. The next thing I get to do is announce the 2025 recipient of the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council Award of Excellence, and it was my great pleasure, on Tuesday, to present that award to Jack McGovern.

He has contributed to both the science and management of the South Atlantic fisheries, through his long term in our region, including spending time right here in Charleston, and, Jack, you know, is retired now, and enjoying the retirement -- The good old retirement life, and so it was great, and it was an honor to give him that award. Then, next, I want to turn it over to Andy. I think he has some words he would like to say of some staff.

MR. STRELCHECK: Yes, and so, first, thank you for honoring Jack McGovern. I think it was truly a surprise to him, and his family, and we were all blessed to be able to work with such an outstanding person and friend. This is very hard for me to talk about, but the wonderful woman sitting next to me is retiring, and this is her last council meeting, and I congratulated her on reaching her last day of her last council meeting.

I don't know the whole history of her work employment, and so I'm not going to go through that, but she's told me she's going to reach thirty-five years in November with the federal government, and you started off, I believe you said, in law enforcement.

MS. SMIT-BRUNELLO: Enforcement.

MR. STRELCHECK: An enforcement attorney, for about the first seven or eight years, and we just did some quick math, and so that means she's been sitting at this table, with a few missed council meetings, for about twenty-eight years, which means over a hundred council meetings, and so I'm very envious that this is her last council meeting.

I asked some colleagues just to write some quick, you know, thoughts and words about Monica, because I thought that's really who she is as a person, is the impact she leaves on individuals, and I'm not going to read their entire statements, but they said things like she cares deeply about the work we do, and I think that's so true. Staff are going to miss the endless reviews that they spend working on amendments and regulations and statements like what does this mean, or this is conclusive, and what fact is this based on, right, and I've seen plenty of that myself, obviously, over the years.

She's also described as a trusted advisor and mentor, and I think that is true. The team of attorneys that she's helped to bring in and mentor over the years are just outstanding, and I know that she's going to leave a lasting legacy, but leave it also in good hands for whoever replaces her at this table.

I've had the opportunity to work with her for about twenty-plus years, and sit side by side with her for the last four here at this council table. I consider her a friend, someone I can trust, and, obviously, someone I can rely on. I'm always happy to toss crazy ideas her way, and she tells it like it is, and gives me that sound legal advice, and often says let me think about it, and I'll get back to you, and that's the patience she's always demonstrated, kind of the straightforward approach that she's taken.

The last thing I'll leave you with, and I think the biggest impact she's had on me as the Regional Administrator, is emphasizing the need and importance of all the decisions we make, whether we like them or not, is how do we build the record, and how do we substantiate that record? How do we ensure that her job is a little easier, as an attorney, and the work that we do to defend the records that we've built, and so with that, please congratulate Monica on her retirement.

MS. MURPHEY: Congratulations, Monica. *(Applause)* So, Monica, would you like to say anything?

MS. SMIT-BRUNELLO: Well, if my face wasn't red before, I'm certain it is now. Thank you, Andy, for the kind words and thank you all. I've developed a lot of wonderful relationships, I think, through working with you all and the service. I always remember Bob Mahood talking about it's the relationships, and it really is, because that helps get the work done.

I've always considered that we're all kind of on the same team, trying to work toward the same goal, and I think that has been a really good -- Kind of a mantra for me to use, so that, if any of you called me up, or had a question, you know, I just figure that we're working together to try to get to a goal. Sometimes the council goal is not the same as the Fisheries Service's goals, and sometimes you don't listen to me, and then we find ourselves in litigation that's a little more difficult to figure out how to go forward, but it's been a really great learning experience, and I've enjoyed it.

I wouldn't be here for all those council meetings if I didn't like the work, and liking the work, in large part, has relationships at the foundation, and so thank you all. Thanks for the work ethic idea. You know, I'm the youngest of twelve children, from immigrant parents, raised on a dairy farm, and how's that? So the work ethic is -- That northern European work ethic is kind of ingrained in all of my siblings, and I guess on me too, and, anyway, thank you all, and I hope this isn't the end, and that I'll see you again, and so I really appreciate it. Thank you very much.

MS. MURPHEY: Thank you, Monica. We're going to miss you. Can you still come in December, please?

MS. SMIT-BRUNELLO: As my mother used to say, we'll see.

MS. MURPHEY: Okay. All right. Rick.

MR. DEVICTOR: You know, Monica, I just have one question. You know, Monica always had a copy of Magnuson-Stevens down at the end of the table, right? Earmarked, highlighted, and I think it has all the secrets to everything, and I want to know who is going to inherit it? Who's going to inherit it?

MR. STRELCHECK: It should definitely be framed.

MS. SMIT-BRUNELLO: Well, the back cover is gone, and it's got some tape on it, and I have doodled a little bit, and someone said, do you want a new copy? I said, oh, no. I'm working through this one.

MS. MURPHEY: Great. Well, thanks so much for all your help, guidance, and just time to the service, and to the council and so I guess we will go ahead and move into committee reports, and I guess I'll start with the Full Council I report. The council met on Monday, September 15 and Tuesday, September 16 of 2025, and we're meeting today in North Charleston, and the council adopted the agenda for the week and approved minutes for the June 2025 meeting.

Newly-appointed and reappointed members took the council member oath, and the 2024 Law Enforcement Officer of the Year Award was presented to the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission's SRA Offshore Patrol Vessel Team and South Carolina DNR's PFC Andrew Alexander.

We had litigation briefs. We had reports from the state agencies, Florida through North Carolina. We were reminded that the best fishing practices staff had a recorded presentation that we're to listen to, and answer a survey, and I think we'll be talking about that later this morning.

Our council liaisons provided reports. We had reports from Andy Strelcheck and Clay Porch from the Southeast Region and from the Science Center. Then we went into discussion of the Executive Order, and so the council began discussion of Executive Order 14276 at its June 2025 meeting, and subsequently solicited public input on what types of management actions may achieve the goals stated in the executive order. Public comments were accepted, via the council's website, from July 28 through August 15, and the council also hosted an online meeting of its advisory panels.

To kick off the discussion, in terms of vehicles available to accomplish various actions, staff presented a tool to assist the council -- To assist that the council select the appropriate amendment types and consider timing for different potential actions in the Snapper Grouper FMP. The tool also includes a list of actions that can be addressed through a framework amendment, and it really just -- It was a good tool to just whatever amendment we need for what we wanted to do.

The council then reviewed a summary of the themes present in the public comments and advisory panel input on the executive order and a list of executive order action responses. The council focused discussion on actions that were already underway, to ensure that they would be accommodated in the workplan, and does have a high chance of completion. Therefore, actions already underway were considered high priority.

The following actions and associated timelines will be submitted to the council's response to the executive order, and so removing or considering ecosystem component designation for species in the Snapper Grouper Fishery Management Plan, Snapper Grouper Amendment 60, which aims to address permit issues and improve commercial trip efficiency, and support for the development of state-agency-led exempted fishing permits to test state management of the recreational red snapper fishery. We also -- While not regulatory action, the council letter will also include a description of how the council is working to increase stakeholder engagement with the management and science processes.

Other recommendations will be considered for the council's response to Executive Order 141192, or the addition to the council's workplan, as is appropriate and times allow. In addition to council-specific actions, the council recommends NOAA Fisheries prioritize the following items in their response to Executive Order 14276: maintaining capacity of data collection and conducting stock assessments; supporting the funding of citizen science and cooperative research initiatives; eliminate the prohibition of shark fin sales, which is detrimental to the fishing business and contributes to shark depredation that has become problematic in the South Atlantic fisheries; and removing the requirement to report discards in the commercial fishery, or develop and fund a discard reporting program that will meet best scientific information available; and support funding the Saltonstall-Kennedy grant program, especially promotion and marketing and development infrastructure and capacity building priorities.

We also discussed the research and monitoring plan priorities. The council revises their research and monitoring plan every two years, and the research and monitoring plan was presented to the

council in June of 2025, and so, due to the limited time in the June meeting, the draft research and monitoring was sent to committee chairs for their review and to prioritize research and monitoring topics for their committee.

NMFS did express that the list of priorities far outstrips what NMFS can do, even without the current funding of staff limitations. A suggestion was made to reprioritize the list to focus on what can realistically be accomplished. The council did ultimately decide not to spend additional time prioritizing research and monitoring needs and approved the plan as revised. The council also requested to include citizen science program priorities in the plan for the next round of review in 2027.

We did hear from Dr. Tracey Smart, from South Carolina DNR, presenting results from the Southeast Reef Fish Survey and the Coastal Trawl Survey, which are two long-running fishery-independent programs that collect data along the South Atlantic coast, and the council members expressed appreciation for this update. One member did note that red porgy have been showing up noticeably in landings in the Mid-Atlantic region, according to a report prepared by the Mid-Atlantic Council, and encouraged communication with researchers in other regions to keep track of such occurrences.

For dolphin management, the Southeast Fisheries Science Center is conducting a management strategy evaluation, or MSE, for the Atlantic dolphin fishery, and the goal of this project is to develop an index-based management procedure that may provide catch level and management advice that best achieves the multiple management objectives of the fishery.

Dr. Cassidy Peterson and Dr. Tom Carruthers updated the council on progress in the MSE and recent modeling efforts, and so the council -- To keep work on the MSE moving forward in a timely manner, the council approved a motion to allow the council chair and the Dolphin Wahoo Committee chair and the SSC liaison to approve the terms of reference on the council's behalf, after review by the SSC in the fall, and before the December council meeting.

The motion was to allow -- There was a motion to allow the council chair, Dolphin Wahoo Committee chair, and SSC liaison to approve the term of references for the dolphin MSE upon review by the SSC in the fall of 2025. The motion was approved by the council. Jessica.

MS. MCCAWLEY: It was just a question back to that slide, you know, that we were shown that this is coming back at every council meeting. I was hoping that we were going to have that discussion when we get to the workplan, and, you know, do we really need to come back that many times?

MS. MURPHEY: All right. Thanks, Jessica. We'll discuss that during the workplan. Thanks. Andy.

MR. STRELCHECK: While we're on the MSE, and I know this will have relevance for the snapper grouper MSE, I received a lot of just side comments, after some of the MSE presentations, that this is really technical, and this is stuff we're struggling to understand. You know, is this the kind of right content for the information that's being shared with the council members, and so Clay and I have been talking a little bit about this, and we, you know, agree that I think the snapper grouper discussion went better than the dolphin MSE discussion, but I'm -- I think I just wanted to

use this opportunity, if people have any feedback, or input, on the MSE conversations, and how we can make them more effective, and I would really appreciate it, either now or after the meeting, and just shoot Clay and I an email.

MS. MURPHEY: Yes. Thank you. I think -- John.

MR. CARMICHAEL: Please include the council as well in that, your staff, because our staff did work pretty hard with folks, and tried to encourage taking presentations in a shorter, and maybe better, content relevant for the council direction, and struggled some in that regard, obviously, and so we would definitely need to be included in that conversation.

MS. MURPHEY: All right. Thanks, John, because, like I said, it's a team effort here. Carolyn.

DR. BELCHER: I think the one difficulty, kind of like where we were with discussing the inputs on the dolphin MSE, is, because this is the first one, I think we're going to clunk around on the first one, and maybe it will start getting more streamlined on the second, because we really don't know what it's going to look like. I mean, we've seen snapshots, but the whole thing is still kind of a foreign tool to us, and so maybe that's a little bit of grace for the first one.

MS. MURPHEY: Yes, and thank you, Carolyn. Good point. Anything else? All right. I will move on into the state management discussion. In June of 2025, the South Atlantic Council met, and they requested holding an informational session on joint state and federal management of council-managed species, and presentations were requested on the federal perspective and regulatory options from the Southeast Regional Office, the council role in implementing state-based management of red snapper in the Gulf by the Gulf Council, a state perspective by Florida Fish and Wildlife, and a broader Atlantic perspective by ASMFC.

The council discussed questions, concerns, and issues to be addressed if joint state and federal management of red snapper is considered in the South Atlantic. Below are highlights of the discussion. If a state allocation is needed to be revised, how would this be accomplished? Recalibration of data can also lead to reallocation. The South Atlantic states will have to consider issues of discards of other species when fishermen are targeting red snapper.

The length of recreational seasons is affected by many factors, such as a change in minimum sizes, changes in fishing effort, and, consequently, there is variation among state seasons. States have different survey methodologies. It resulted in a huge challenge, and caused delays in the stock assessment for red snapper in the Gulf, and so states would need to consider this before implementing successful state management programs.

Part of the success in the Gulf is attributed to the stock rebuilding, and the Great Red Snapper Count in the Gulf contributed to the increase in red snapper quotas, but there's still issues regarding how the data are incorporated into the assessment, and, in the Gulf, as the population of red snapper rebuilt, it changed its locations. Areas where red snapper were not abundant began to be filled in as the fishery was rebuilding, and the South Atlantic states will have to enhance their data collection programs to have enough data to successfully allocate and manage red snapper at a state-by-state level.

There are concerns regarding how well data collection programs are representing the abundance of red snapper, and how this will affect allocations to states. However, many different alternatives to allocation can be considered. The Gulf Council did consider conservation equivalency, but ultimately went with delegation, because of the amount of time it would require maintaining the conservation equivalency.

Acknowledgement that Florida has well-established data collection programs that gather a lot of information on red snapper, whereas the other South Atlantic states lack that. How do the states in the Gulf pay for their expanded data collection programs? Was some of the Deepwater Horizon money used for expanding or implementing the state data collection programs? How do the fishery-independent data collection programs in the Gulf -- How are they being used? Are they used to inform state-by-state allocations and to track red snapper conditions?

Fishery-independent data are coming into play, as well as the Great Red Snapper Count, in terms of where the fish are located, and it provided a characterization of the bottom that added to the understanding of red snapper distributions in the Gulf.

G-FISHER, in partnership with the Science Center, Florida, and other Gulf states, is anticipated to be a flagship survey in the Gulf, but it's still very new. States are requesting congressional allocation to fund progress towards state management. However, there are no details to share currently. States intend to submit EFPs to test data collection for 2026, and test out state management, and this will be presented to the council in December.

Coming up with state apportionment for red snapper was a long and laborious process in the Gulf. There was a lot of momentum in the South Atlantic to explore state management of red snapper, and the conversation should continue. A council member inquired as to whether the total ACLs for red snapper can be allocated to each sector, and then be reduced by that sector's corresponding discards, and the states are looking at recreational components only for EFPs, and to simultaneously work through the council process. The council approved the following motion, and that motion was to initiate a plan amendment for state management of recreational red snapper, and which was approved by the council.

So, to address increasing the states' role in data collection, the council also identified topics, and potential presenters for the planned December 2025 session, and so we have directions to staff that the council will send a letter to the Southeast Fisheries Science Center requesting details on activities the center can no longer accomplish, activities conducted in cooperation with states that the center can no longer support, and opportunities for increased state cooperation to complete priority tasks, and to contact the Gulf states to obtain information on how they identified offshore or reef fish anglers. I do have a request for clarification. This was some guidance that came from the June meeting.

MR. CARMICHAEL: Trish, I did want to point out, Trish, and you know, Jessica, remember, based on our discussions of the December agenda, that we were trying to clarify some of these presentations, because, as always, there's way too many topics for December than the time will allow, and so I didn't know if you guys wanted to bring some of that up now, or just, you know, wait until later for the agenda, but, since this is on here, it might be good to clarify, for the record, what we were thinking on these presentations, and so, if you would like me to rehash sort of where we ended up, that would be fine.

Yes, and so, as I said, you know, based on the timing and such, and plus there were a number of data-related topics that have been rolling over since June and prior meetings, and so we needed to hone-in and focus on things that are really timely and fit for December, and so, for one thing, we're expecting, and have been planning for I think over six months, if not longer, a presentation from MRIP on the FES outcome, and the comparison. I think that will be fairly extensive, and that sort of covers MRIP.

We've also been expecting the FWC results of the EFPs and we are anticipating state EFPs, that are going to need to be discussed and presented, and so thinking the focus really, in the Snapper Grouper Committee, should be the FWC recent EFP, and the new EFPs that are coming, and have another session, probably at Full Council, where we look at MRIP, but we're, for now, setting aside say LA Creel.

The council has heard a lot about that, and had a lot of informational sessions on the different things. If a state were to pursue that program, I think that would be something that maybe comes up later in the discussions, when we get to the point of what type of data collection program is there on the Atlantic coast, and we certainly want a consistent data collection program on the coast, but, at this point, we're really not there to hear more details about any particular program.

As far as ACCSP, I think people around this table are well aware of ACCSP, and its capabilities. If not, you have co-workers you're close with who attend ASMFC meetings, and serve on the ACCSP coordinating council, and know very well what it does for us in our states, and we probably don't really need to have a formal presentation here at the table, and so we're thinking about, you know, setting that one aside for now.

Then the Gulf States Commission, you know, they have IRA projects looking at discards and fishing effort, but the reality is we didn't get \$20 million for South Atlantic red snapper, and so it might just -- You know, it doesn't -- I don't think that it forwards our efforts to hear what is going on with \$20 million that we don't have access to, and so, you know, to get it narrowed down, that's sort of where we were -- Where we ended up, after lunch yesterday, talking about the agenda.

MS. MURPHEY: Go ahead, Andy.

MR. STRELCHECK: Yes, and, just to that point, I don't feel strongly whether that has to be an agenda topic or not, but, to what John just said, in terms of forwarding your efforts, yes, it's going to the Gulf, but the studies, and the things that they're doing, will have broader application of recreational data collection, and it could be used in other regions, and not just the Gulf.

MR. CARMICHAEL: You know, I think we could encourage them to submit a written report summary of their various projects, to bring you into the loop, and, as the projects come to fruition, we could route it through the appropriate channels, through the states and through the SSC and others to look at, which is exactly how we're handling your own IRA projects. I'll just point out, you know, we're not we're not spending a lot of time here at these meetings giving you detailed reporting-outs on your own IRA projects.

MS. MURPHEY: Jessica.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Yes, and, just to add to what John said, also, I think some of these presentations -- Maybe they come later in the process, like the LA Creel, you know, and so, I mean, we have had a presentation in the past on the LA Creel program, and, actually all the state, Gulf state, data collection programs, when we were talking about this in the past, and so I think that, since the states are working on EFPs, the states need to think about the LA Creel program.

The states need to think about some of these programs, and then, as the council considers state management, if they want to bring some of these presentations back in, including things about discards and others, then maybe it's a little bit more timely a little bit later in the process, and that was just my thought.

MS. MURPHEY: Thanks Jessica. Carolyn.

DR. BELCHER: It may be too -- I mean, obviously, we're not far enough along in our own observer for-hire information that we're doing, but we do have our own projects that got off the ground this year to look at that, and so it may be worth it just to kind of hold that off until we can get some results from our own studies.

MS. MURPHEY: Charlie.

MR. PHILLIPS: Thank you, Madam Chair, and I'm just trying to think of flow, and, you know, if MRIP is going to be supporting the states, and we're looking at LA Creel, I would I would kind of be inclined to tie those two together, so we can weigh one against the other, know who is doing what, why they're doing it, where they're going, and some things like that.

MS. MCCAWLEY: But I guess, because we stopped work on Amendment 46, and instead the states are focusing on their own state data collection programs, is LA Creel as timely as MRIP, I guess is my my question, since we stopped work on that amendment that was looking at all those different pieces.

MR. PHILLIPS: Yes, and I didn't say December. I just said when we do this, and I did not say December.

MS. MURPHEY: All right. Is everybody -- John do you have anything else to say, or is everybody good with that discussion and timing of when we have the different presentations, or if we have them? Okay, and so where am I? I'm sorry. Clay.

DR. PORCH: Thank you. Just regarding the passage, in terms of including discards in the allocations that council member Dewey brought up, the last sentence has a parenthetical statement of "e.g., include discards in the ABC, versus the ACL", which isn't technically right. I think what you mean to say there is include discards in the allocation, and so either just -- You probably can just delete it, because the sentiment is in the sentence before, but it's essentially whether you include in your allocations the total kill or just the landings.

MS. MURPHEY: All right. Thanks, Clay. Andy.

MR. STRELCHECK: Yes, and I just wanted to provide a few clarifying comments, and then kind of make a request for the December meeting, and so, in our notes on state management, it says

calibration can lead to reallocation. That's true. In the Gulf, what has occurred is the allocations were set based on the stock assessment, that was done in MRIP, and then the state surveys monitored against MRIP units until calibration came along later.

Then, if your state survey for one state estimates landings markedly different than another state, right, then your calibration relative to MRIP is going to be different, but we haven't changed allocations in the Gulf. What we have done is calibrated against MRIP. In the future, going forward, I think those will be state conversations that may happen. Kind of in hindsight, what we know now, if we had known back then, we would have maybe made different decisions about allocation.

There's also a statement about stock rebuilding. I forgot how it was worded, but, by the time state management actually came into place, the quotas in the Gulf had increased from five million to fifteen million pounds for commercial and recreational combined. When the Great Red Snapper Count was implemented, that added, I think, another 10 percent increase to the catch limit, and so it's I don't think entirely true to say that the Great Red Snapper Count contributed to the increase. There was substantial increases that were happening in advance of the Great Red Snapper Count.

Then the last thing is a request for December, and so I had a nice sidebar last night with the state directors, and we've agreed to work to coordinate with one another, so that we can have what we would hope to be complete EFP applications in advance of the December meeting to bring to you, but I think we're going to need some good amount of time on the agenda, and so to find that time, and make sure we dedicate adequate time and resources to the agenda for those conversations, would be appreciated. Thanks.

MR. CARMICHAEL: To that, that's our intent, and that's why we started trimming presentations right there, to make that time available for you.

MS. MURPHEY: Are we good? Okay. Then, last, but not least we had to -- I want to request some clarification on some guidance that was included in our June report, and so, in December 2025, we were to add a half-a-day agenda item, or longer if required, that will focus on recreational fishing data and include an update on the Gulf Council, Greater Atlantic Region Fisheries Office, and Highly Migratory Species related to the for-hire reporting and preliminary results from the red snapper exempted fishing permits.

There's a lot of information here. Then discuss relevant measures that respond to the recent executive order and directives to increase state involvement in recreational data collection, and also to convene a recreational state and federal data subcommittee to help coordinate council and state efforts to improve recreational data, and so I guess my question is are these really needed, or do you -- All are you all good with dropping these from our December, because I think some things have changed since the June meeting, like dropping the Amendment 46, and the SEFHIER one, and so, John.

MR. CARMICHAEL: I think the first one really gets it a lot of stuff that was in the above discussion about the presentations, and we kind of clarified what we'll actually be getting, and so, yes, I think that -- We've clarified what the purpose of that will be, and it's a much heavier shift toward the EFP situation, and then we also think, based on, as mentioned, dropping that other amendment, that we probably don't need the state and federal data subcommittee at this time, but

we certainly want to have the council do what it can, and use this table as much as we can, to coordinate efforts and ensure that we have a much more consistent approach to data collection from the get-go than occurred in the Gulf, but I don't know that a -- That a data subcommittee of the council is necessarily going to be all that helpful in that regard.

MS. MURPHEY: So any thoughts? Jessica.

MCCAWLEY: Yes, and just I agree. I think that the EFPs to test state management maybe are more front and center, and the states are going to come forward with kind of how they're going to look at their anglers and what data they're going to get from anglers as part of that process, and so, to me, maybe that bottom bullet there -- That subcommittee isn't really needed right now. Between that and us stopping work on Amendment 46, I don't know that we need that subcommittee at this moment.

MS. MURPHEY: Any other thoughts? Carolyn.

DR. BELCHER: I would agree with what Jessica just said.

MS. MURPHEY: Okay. Anybody else? Does everybody support just removing that? Anybody that says we think we should have it? Dewey.

MR. HEMILRIGHT: I'm in favor of that, because it seems like the EFPs, and other things that the states are working out, are more important right now. As they get something worked out, and then it comes back to the council to say what's the update, and then these other things might be needed in the future, but, right now, the ball is in the EFPs, and the potential work ahead that needs to be done.

MS. MURPHEY: All right. Thanks, and so I think we -- Everybody is of the conclusion that we no longer need that subcommittee, and, with that, I -- Jessica.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Yes, and so, right above that blue area right there, where it says direction to staff, I just wanted to make sure -- So the first bullet is about how we're requesting, from the Science Center, the details of the -- In a letter, the details of the activities that they can no longer accomplish, and then I guess what the asks are for the states, so that we're clear on what all they need from the states to support, and then I didn't -- I can't remember the specifics of that second bullet about contact the Gulf states to obtain information on how they identify offshore or reef fish anglers for use in estimating catch, and I couldn't remember that particular one. I just wanted to point out the one above it.

MS. MURPHEY: Thanks. John.

MR. CARMICHAEL: Yes, and I think that came up when we were talking about the efforts in the Gulf, and mentioned that the percentage of their general anglers who participate in the various programs, and, rather than getting, you know, percentage out -- A reporting out from all them on the details, you said we just reach out to them, and maybe get a -- Initially, it was just really the idea of the number of anglers who actually get the reef fish permit, to have some sense of the universe. If you guys don't think that would be helpful, because the states are really working on this, then we can scratch that.

MS. MCCAWLEY: I guess I would say I'm not -- Because of the EFPs, I don't know if we need it at this moment, but I would look at other states, to see what they think about it, because I feel like it came before we had that other discussion, but so I don't -- I don't know that we need it, but I don't want to speak for all the states.

MS. MURPHEY: Amy.

MS. DUKES: Thank you, Madam Chair. Yes, and I agree with Jessica that it might just be a little premature at this point, until we figure out a little bit more about how the path is going to progress. I do have an additional comment, but I'll wait on that for a minute.

MS. MURPHEY: Carolyn, any -- Yes, and I'm good, too. Amy.

MS. DUKES: Thank you, Madam Chair, and, with the requested clarification down below, the only thing that I would ask is, as the MRIP team provides perhaps that presentation on their role for state-led data management programs, I do think it would be helpful to have a couple of slides, maybe at the end of that, that gives us some information on how the FES transition plan is moving, just because some of that information will be helpful for us as we continue this path as well. Thank you.

MS. MURPHEY: Yes, and thank you, Amy. That's a good point. All right. Now that concludes my Council I report. Yay, and so now you've got to suffer through me again on the Habitat & Ecosystem Committee/Shrimp Committee report, and so the committees approved the Habitat & Ecosystem and Shrimp Committee minutes from the June 2025 meeting, and the agenda as well.

We heard from Stacie Crowe, from South Carolina, who is the Habitat & Ecosystem Advisory Panel chair. She delivered the July 2025 report, and the council reviewed the workplan. **A motion was made to approve the Habitat & Ecosystem Committee panel workplan, and it was approved by committee. On behalf of the committee, I so move. Is there any discussion? Any objections? The motion is approved.**

We then went into discussion of Amendment 11 and Shrimp Amendment 12. In September, the council began developing a joint amendment to the Coral and Shrimp FMPs to propose in establishing a SFAA within the northern extension of the Oculina Area of Particular Concern. We went through public hearings. Hearings were held in October, or I mean August, and staff has reviewed the decision document and the public comment summary.

The committees did confirm that the purpose and need should not change from the approved June 2025 wording. The committee also approved the changes to the alternatives clarifying how the square nautical mile mileage was measured. Regarding VMS ping rate, the committees clarified the intent to retain the transmit transit VMS communication, or ping rate, in the fishing area, and the increased ping rate provides an additional resolution on the collect the location of shrimp vessels relative to the coral, and thus ensures fishing activity is sufficiently away from the coral to prevent damage.

On discussion of sediment and protection of EFH, we discussed how EFH is still protected within the OHAPC, if trawling is allowed in the fishing area, and how the adverse effect of fishing is

minimized by selecting Preferred Alternative 2. Preferred Alternative 2 has a larger buffer between the fishing area and the known coral pinnacles, which should minimize damage to coral, and the upwellings that are isolated, and are limited, and so, between that and the additional buffer, damage to EFH should be minimized.

Regarding the goals and objectives of the FMPs, we discussed how establishing the fishing area supports the Shrimp and Coral FMP goals and objectives, and the committees had robust discussion on how the goals and objectives for both FMPs are being met, and those discussions can be viewed in Appendix 1.

We had a motion to approve the modifications to the Preferred Alternative 2 and Alternative 3, and, on behalf of the committee, I so move. Do we have any discussion? Any objections? The motion is approved.

We also reviewed the alternatives, and kept the Preferred Alternative 2, and so we have a -- **We made the motion to approve the action in Coral Amendment 11/Shrimp Amendment 12 for consideration of final approval in December of 2025. This was approved by the committees, and so, on behalf of the committees, I so move. Any discussion? Any objections? The motion is approved.** We do have a timing and task most draft motion here, if someone would like to make that a motion, make that motion. Don't everybody jump at once, Come on. Okay, Kerry. You do it.

MS. MARHEFKA: I move that we adopt the following timing and tasks: staff should start collecting space industry information and explore the formation of a working group to explore whether the development of a policy is appropriate, and Florida staff may be interested in being involved; and to prepare Coral Amendment 1/Shrimp Amendment 12 for consideration for final approval at the December 2025 meeting.

MS. MURPHEY: Do I have a second? Charlie. Any discussion? Any objections? Sorry, Carolyn.

DR. BELCHER: I just thought, maybe to clarify, that that's Florida FWC staff, as opposed to just Florida staff.

MS. MURPHEY: I think that's been captured, and so thanks for that clarification. Any other discussion? Okay. **Any objections? Motion approved.** Just to reiterate, there is an appendix, here in this committee report, that fully details those discussions of meeting the Shrimp and Coral FMP goals and objectives, and, with that, I'm done. All right. Next -- Well, does everybody want to take a break, or just keep moving? Okay. We'll take a break, and come back in ten minutes, whatever that is.

(Whereupon, a recess was taken.)

MS. MURPHEY: All right. We'll go ahead and get back started. I'll go through the SEDAR Committee report. Sorry. I'm breaking in line. I'll let -- Go, Carolyn.

DR. BELCHER: You're the chair. You're entitled to restructure if you need to. I'm going to be presenting the summary report for the council's Shrimp Committee, the meeting that we held on

September 18. The committee approved the agenda for the September 2025 meeting, and then we reviewed one item on the agenda, which was related to the giant manta ray and smalltooth sawfish Section 7 reinitiation updates.

In June of 2023, the SERO Sustainable Fisheries Division requested the Protected Resources Division reinitiate Endangered Species Act Section 7 consultation on the Southeast U.S. shrimp fisheries, both in the Gulf and in South Atlantic. The reinitiation is required by the ESA, because new information indicates shrimp fishing is affecting smalltooth sawfish and giant manta rays more than predicted in the previous 2021 shrimp biological opinion.

SERO staff reviewed key summary data on smalltooth sawfish and giant manta ray assembled for the reinitiation of the consultation, which has been compiled over the last two years. SERO staff discussed present paths forward for collaboration and advancing the consultation, consistent with the October 2024 ESA and Magnuson-Stevens Act policy directive.

The council discussed the need for the creation of a workgroup, similar to what was proposed at the August 2025 Gulf Council meeting, to explore ways to reduce interactions of smalltooth sawfish and giant manta rays in the South Atlantic. The committee made the following motion.

Motion 1 is populate and convene a new working group comprised of shrimp harvester sector representatives, National Marine Fisheries Service staff, council staff, council members, an SSC member, researchers and others to identify workable solutions that aim to reduce interactions with smalltooth sawfish and giant manta rays in the South Atlantic federal shrimp trawl fishery. This new working group should be formed by the council chair, Shrimp Committee chair, Regional Administrator, and executive director, with no more than fifteen members. On behalf of the committee, I so move. Any further discussion? Any objection? Seeing none, that motion carries. Next up, we have a draft timing and tasks motion. Would someone from the committee like to make that motion, or I guess the council? Sorry. Amy.

MS. DUKES: Thank you, Madam Chair. **I move to direct staff to do the following: coordinate the formation of the workgroup, schedule meetings, and facilitate workgroup discussions; present workgroup discussions to the Shrimp Committee as needed.**

DR. BELCHER: Do I have a second? Charlie. Any further discussion? **Any opposition? Seeing none, that motion carries.** With that, I conclude my report, Madam Chair.

MS. MURPHEY: All right. Thank you, Carolyn. Okay. Now I'm up next. This is the SEDAR Committee report, and so the committee approved the agenda for the September 2025 meeting and the minutes from the March meeting. We did not hear any on steering committee updates, because of time, and we did discuss the SEDAR process changes, and so these were presented changes from in the SEDAR process.

These changes include the addition of technical teams, optional SSC check-ins, continued use of topical working groups, and distinct pathways for assessments led by the analytical agency, versus those led through SEDAR, and the committee discussed the changes and clarified the differences between topical working groups and technical working groups and reviewed the revised assessment process.

The council staff presented draft statements of work for Spanish mackerel, greater amberjack, and red porgy. These statements will be sent to NOAA Fisheries to begin negotiations on the type of assessment that can be conducted. The committee recommended a virtual data workshop for the Spanish mackerel assessment. to ensure coordination with NOAA Fisheries in both the Southeast and Greater Atlantic Regions.

Then, for greater amberjack, the committee requested a data workshop, a topical working group, and technical team to aid in the incorporation of the findings from the Greater Amberjack Research Program, and then, for red porgy, the committee requested inclusion of topical working groups to address natural mortality and landings in the Mid-Atlantic region.

The committee made the following motion, and that was to approve statements of work for Spanish mackerel, greater amberjack, and red porgy, with the suggested edits, and this was approved by committee, and so, on behalf of the committee, I so move. Any discussion? Any objections? So the motion carries.

Then we reviewed the species for the 2025 to 2029 assessments, and the council staff updated the committee on the SEDAR projects and other assessment-related efforts in the region. Following the update, the committee considered priorities for 2029 and recommended scamp and tilefishes, which include blueline and golden, for assessments for that year, and so I have a motion here on timing and tasks, if someone would like to make it. Amy.

MS. DUKES: Thank you, Madam Chair. **Regarding timing and tasks, I move to direct staff to do the following: recruit members to fill the assessment technical team, to be nominated in December.**

MS. MURPHEY: Do I have a second? I've got Carolyn. Any discussion? **Any objections?** Okay. **The motion carries.** That concludes the report for SEDAR Committee. Monica.

MS. SMIT-BRUNELLO: Could you back up to the SEDAR process changes? I think it would be appropriate, given the discussion we had, to just add something like NOAA General Counsel is going to further review, to make sure that the changes are consistent with the Magnuson Act.

MS. MURPHEY: All right. That's right. Thank you, Monica, and I think -- You're capturing that, Myra? Yes. Myra is capturing that, and so good catch.

MS. SMIT-BRUNELLO: Thank you.

MS. MURPHEY: All right. I guess I will turn it to the great Snapper Grouper Committee, and so take it away, Jessica.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. Thank you, Madam Chair. All right, and so the committee met earlier this week, and approved the minutes from the June meeting, and the agenda for this week's meeting, and we received some updates from SERO on several amendments that have been submitted.

Then we went into reviewing the commercial subcommittee report and Amendment 60, and so we've talked about that, which included revising some of the actions in Amendment 60,

and then the committee also discussed the recommendation to revise the application of trip limits to the sale of fish and expressed intent for this revision to be addressed as quickly as possible and passed the following motion to initiate an action to revise how trip limits are applied to the sale of fish, with the vehicle to be determined later, and, on behalf of the committee, I so move. Any discussion of this? Kerry.

MS. MARHEFKA: I've been trying to figure out sort of the best path to go forward with this, realizing it's not necessarily practical to put it into black sea bass. Workload-wise, it's probably not the best idea to initiate its own framework. Amendment 60 feels too long for me, but, if that's the appropriate thing, it is.

What I would request is, is it possible for us to send a letter to the region clarifying that the sale was never the intent for the end of a trip, and the wording is probably not -- I'm not going to come up with it on the spot, and so please, if anyone doesn't understand, let's be really clear about it here, because I would -- You know, we have to speak as a body, and say, as a body, this is not our intent, and the council is going to work on a remedy for this. In the meantime though, are there other avenues, such that it's not enforced in that manner.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Monica.

MS. SMIT-BRUNELLO: I was looking through the regulations, and that language for commercial trip limit is in the snapper grouper regulations, the same language in the dolphin wahoo regulations, and the coastal migratory pelagic regulations, and so, if you're thinking about the issues you brought up with snapper grouper, maybe at one of the next meetings or whatever, and I understand you're going to write the letter, but, also, this doesn't -- You know, how would this affect these other fishery management plans with the same kind of regulations in them?

MS. MCCAWLEY: Kerry.

MS. MARHEFKA: Well, in my mind, it was never ever the intent, ever, to have sale be -- For various reasons, and, if we need to get into them, we can get into them, but there are so many circumstances in which that is an inappropriate metric for the end of a trip, and it's not even funny, and so, knowing that, that would change whatever the vehicle looks like, I suppose, and it would have to be some sort of comprehensive amendment.

I assume, even if we send the letter saying that was never our intent, and that's not how it should be interpreted, and that's one thing. I would still assume, and, Monica, correct me if I'm wrong, that we would have to probably go back and dot the I, and cross the T, and get it taken out, and so it sounds like there's two things we need to worry about. With the letter -- Now I'm confused. I mean, I'm fine if we just do it for snapper grouper, but, if it affects everyone, then can we do a letter about everything?

MS. MCCAWLEY: These are great questions, and we've got more hands going up, and so stand by. Andy, are you okay if I go back to Monica first?

MS. SMIT-BRUNELLO: I kind of had my hand up, and then I took it down, and then I put it back up. So send the letter. It will certainly start the conversation, and I think we'll work with the

enforcement attorneys to discuss it further, and then, you know, you haven't really thought about it, or have any record for the dolphin wahoo or coastal migratory pelagics.

I don't know if it's the same issue there, and the same problems, and it probably is, and I don't know, but at least we can start that discussion, and maybe you could have one document that -- We'll look at the frameworks for the other two FMPs, but you would need a change to the regulations, I think, because there's the language of it being sold in the trip limit, and so it's not so much a problem with the regulation that defines what a trip means, but it's more in the problem with the trip limit language, and so this will start the conversation, and put it on the radar for everybody for the other two fishery management plans.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thank you, Monica. Andy, and then I'll come back to Kerry.

MR. STRELCHECK: Yes, and I'm certainly comfortable with the council sending the letter. I think where I'm getting hung up is by saying it was never the council's intent. I think, you know, trip limits have been around a long time, and so, when we talk about intent, we would have to really go back and look at the records, and decisions made by past councils, and maybe it's not this council's understanding, right, of the how a trip limit should be implemented, but just caution using the word "intent", because that really goes back to how decisions were initially made with trip limits.

MS. MCCAWLEY: I have a suggestion, and so Myra is typing some stuff there about the language of sale. The second paragraph, that says could the council send a letter to clarify, I think that we do -- The council will send a letter, and so that could be direction to staff, to send a letter to -- Instead of saying clarify the council's intent, I think that the direction is to discuss the problem, maybe, but I'll look to Kerry on what all should go in that letter, and can you think about what Andy and Monica said?

MS. MARHEFKA: In order of how my brain is working, in a response to Andy, I've been around a long time, and so just trust within my head that it wasn't the intent. No, and I'm just kidding. No, but I think this might -- Let's take a second to let this highlight the fact that I would bet my children on the fact that there's a disconnect between the action -- What? That's how confident I am. Confidently wrong sometimes. Let me finish.

That the action that was in the whatever initial amendment that we instituted, and, I mean, I could probably tell you the -- Anyway, that the action, and what ended up in the proposed regs, are not exactly the same wording, and I think this highlights the fact that, you know, when we get the Federal Register language, right before we're about to take final action --

Personally, it doesn't feel like enough time to take time to make sure that the codified regs are exactly what we're intending, and so, to the extent that we can see that language earlier in the process, that would be -- I understand we can't see it before we've narrowed down what we're going to do, but I often feel like we're up against the wall when it's time to finalize a plan, and that is the very last thing we see, and it's very hard to catch mistakes like this, and I do believe that this was a mistake.

To your point, Jessica, my intent of the letter, and this may be unrealistic, is for, at the very least, this body to send a message to enforcement that, if this is open for interpretation at all, please

understand this body would like you to interpret it less restrictively, because that's how we meant it, and I say that again because it has been interpreted different by different officers, and what we are trying to say, as a body, is we would like it to be interpreted -- It is our intent that it is interpreted that a trip ends when that fish is offloaded.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Okay. I appreciate all that, and so I'm going to work on your last point first, and so Myra is typing there about that the letter is how we think it should be interpreted, that the letter is about how it's being enforced, and it also states there that a change in the regulations will be needed in the long-term to clarify the trip limit language.

The bottom paragraph there, where you have the mouse, I think we can -- That is bolded. I think we can delete that, but I want to capture the other thing that Kerry brought up, and I would like to reference the debacle with black and gag, and that it was the same problem with the codified text, and it not coming until late, and not realizing, and then we had to bring it back to the council to try to fix it, once again to clarify what the intent was, but it also held up the FWC passing complementary regulations for state waters, and so I would like to capture that as well, that the council is requesting that the codified text be provided earlier in the process, to ensure, before the final passage of the rule, or the amendment, that it is accurately reflecting the council's intent for the rule.

Okay. All right, and so we have both items on there. This is good discussion, and so we still have a motion on the table that we haven't voted on, but is there anybody else that wants to weigh-in here about the language and the direction here? I know that we had a lot of discussion on this in the subcommittee, but anything else that people want to say here? Amy.

MS. DUKES: Thank you, Madam Chair, and I appreciate Kerry starting this initiation. I fully support sending the letter. I do also understand that officer discretion applies, but, because this particular law is being handled by law enforcement differently in different states, and with different things, I just -- I really feel like this letter is super important. It kind of gets back to the whole the spirit of the law, versus the letter of the law, and so um I support sending this letter. Thank you.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. Any more discussion? Myra.

MS. BROUWER: Just a question. We are going to be selecting topics, or you all are going to be selecting topics, to bring together the Law Enforcement AP in January or February, and is this something that you would like to bring before that advisory panel?

MS. MCCAWLEY: Sure. I see heads nodding yes, that we want it to come before them. I don't think that that's going to stop us from trying to fix it but, I mean, certainly we can talk about it with them, and the concerns of how it's being enforced. Okay. Any more discussion on this? All right. **Any objection to this motion? So no objection to the motion that I can see.** All right. **The motion carries.** The rest of that is just direction to staff.

All right. In addition, the committee discussed issues with the Starlink, and made a recommendation concerning Starlink as a potential approved telecommunication device for the Coast Guard, and gave the following direction to staff, to send a letter to the Coast Guard, of similar form to a letter sent by the Gulf Council, requesting approval of Starlink as an approved telecommunication device.

Then the committee passed the following motion, and so different topic. The committee made -- **They passed Motion Number 2, which is to send a letter to the Secretary of Commerce expressing concern about the delayed closure of the commercial red snapper season, and, on behalf of the committee, I so move.** It's under discussion. Andy.

MR. STRELCHECK: I can save you a letter. We got clearance today to close red snapper. A notice will be going out today, and I expect it will close sometime next week. I think there will be a five-day notice to commercial fishermen.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right, and so I already moved the motion. You just heard some discussion on it. I think we're okay to pass this motion. We've heard some updates on it, and any additional discussion, or any objection? Go ahead, Amy.

MS. DUKES: Thank you, Madam Chair. I'm wondering if the letter should still be sent, without necessarily the direct red snapper season. I am concerned that there could be another commercial closure that's going to come down the pipes at some point, where, if it doesn't get closed on time, and that particular species has accountability measures, it's going to negatively impact the following season for those commercial fishermen. I'm wondering if this letter still needs to be sent, but just in a general format.

MS. MCCAWLEY: So I guess I'm going to bring up a couple other points to that, and so, you know, we're dealing with Spanish mackerel right now. While the southern zone was frantically trying to transfer quota to the northern zone, the northern zone was going to close, and, also, I think we discussed, in the subcommittee, that there isn't a payback provision for commercial red snapper right now, and so just -- I think that there's some nuances there.

I'm happy for the committee to discuss how to handle it, but it seems like there might be some situations that are different for different fisheries, where we might not want them to act expeditiously, like this issue with the transfer between the two zones on Spanish mackerel, and so I'm just bringing up some points here. I'm happy to hear thoughts on this. Andy.

MR. STRELCHECK: I mean, I'll just comment on Spanish mackerel. I think that's a different situation, in that the transfer decision came later, in terms of a secondary transfer, right, and, if we had known a week or two ago about that transfer, we would maybe have made a different decision about when to close, or, you know, not having to close.

Because this is a letter coming to the Secretary, I'm going to abstain, but certainly, you know, points well taken with regard to any general concerns the council might have about fisheries not closing in a timely fashion, or if there's payback provisions, and the consequences of that.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thank you. Tom.

MR. ROLLER: Thank you, Madam Chair. I just want to echo Amy's comments. I agree. I mean, it's not just red snapper. It could be a recreational fishery as well, like, you know, Gulf amberjack, which is, or was, and I don't know if that's been closed, but I know that was open longer than it was intended to be, and, whether or not there's a payback, I mean, this is just more of a general issue I think that we need to be concerned about in the future.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right, and so would we like a substitute motion here that changes this up to more match what Amy and Tom are suggesting, and I'm not exactly sure what's in that substitute motion. The reason I said substitute motion is because I already moved this on behalf of the committee, and it's -- We're under discussion, and so just process-wise, because I don't know that we want to send a red snapper letter anymore, and so maybe the letter is more about the timeliness of things. Amy.

MS. DUKES: Thank you, Madam Chair, and sorry. I'm just processing this a little bit, too. Yes, ma'am. **I would move that we make a substitute motion to send a letter to the Secretary of Commerce expressing concerns about the delay of closures, and/or -- I want it to be more broad than even closures, and just any Fisheries Service actions that a delay would cause consequences for, possibly, or possibly cause.**

MS. MCCAWLEY: So delay of Fisheries Service actions, or something --

MS. DUKES: Maybe implementation? I'm happy to take some wordsmithing from others, and please feel free.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Okay. There were other hands going up. Charlie. Tom.

MR. ROLLER: I'm just waiting for the typing. Amy, I think your motion is pretty good. I do like the idea of saying something about accountability measures in there, because, you know, our fisheries plans are complicated, and different, and, even as it stands, I would be happy to second this motion.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Okay. Are we good with that motion? I see some heads nodding yes. Is it the delay of -- I don't want to say, "important Fisheries Service actions", because then what -- Then do we try to define what is important? Just is there anything else we want to add to this motion? Jimmy.

MR. HULL: I was thinking the wording of "quota-managed fisheries".

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. Amy? Okay. All right. Amy, would you like to read the motion?

MS. DUKES: Thank you, Madam Chair. **I move to send a letter to the Secretary of Commerce expressing concerns about the delay of Fisheries Service actions as related to quota-managed species, or fisheries. Examples would include accountability measures.**

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. Motion by Amy, and seconded by Tom. Any more discussion of this? Is there any objection to this? I think that, Andy, you're abstaining?

MR. STRELCHECK: Correct.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Okay, and so the motion carries with one abstention, and so the substitute now becomes the main motion. Now that it's the main motion, one more vote. **Any objections? One abstention, and so the motion carries with an abstention by Andy.** Thank you for that discussion.

All right, and so then we moved into discussion of yellowtail snapper and mutton snapper, which was Amendment 44, and this is a joint amendment with the Gulf Council. The recent stock assessments for both these species indicated that the stocks are not overfished, or experiencing overfishing, and the council reviewed a decision document that would establish the OFL and the ABC and jurisdictional allocation between the Gulf and South Atlantic Council for both of these species.

The council had previously planned on updating the ACL and sector allocations in a separate amendment, but this isn't feasible, because of a gap in time between amendments. We don't want the data to get stale again. Therefore, the ACL for each species would be updated within the current amendment, and the committee discussed the best way to move forward updating the catch levels, and they settled on one amendment that would be prepared jointly with the Gulf Council, with the Gulf Council as the administrative lead, and there would be items in there that would be just for the South Atlantic.

The committee made the following motion. In Action 1, move Alternative 4 to Considered but Rejected, and, on behalf of the committee, I so move. Any discussion? Any objections?
All right. **The motion carries.**

Also, there was discussion at the Gulf Council that Action 1 should be split into two actions. This would be one action for each species, and so, instead of them being all in one action, mutton and yellowtail would be split apart, and we agreed to direct staff to split this into two actions as well.

Additional direction, as I just talked about, that would update the ACLs for each species within Actions 1 and 2, and then include two additional actions that would update sector allocations for mutton and yellowtail. This would just be for the South Atlantic, and this would be presented at the December meeting, and so a little bit of additional discussion needed.

There's -- Can you scroll down a little bit more, Myra? There's two notes there, and so we had some discussion about this in committee, and we need to talk about it just a little bit more, so that staff can work on the document. We need to provide some rationale on why, here at the South Atlantic, we are considering setting ABC equal to ACL, without a buffer, and that's how we have it set right now. The ACL has not been exceeded in the past few years, and it was a couple times for yellowtail on the commercial side, but there's already a buffer in place, a scientific uncertainty buffer between the OFL and the ABC, and it's a fairly significant buffer.

I'm good, for these two stocks, setting the ABC equal to ACL, and that was also the Gulf Council's recommendation, but just looking for a little bit of additional discussion on that, and making sure that that's where we all are that that's accurately -- What everybody else on the committee was thinking, and so is that what folks think? So this would be no additional management buffer. Go ahead, Amy.

MS. DUKES: Thanks, Madam Chair, and, no, I agree with your rationale that the buffer between the OFL to the ACL -- I'm sorry. ABC/ACL is sufficient enough to have them be equal to one another.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Yes, and I agree. Carolyn.

DR. BELCHER: I mean, also, that the stocks are in good shape, as far as not overfished and not overfishing, and so I don't feel that that's a risk.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. Okay, and so we already captured some additional information there. Myra is capturing that on the board. Thank you for that discussion. I think we're good to leave the mutton and yellowtail amendment.

Then the council received some updates, and we received an update on the recreational aggregate bag limit discussion, and there were discussions about whether there were similar patterns observed in the Florida State Reef fish Survey, or under the exempted fishing permit, and members also noted any recreational aggregate bag limits would need to be based on full retention, with no size limits. Then, also, members expressed interest in exploring the data by region, which could possibly be by state, to find overlaps or differing species.

Then we went into blueline tilefish jurisdictional ABCs, and the council reviewed the communication with the Mid-Atlantic concerning jurisdictional allocations between regions and formation of a joint subcommittee, including members of both councils, and collaboratively determining how the ABC should be divided.

Then the committee discussed the need to implement the increased ABC that's been recommended by the SSC, based on SEDAR 92. **The committee recognized the time constraint with any potential amendment, in order to get the new catch limits in place for the 2026 season, and the committee passed the following motion, Motion Number 4, to initiate an abbreviated framework for blueline tilefish for 2026 to implement the SSC-recommended ABC and establish an ACL, and, on behalf of the committee, I so move.** Any additional discussion on this? **Any objection? All right. Motion carries.**

All right, and so then this change would be addressed through an abbreviated framework amendment. Sector allocation percentages would need to be maintained, even though the recreational catch estimation method changed to incorporate MRIP-FES in the SEDAR 92 assessment. This method would be used to track recreational catch moving forward.

Staff presented an analysis of recreational and commercial landings, with recreational landings calibrated to the Coastal Household Telephone Survey as well as FES. There was a small difference between rec and commercial landings relative to current sector allocation percentages, and the committee also discussed that the overall benefit to the fishery of quickly implementing the increased ABC is greater than the potential benefit of waiting for a more prolonged process that would include re-evaluating sector or jurisdictional allocation percentages.

The council directed staff to draft the abbreviated framework amendment for consideration of final council approval in December 2025. The public hearing for the abbreviated framework amendment would be conducted within the public comment session at the December 2025 council meeting. All right. Moving on -- I'm sorry. Go ahead, Andy.

MR. STRELCHECK: I don't recall, when we discussed the justification for allocation, if it was mentioned about the revisions to the FES that are also going to be emerging in 2026, and so I think

that also is valuable, in terms of considering that information before we make any sort of allocation decisions, and so I just wanted to note that.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thank you. I think we discussed it just a little bit, and so thanks for bringing that back up here. Monica, did you have something else?

MS. SMIT-BRUNELLO: Just quickly, it's still the council's intent to contact the Mid-Atlantic Council and have some sort of subcommittee, right, to look at years past 2026, in terms of how the assessment -- You know, the northern part of the SEDAR 92 assessment and the southern part?

MS. MCCAWLEY: The short answer is yes. Myra was still capturing the previous item. Myra, can you add that it's the council's intent to still work with the Mid-Atlantic as well? All right. We've got that captured. Thank you, Monica.

All right, and so now I'm going to move on to golden tilefish. We received some updates from council staff about the discrepancies among commercial data sources in SEDAR 89, and there will be continued discussions, and the revised stock assessment is expected to be completed and presented at the December 2025 council meeting.

All right. Vessel limits for headboats, council staff reviewed previous discussion points related to vessel limits for headboats and updated the committee on upcoming discussions about headboat vessel limits scheduled for the March 2026 meeting. The committee requested the following additional information be provided.

For this discussion, it would investigate vessel limits and current catch rates per every six passengers for black grouper, gag, and scamp. These are the species that already have a vessel limit in place, and this has already been discussed with the AP, and then, also, define and explain the requirements to be considered a headboat, and then the committee discussed, for other species, for future species, as vessel limits were made, this would be considered during the amendment development for that particular species. Myra.

MS. BROUWER: Just a quick question. My recollection is that, in June, you also included snowy in the list, because that one also has a vessel limit, but should that one be included as well?

MS. MCCAWLEY: Yes. If it has a vessel limit, can you put it on the list? I see heads nodding yes. All right. Just making sure there isn't anything else needed there on the headboat discussion, and so then we went into the management strategy evaluation, and we actually talked about this on a couple different days.

Staff provided an update on the MSE and requested the committee provide guidance on management scenarios, performance objectives, and the species to analyze. The committee recommended including aggregate bag limit, mandatory stopping, seasonal closure and spatial closure as potential management scenarios, and the committee recommended not considering large area closures in the EEZ and recommended performance objectives, including rebuilding overfished stocks, short-term and long-term yield, fraction discarded, and angler access.

The committee wanted additional information to make a recommendation for species to include in the evaluation, and I think Chip and I are ready for that discussion too, but let's -- Let me go ahead with these motions.

The committee made Motion Number 5 to consider aggregate bag limits mandatory stopping for reef fish, seasonal management, and spatial management (closed or open areas) in the management strategy evaluation. On behalf of the committee, I so move. Any additional discussion? Any objection? All right. Motion carries.

Then there's direction to staff, again, about not including large area closures. **Then the committee made Motion Number 6 to use performance objectives: successful rebuild, short-term landings, long-term landings, discard fraction, and angler access in the snapper grouper MSE. On behalf of the committee, I so move. Any discussion? Any objection? All right. That motion carries.**

I'm going to turn it to Chip to start the discussion, and so we were talking about what species to include. You guys asked me to go back and look at the species, the top species, being targeted in the Florida EPS. I do have that information, but I was hoping that Chip could talk a little bit about the regions, because, depending on how the regions are defined, or if we can change how the regions are defined at this point in the MSE, I think is going to affect what species you guys want to consider, and so I'm going to pass it over to Chip.

DR. COLLIER: Thank you. Right now, we have six different regions in the MSE. There is a shallow and a deep region, and then there's basically three latitudinal regions that occur. One of the breaks is between South Carolina and Georgia, and the other break occurs just south of Cape Canaveral, and so it kind of matches up with where the headboat line is, based on their dataset, and so that that accounts for the six different regions.

As Jessica said, there's definitely differences in species abundance as you go along there. I believe there's a Williams and Shertzer paper from like 2010, around that time period, where they documented changes in the headboat fishery around the Georgia -- In the Georgia area. Depending on the data source, you might see differences based on how the fisheries operate.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thank you for that, and so I think we had already talked about it's hard to do it without seeing that nice document that Chip was typing in, but we had already removed species like hogfish, yellowtail, and the deepwater species.

Then, if we start adding back in these Florida species, like mutton, et cetera, and so it's like there's some species that it seems like maybe should be in the portion south of Canaveral, and then, if you start adding species to the area north of Canaveral, they'll also be added off of Georgia as well, and so I don't want to mess up the MSE, but some of the species that we saw in that EFP, over that hotspot area, which is north of Canaveral to the Florida-Georgia line, would be things in addition to red snapper, like vermilion, lane snapper, triggerfish, white grunt, which we talked about, gray snapper, et cetera.

You guys can direct me to work with Chip more about, you know, which species, for which of these areas, but I just wanted to express a little bit of concern here about one of those areas is from Cape Canaveral all the way to the South Carolina/Georgia border, and so, if we start adding these

species, you know, that's from Canaveral to the Florida-Georgia border, you're technically also adding them for Georgia as well, and so I'm happy to do whatever the committee wants here, and let me look over to Chip.

So I'm assuming that we can't also just have an area that's northeast Florida, that doesn't also include Georgia, and I'm assuming that it's too late in the process to define another area, but it seems like whatever we add to that northeast Florida area is also going to apply to Georgia. Chip.

DR. COLLIER: Yes, and I think so, and, I mean, Georgia's coastline isn't huge, and so going up that -- I mean, it's just the reality, but I think there is some benefits to including Georgia in with Florida, because, if we want specific recommendations coming out for the headboat fishery, we are going to be getting into some confidentiality issues, if we're only looking at Georgia, if we're trying to split up Georgia and into finer levels of detail.

As Clay has pointed out, this is just a simulation of everything that's going on, and we don't need absolute perfection, and I think this -- You know, having to move forward the way it is I think is sufficient. You know, one of the big challenges with this MSE is trying to superimpose a distribution of the species into that Beaufort Assessment Model, and we don't have a great approach for that. The way that he has done it has worked out well, and I worry about tinkering too much, trying to get to like really specific details, and I think we should -- We could end up with some consequences that aren't always thought out that quickly right now.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Yes, and so I'm happy to do whatever the committee thinks here. It sounds like what Chip is suggesting is that, whatever you're going to add species-wise for northeast Florida, to -- You know, it's okay for them to be added for Georgia as well. I just would point out that we had talked a little bit about gray snapper.

I wanted to make sure -- I couldn't remember if triggerfish was on the list, and vermilion, and lane snapper, but also my favorite, white grunt, and I think that that needs to be added as well, and so I'm happy to work with Chip offline, or, if you all want to define the species here, and whatever you all want to do, but we're talking about kind of what species to analyze for those aggregates, based on what we saw as the top species in northeast Florida in the hotspot fleet for the Florida EFP. Thoughts? Amy. Sorry. Not Amy. Kerry. It's late the week, and I don't know anybody's name either, apparently.

MS. MARHEFKA: I mean, going back to what we sort of said, and Chip reiterated that it's really about choosing representative species, and so, I mean, I would be comfortable -- Obviously, you're comfortable identifying the Florida span, and, you know, throwing it past Carolyn. Do we then, outside of this meeting, let the state people think about -- Or Trish and Amy work together on what would be appropriate for the North Carolina and South Carolina contingent? I mean, obviously, I would love to see vermilion in there.

MS. MCCAWLEY: I'm good with that, and I would love to have a debate about gray snapper with the other state folks, because part of me says leave it out, and I just -- I would love to be able to have some more discussion with the state folks after this.

MS. MARHEFKA: Can I ask a question, real quick?

MS. MCCAWLEY: Sure.

MS. MARHEFKA: Before I leave the mic. When you talk about a representative species, is it representative of what's caught together or representative biologically? Which matters more?

DR. COLLIER: Well, I think, in this instance, when you're thinking about an aggregate bag limit, it's going to be what's caught together, because that's going to be the most important part, making sure we analyze if people are stopping fishing. We need to know what they're catching.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Okay, and so I'm going to ask the committee, because we're sitting here diving down into the weeds again, on the aggregate limit, which is what you told us to do, to go look at additional data, but I feel like maybe a little bit more discussion is needed, and are you okay with the state directors talking to Chip about what species to include here? I'm just -- Okay. I hear people saying yes. Trish.

MS. MURPHEY: Just curious, and do you have like a number? I mean, I know you don't want us to tell you all fifty-five species, and so do you want to give us some guidance on how many you may be looking for from each area?

DR. COLLIER: So I had reached out to Adrian and asked that exact number last night, and, unfortunately, I haven't heard back from him, but, you know, I think the we can definitely reach out to the state directors, or whoever you recommend within the state, if it's SSC members or somewhere along those lines, and we can work together to refine this list, but I appreciate all the discussions, and we've definitely heard what it is, and, yes, we'll work on developing the survey, and developing this MSE to meet your guidance.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. Thank you, Chip, and so I see hands going up. Amy, and then Clay.

MS. DUKES: Thanks, Madam Chair. I'm happy to continue to have these conversations with Chip, but my question was sort of in line with Trish. I guess the way I imagine this is we're looking at it as a sub-region, but then also as the entire South Atlantic, and I think this idea of maybe having a core five-ish species, that we all agree to, and then have like a few little this is my species, and this is my species type thing, would be really helpful, and dynamic, and so hopefully you hear back from him. You know, I'm thinking less is more, as far as the number of species that we provide to you.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. Clay.

DR. PORCH: Amy said it for me. You know, let's keep it simple, and five-ish probably is about right.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. I heard five-ish. All right, and so then we'll figure this out, and it looks like Myra captured some notes on this, and so we'll figure out the species, based on the region, Goal 5 of cooccurring species, but state agency people, and/or whoever they recommend, will work with Chip on this after the meeting. Okay. All right. Thank you for that additional discussion.

Then we moved into the innovative management approach for the snapper grouper fishery, and so this was our brainstorming exercise. Once again, I wanted to thank everybody for that great discussion this week, and there is a nice appendix at the back of the Snapper Grouper Committee report that lists out everything that we wrote.

There's also pictures of each sticky wall, and so, the way that the appendix is written, the post-it note that we had on top of the top grouping, that's listed first, and then you have some sub-bullets under that, that are all the items that were behind that, and then you can also see the results of the sticky dot exercise, both a photo as well as the number of dots that each thing received. That's also in the appendices as well, and we will continue discussions from this exercise at the December meeting, and so I appreciate all that, and you can see the results, and we'll be taking this to the next steps at the next meeting.

All right. Black sea bass, Regulatory Amendment 37, so council staff informed the committee of the council's request for additional modifications to review the SEDAR 76 update stock assessment. This will be included in Regulatory Amendment 5, to note long-term actions that are developing outside of that amendment process. The council staff presented Regulatory Amendment 37, a decision document, and then the committee passed the following motions and gave the following direction to staff.

Motion Number 7, For Action 1, Select Alternative 2 under Sub-Action 1a, Alternative 2 under Sub-Action 1b, and Alternative 2 under Sub-Action 1c as preferred, and, on behalf of the committee, I so move. Any additional discussion? **Any objection?** All right. You can see some of that is pasted there in the document.

Then the committee made Motion Number 3 to select Sub-Alternative 2b, February commercial; Sub-Alternative 2c, March commercial; Sub-Alternative 3, February recreational; and Sub-Alternative 3c, March recreational under Action 4, spawning closure, as preferred, and, on behalf of the committee, I so move. Any discussion? **Any objection?** All right. **That motion carries.**

All right, and there was some direction to staff to include season length and closure date projections in the draft amendment that will be released for public comment. **The committee made Motion Number 10 to approve Regulatory Amendment 37 for public hearings, and, on behalf of the committee, I so move.** Any discussion? **Any objection?** All right.

Let's talk about the types of -- I'm sorry. I did? Okay. All right. Thank you. **Let me -- So let me go back to Motion Number 9, and so Motion Number 9 is to select Alternative 3, two fish, under Action 2, bag limit, and Alternative 1, no action, thirteen inches, under Action 3, size limit, as preferred. On behalf of the committee, I so move.** Any discussion? **Any objection?** Charlie has discussion.

MR. PHILLIPS: Would it be possible to, in the material, to explain to the public what a thirteen-inch size limit is going to do, as far as discards, versus eleven, with shortened seasons and things like that, so they can actually know what kind of tradeoff that they're getting?

MS. MCCAWLEY: I think so, and so Myra is typing some of that there. I feel like we had a lot of really good discussion on this. I was hoping that staff could pull from that discussion for the

documents for the public hearings. I know a lot of it wasn't captured, and it doesn't need to be in the Snapper Grouper Committee report, but I'm just looking around the table, to make sure everybody -- I see heads nodding yes, that they're okay with that. Mike.

DR. SCHMIDTKE: Thank you, Madam Chair, and a lot of that discussion is in the actual amendment document, when we go through the different analyses of effects sections, and so that's going to be in like Chapter 4 of the amendment. It's included there, but we can try to, I guess, have it out front, in terms of the presentation that gets put together for public hearings and things like that, and so we can have it within that discussion as well, but we do capture that.

I do want to point out that there is a slight difference in what we're going to be able to analyze in terms of projecting discards, versus projecting catch, and we have a bit better handle on catch than we do on discards, and so the discards are going to be more of explaining the theoretical, so to speak, tradeoff of what they're looking at, as opposed to what you saw yesterday with the decision tool being catch related, that we have uh landings that we can track and use to project that, in terms of numbers.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. Andy.

MR. STRELCHECK: That's a great suggestion, and I agree, obviously, that we had a good discussion. Mike, I would just encourage you to work with Rick and Dominique and team, and maybe we can come up with an infographic or something that addresses, you know, what was suggested there.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Trish.

MS. MURPHEY: Well are we -- I need to just -- I wanted to talk about Motion 10, real quick, and so, if we're done with 9, great. If we need --

MS. MCCAWLEY: So I believe that we passed Motion 9, but I'm looking to Myra to make sure, and so I didn't see any objections. **We were under discussion, but any objections to Motion 9?** Just making sure. All right, and so then let's go back to Motion 10, which was to approve Regulatory Amendment 37 for public hearings, and maybe we need to talk about that a little more, and so under discussion on Amendment 37 public hearings. Trish.

MS. MURPHEY: I just -- I know we had discussed this being listening stations, and I'll be honest that I would prefer webinars, if we could do multiple webinars, and I totally agree with Kerry that in-person is the best, and I do support that, but, in this particular timeframe, and I know, me personally, I'm kind of spread thin, and I think staff is, because of all the other things going on, and so, if it's okay, could we just do these via webinar, if everybody is good with that and so that's just a -- That would help me out a lot.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right. I saw other hands going up. Kerry, thoughts on this?

MS. MARHEFKA: Yes, and, out of respect for everyone's time, and staff, I can see that this is a better way to go for this, and so I remove my request.

MS. MURPHEY: I appreciate it, because, if we -- Maybe, if it was a little bit further in the future, I could, but this -- Everything is tight right now, but thanks, Kerry.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Yes, and so, just to be clear, these would be conducted between -- Via webinar between now and the December council meeting. All right, and so we've had good discussion. **Is there any objection to this motion?** All right. **That motion carries.**

All right, and so then we went into the snapper grouper fishery management unit revision, which is Amendment 61. The council has identified seventeen species to examine more in depth to determine whether the species should be removed from the fishery management unit or designated as ecosystem component species. I'm not going to go through all the seventeen species.

We looked at the previous council actions, the ability of states to manage species removed from federal conservation and management, parameters for designating ecosystem component species, ecosystem species actions from several fishery management councils, and permit requirements for ecosystem component species, and then the committee provided the following guidance and motion.

There's a number of bullets there to include for scoping, and you guys can read them. There's also direction to staff, and some bullets there, such as the same action does not need to apply to all seventeen species, and some additional information that we're hoping to see at the December council meeting relative to ecosystem management objectives, and then the report of landings for unmanaged and ecosystem species, and include landings from both state and federal waters.

That brings me to the next motion, Motion 11, that was made by the committee, which was to request to receive an annual report of commercial landings of unmanaged and ecosystem components, and see Mid-Atlantic report for reference, and, on behalf of the committee, I so move. Any additional discussion on this? **Any objection?** All right.

Then I see a note there about who is expected to develop this report, and it looked like the Mid-Atlantic was done by both Mid-Atlantic staff and NOAA staff, but so is that what we're anticipating here, that it would be developed by a combination of council staff and NOAA staff? I'm just making sure that that's our intent. Okay. I see heads nodding yes. Andy, are you guys okay with that?

MR. STRELCHECK: I mean, I think we have to play a role, in terms of providing the data.

MS. BROUWER: Just one more question. What time of year would you like to receive this, if you can give us an idea. If not, that's fine, but, if there's -- Just so we can start preparing.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Is the fall better? I don't know. Andy, thoughts?

MR. STRELCHECK: I would say the second half of the year, just to allow for final landings to be completed and stabilized.

MS. MCCAWLEY: All right, and so then Myra is adding the second half of the year. All right. **Then the committee made Motion 12, which was to approve Snapper Grouper Amendment**

61 for scoping. On behalf of the committee, I so move. Any discussion? **Any objection?** All right. **Motion carries.**

All right. We have a list of topics that we worked on for the fall Snapper Grouper AP meeting. We said that we would make sure that this was the right list when we got back to Full Council. I'll let you guys glance at that list, and make sure we're good, and so let me just remind you that the AP is getting some updates on various council actions. But, things like Amendment 60, we had asked that the Snapper Grouper Committee get a more detailed um document, and have a more thorough discussion of it, when the amendment was more developed, and so that would be at their spring 2026 meeting, and so it would just be an update at this meeting. Are we good? Monica.

MS. SMIT-BRUNELLO: My point is not to the topics for the AP, and so if you wanted to go through that and then call on me afterwards.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Okay. Will do. Are we good on the AP topics? It looks like heads nodding yes, and so, Monica, over to you.

MS. SMIT-BRUNELLO: Just to kind of clarify the record a little bit, so, when the committee met, and we were talking about I guess it was Snapper Grouper Amendment 61 on ecosystem component species, and what a state could regulate under the Magnuson act in federal waters, Jessica mentioned about that you thought there was something that was specific to the intent to land in that state.

I've looked through the act, and I cannot find that anywhere. I understand that you thought that was an issue in the pompano lawsuit, and so I'm happy to look at those briefs, and we can discuss it, or someone could discuss it, at another meeting, but, anyway, I just wanted you to know that that language is not in the Magnuson Act.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Thank you, and I can certainly bring something back to the next council meeting relative to that pompano lawsuit, which was specific on what a state could regulate, and so I can bring that information to the next meeting. Amy.

MS. DUKES: Thank you, Madam Chair, and, just under the topics for the fall Snapper Grouper meeting, the one thing that I'm not seeing is the plan amendment for recreational state management of red snapper. There may be some questions, and it just be might be helpful to -- Is that too much too early?

MS. MCCAWLEY: Maybe it could go under updates on developing council action.

MS. DUKES: Yes.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Okay, and so we could add it to that list. Do you have a question? All right. Anything else for the AP topics? All right. We have a gigantic timing and tasks motion that would need to be made, if someone is willing to make that timing and tasks motion, or if you want me to read it, and then we could see if we want to edit it, however you would like to do it. Kerry.

MS. MARHEFKA: I just act like I like to talk or something. All right. **Direct staff to do the following: continue development of Amendment 60 for council approval for public hearings**

for March 2026 and update the Snapper Grouper Advisory Panel on the progress of this amendment at their meeting in October of 2025, but give them a detailed update at their April meeting and present information on the amendment to the Law Enforcement AP for discussion at their next meeting in January or February; send letters to the Secretary of Commerce concerning the delay in closing commercial red snapper and the Coast Guard requesting designation of Starlink as an improved telecommunication device. Do we need to edit this now, because some of this has changed. I'm sorry to interrupt my motion reading, but --

MS. MCCAWLEY: Yes, and I think we can edit it. Go ahead.

MS. MARHEFKA: Okay, and so, Myra, I think that the letter about red snapper has become more broad, and we can remove -- But Starlink is staying in there, correct?

MS. MCCAWLEY: Yes.

MS. MARHEFKA: Okay. Sorry. Okay. So let me repeat the bullet. Everything before that remains in the motion. **Send letters to the Secretary of Commerce concerning the delay in NMFS action on quota-managed species, if I recall correctly, and to the Coast Guard requesting designation of Starlink as an approved telecommunication device; develop a draft abbreviated framework amendment that would change the blueline tilefish ABC and ACL for consideration of Full Council approval in December 2025; gather and analyze information on the aggregate bag limit and headboat vessel limit ahead of future discussions; continue development of the snapper grouper MSE, using direction provided earlier in this report; conduct public hearings for Reg Amendment 37 prior to the December council meeting; prepare Reg Amendment 37 for final council approval in December 2025; conduct scoping meetings for Amendment 61 and continue developing the amendment for review at the December 2025 meeting; develop a report of landings for unmanaged and ecosystem component species in the region, with the intent that this report be updated and provided to the council annually (in the second half of the year) with development by both NOAA staff and council staff; convene the Snapper Grouper AP to discuss topics as described earlier in this report; continue development of Amendment 44, including action to update the ACL and include the South Atlantic sector allocations for both species, and this amendment will go to the Gulf at their next meeting, and then the South Atlantic Council will review again in December; prepare the allocation decision tool to review possible allocation changes for mutton and yellowtail snapper. Is that everything? Yes. On behalf of the committee, I so move.**

MS. MCCAWLEY: Amy.

MS. DUKES: Strip the last part.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Okay? Any discussion? Any additional discussion about timing and tasks, knowing that we're going to look at the workplan after this? Are we are we good here? All right. **Any objection to this timing and tasks motion? All right. Motion carries.** That concludes my Snapper Grouper Committee report. Back to you, Madam Chair.

MS. MURPHEY: All right. Thanks, everybody. Since we are a little ahead, I'll go ahead, and let's take a break until 11:00, and I think an hour should give us time to do the rest of -- Myra, do

you think an hour will give us time for the best fishing practices and everything? Okay, and so let's -- You all come back at 11:00, and we'll finish up.

(Whereupon, a recess was taken.)

MS. MURPHEY: All right, everybody. We're reconvening, and we're on the short row here, and so I'm going to turn it over to Ashley Oliver and Christina Wiegand to talk about the best fishing practices questionnaire form results that I know everyone answered .

MS. OLIVER: All right. Good morning. We're in the home stretch, and so hopefully I won't keep it too long but, first I just wanted to say thank you all for taking time outside of the council meeting to listen to my voice on a YouTube video and for filling out this best fishing practices questionnaire form. We got a lot of great feedback, and it's going to be extremely helpful as we're kind of, you know, planning the future and direction of this campaign.

Just for the next few minutes, I wanted to quickly summarize the results from this questionnaire, and then, if there's time, you know, any discussion or additional questions afterwards, and so, the first question, we were trying to get a better understanding of the value of the best fishing practices campaign, and so we asked you to describe it in one to two words.

You guys said that the best fishing practices outreach is, you know, extremely valuable, and it's essential, and it's crucial. You mentioned how important angler engagement is, and that building trust is very important. You also noted that it's innovative. It's an innovative approach to communication, and so all of these words and phrases together really encompasses the, you know, kind of goals of the campaign itself.

We then asked how well do the campaign priorities align with council goals, and it was great to see that you all feel that we are achieving not just our campaign goals, but the broader council goals, and, overall, you know, that just goes to show that outreach is much bigger than just best fishing practices.

Then the next question we asked is which aspects of the best fishing practices campaign do you find the most valuable, and you all highlighted that, you know, in-person outreach is the most impactful, specifically the Best Fishing Practices Master Volunteer Program, closely followed by tackle shop outreach, and then seminars, and it was great to see that you all find value in that Best Fishing Practices Master Volunteer program, as it is a new and very unique initiative to the Southeast, and we have worked closely with our state partners, you know, a lot of you in this room, on this program and we not only talk about best practices information in those workshops, but we also have a section on citizen science efforts and the management process.

Then, of course, we wanted to know why you chose those components as the most valuable, and so tried to, you know, kind of summarize that here, and so you all can't emphasize that, you know, there needs to be consistent engagement with stakeholders, as, again, that builds trust, fosters relationships, and improves the credibility of the council.

You said that, you know, in-person outreach, combined with digital outreach, really ensures that the message connects with a broader fishing community, and, in addition to that, you said videos deliver powerful and lasting messages. As for tackle shop visits, they give an opportunity for us

to talk one-on-one with shop staff, but also to leave our informational materials in, you know, a trusted environment. Then, when it comes to the BFP MVP program, training key individuals allows the message to be spread, you know, fisherman to fisherman, again, you know, really expanding the council's reach.

You noted that hands-on education drives best fishing practices adoption, and then, lastly, you stressed the importance of not slowing down efforts, as the campaign is expanding and reaching new audiences, and so, at the bottom here, I just kind of compiled some words and themes that came up consistently throughout your responses, and so trust, reach, impact, amplify, educate, and momentum, and I think that really ties up nicely with that first slide with all the, you know, words and phrases, but also generally, you know, the campaign's goals, and the council's goals.

Then, lastly, we asked you all to provide any suggestions on, you know, improvements or new ideas for the campaign, and so I just want to talk a little bit about how we can incorporate that, along with all of your other feedback into our outreach, and so, again, you stressed the importance of momentum and continuing being in-person with the stakeholders, so we can continue seminars, visiting tackle shops, collaborating with our state partners, and, of course, continuing the Best Fishing Practices Master Volunteer Program.

There are some comments about expanding the BFP MVP workshops into new communities, and maybe even including like a BFP 102 type of workshop. We've talked internally about, you know, some ideas of incorporating our OG MVPs from our first round of workshops, and maybe having them share, you know, their experiences as a BFP MVP, and how they've incorporated best fishing practices in their everyday fishing lives.

Also, on the topic of expansion, I mentioned, in the video, how we've been invited back to tackle shops and fishing clubs for seminars, and, you know, we're not being invited back just for best fishing practices and citizen science information, but, also, they're interested in the kind of general management process and other salient issues. Then, lastly, there was a comment or two about potentially exploring podcasts and increasing our social media and digital presence, and so videos, reels, things like that.

That was a very quick summary of just how that questionnaire went. I thought I would just kind of play this video here for you in the background, if it will let me, but this video is from NC State and Brendan Runde. We use this video in almost every aspect of our outreach, whether it's seminars, you know, tabling events, things like that, and, fishermen, you know, they are really captivated by this video, and, if it will let me play it, I would love to play it, and you guys can also save it for yourselves, for future reference, but, with that, I guess I will -- I don't know if you have anything else to add. Okay. Christina.

MS. WIEGAND: So I just want to add a few things, and first give Ashley a shoutout for coming up with this plan and putting it together for you all, and, also, I was very excited to see that you guys are finding great value in that BFP MVP program. Like Ashley mentioned, this is something pretty unique.

We got an idea from the Outreach & Communications AP, and Ashley took that and developed it into this fantastic program, and, to my knowledge, which is not always foolproof, but there is nothing else like this in the Southeast, where people are taking a grassroots approach and going

into communities, to work with these community leaders to build momentum and to get them to help spread the word for us sort of increasing our ability to reach these communities and spread this information, and so it's been incredibly successful, and I wanted to give just a quick shoutout that, and then just a note that I was also glad to see that you all are finding real value in the in-person outreach efforts, the tackle shops and seminars, because we've really seen, over the last, you know -- You've been with the council for three years, or four years now?

MS. OLIVER: Almost four years.

MS. WIEGAND: Almost four years now, and this being in-person, and working with communities, has really built momentum and engagement with the council. Ashley, as well as Meg Withers, with the Citizen Science Program, are out in communities all the time, and they really have become recognizable faces, and that's not only helping further the goals of best fishing practices and citizen science, but also the council in general. They're now, you know, getting questions about, you know, red snapper or black sea bass or what have you. They've become sort of ambassadors for the council, if you will.

I want into a tackle shop, and, if mackerel fishermen are in there, they might know me, but, broadly, the fishing community doesn't know me. They do know Ashley, and they do know Meg, and so a just a note that, you know, this best fishing practices and citizen science outreach work is really bigger than just those two programs. They are serving as ambassadors to the council by being out in these communities so consistently and building those relationships, and so I just wanted to note that.

MS. MURPHEY: Has anybody got any comments or questions or Ashley or Christina? Kerry.

MS. MARHEFKA: I just want to say I did -- I gave you guys a little bit of a hard time, but that's just my nature. I actually really did appreciate sort of the concept of having us watch the video and answer the questions.

I think that it allows you to do it when your brain can really engage, because you are doing -- The work is very important to us, but, when we're in the middle of council meetings, you guys know we get so wrapped around the axle, and so great idea. I highly encourage its use in the future, and I just -- You know, I've been at Haddrell's, when you guys have done that several times, and I see how you interact with the community, and I 100 percent have seen the trust and respect you've built, and I just very, very much appreciate it, and so good job on all levels, and great job coming up with that idea of doing the video and the response questions.

MS. MURPHEY: Amy.

MS. DUKES: Thanks. To piggyback on that, I actually really enjoyed the video as well. It kind of gave us sort of like a behind-the-lens opportunity to really sit back and think about it. Ashley and Christina, you guys have done a great job, and I would be remiss if I didn't mention the fellows as well, the fact that you came from that fellow position, and now you've been here almost four years, and then we've had two very successful fellows, and I'm excited to have the fourth one coming on here soon as well, but you guys elude passion in what you do, and I liked your word of "ambassadors", Christina.

I really also appreciate the inclusion, overlap, intertwining, however you want to say it, of the citizen science program. Meg has a great collaboration with you guys, and she really brings a lot to the table as well, and Julia. I would be remiss to not mention Julia as well.

You guys are setting the standard. You are setting a standard not only for what's happening in the South Atlantic, but for all of the other management councils to hurry up and get onboard. You guys are gaining momentum, and you're maintaining that momentum, and you're growing that momentum, and, without this education and outreach and best fishing practices and citizen science -- It's really the next wave of how we're going to continue to do what we do as fisheries managers, and so thank you very much for your passion. I love it.

MS. MURPHEY: Thank you, Amy. Anyone else? So I guess I need to say I really appreciate all the work and time that you all put into this. I enjoyed the video, and I enjoyed the report. I mean, I think I sent you guys an article that kind of hits on that more social economics, you know, just the enjoyment of fishing, versus just meat-hog fishing, but, you know, fishing is -- It's important to everybody, commercially and recreationally, be it you're making money or you're just hanging out with your dad, you know, and so I appreciate all that.

Also, I can't go without saying how great you guys have been with our DMF staff. We've got a great cooperative cooperation going, or tag-teaming off everybody, and so I really appreciate having that partnership with you guys and our DMF staff. Anything else? All right. Well, thank you, guys, and keep doing the good work.

MS. OLIVER: Thank you for doing the survey.

MS. MURPHEY: Next is the almighty workplan with John, John and John.

MR. HADLEY: All right. Well, thank you, everybody. So we've come, you know, towards the end of the meeting, and we always look at the workplan. There's a revised version that, if you go to the meeting webpage, and click on the link, this version, the revised version from the week, and you can kind of look at it on your own laptops, but I'll go over it really quickly.

If you see some of the items that are highlighted in that pink magenta color, those are the items that, you know, I wanted to take a take a little bit of time to acknowledge. Those are something that, you know, may be new, and maybe kind of changed around for the week, and so I'll start off going from top to bottom.

Looking at the long-term snapper grouper response, and so that's the amendment that's incorporating the snapper grouper MSE, you know, large, high-level management measures, and we also added the aggregate recreational limits back into that. It seems like, based on the MSE discussion, that the MSE modeling will cover aggregate limits, and so I just wanted to note that that was added back in there.

Moving down, we have Snapper Grouper Amendment 44. That is scheduled for approval for public hearings at the December meeting. I wanted to note that we -- You know, I think staff needs to get together and discuss that.

We'll do our best to maintain that timing, and I know there's an IPT meeting on Monday to discuss that, but, given that it needs to go through both councils, and it would need to be approved for public hearings by the Gulf Council, I believe at their November meeting, just note there may be a little flexibility needed there to be able to -- To be able to bring that amendment to final approval, but we will aim to have it ready for public hearings, and it was previously a yellow, and now it's been changed to an orange, and so more of a larger chunk of time at your December meeting will be dedicated to it, both to go through the amendment and also go through the allocation decision tools for both mutton snapper and yellowtail snapper.

Moving down, there's Abbreviated -- What is now Abbreviated Framework 5, and so that's the amendment that is looking at updating catch levels for blueline tilefish. Previously, that was sort of a full amendment, if you will, and so a longer timeline. We'll get to it, but that's been -- That larger amendment, allocation-related amendment, has been bumped down to the anticipated amendments, and so it's still there in the background, but, as far as your active workplan, we're looking at an abbreviated framework focused specifically on updating the catch levels for blueline tilefish, ideally for approval for public hearings and final approval at the December meeting, and so that's captured in there as well.

A new item is we did add the snapper grouper state management amendment. You'll see in there that it's added right here. It's potentially going to begin -- Sorry. Approval for scoping at the March meeting, and there's going to be some a lot of work done on that in the process, and I think, from a -- This is sort of a placeholder in there for now. It's a standard amendment timeline, and it's probably going to take a little bit longer to implement, but we did want to start to put a placeholder there.

I think our staffs, you know, council staff and Regional Office staff, will get together and discuss what that's going to look like. I know, in the Gulf, it was -- There was sort of an overarching amendment that touched on the topic, and then several other amendments that were state-specific, and I'm not sure if we will use that outline, that format, and we may be able to streamline it a little bit in this case, and so it is -- I just wanted to mention it is captured on your workplan, and we'll continue to update that timeline. Those are all the active amendments underway, or anticipated amendments.

Moving down into the council's other items that you'll be discussing during your meetings, for the December meeting, we did bump up the AP and SSC selection to a full one, and so that's likely going to take a full afternoon session, and so that did increase a little bit. There's several items that need to be covered in that closed session, and so that was increased a little bit. We did add a commercial subcommittee, Snapper Grouper Commercial Subcommittee, meeting to the December meeting. There's no time allocated to that, just because that is already captured further up in the in the workplan, under the Amendment 60, but it is noted that it will take place.

Also added was a discussion of the innovative plan for the snapper grouper fishery, and also a discussion of the snapper grouper SAFE report in December. I will skip these two items, the recreational data discussion and the recreational data subcommittee, and you already addressed those in your discussion under the Full Council I, I believe the Full Council I, report, and in Snapper Grouper, and so that's already been discussed, but, you know, the take home there, at the very end, is you're looking at a pretty full meeting. It's manageable, but you're over the target

eight, but it seems like, based on discussion so far, you know, it's going to be a very full meeting, and we can likely accommodate it in December.

I do want to mention a couple of other items on here. As you'll see, there's also the SERO priority list, those priority items, and so this is included up here, for the amendments that are actively being worked on by the council, and then it's also included down here as well, and so this is a table of amendments that are undergoing rulemaking, and so they've come on off the council's workplan, but they -- Since the council has given them final approval, but they are still SERO priority items, and they're in the rulemaking process.

One last thing I did want to mention is here's sort of your other anticipated or requested amendments. You know, this is an item that's in the workplan, just to sort of make sure nothing falls by the wayside, and acknowledge that there that the -- That the management topics are still there, and they're just -- There's not an active timeline carved out on the council meeting agendas just yet, but I will note, you know, I noted aggregate limit, recreational limits, and that will be added to the MSE-related amendment, and there's your larger -- Larger, if you will, blue line tilefish allocations amendment that was brought up earlier, and so that's -- You know, that's still in the anticipated amendments, and there's no timeline related to it just yet, since those discussions have not taken place, but it is still on there, and so it will kind of carry forward to future workplans.

With that, I'm happy to hand it over for any questions. One other thing, or a comment, is one other thing that I did want to note is there are a lot of approvals on there, either in December or in March, and so we do need to try to do our best to make sure that happens, because, as those slide, you know, that tends to require movement of different items, and so, you know, a pretty full agenda there, as far as approval of amendments, either at the December or March meeting, and so I will hand it over. I don't know -- John, do you have any other comments?

MR. CARMICHAEL: Yes, and thank you, John, for pointing that out, because I think it's really important. You notice that we have a pretty full load coming up in 2026, and so it's important to hit the mark on those As, and get those things off of your workplan, so you have the ability to work on these other things, and we're optimistic with the long-term, as we always are, but things will come up, and, you know, Dewey mentioned, the other day during SEDAR, about how we plan for assessments that are coming up, and where we factor those in.

You know, there's a couple of ways that we like to -- The first thing is, when something is on the SEDAR schedule, and we know it's coming, it shows up down there in the bottom, like snowy, and then, as the assessment moves ahead, and gets scheduled, and we have a delivery date that we think will -- That's coming, and it makes its way up there into the things that are planned, and so you see like the hogfish and the black grouper.

We put those in the workplan based on when we anticipate it coming to the council table, so that we -- Because we know we've got to deal with them, and so we make sure we have the resources, you know, kind of already pre-allocated, as you see, you know, several years out, starting, you know, even mid-next year, with assessments that are coming, and so we do try to anticipate what's coming at us through the SEDAR schedule, and make sure we give you guys the resources to act on them.

MS. MURPHEY: Any other comments or questions on the workplan? Andy.

MR. STRELCHECK: So you said we're over kind of the magic target of eight. I wanted to talk about the dolphin MSE coming back to us, and the necessity of that, versus just waiting for March.

MS. MURPHEY: Go ahead.

MR. STRELCHECK: I don't understand -- I'm not -- I would like to know what we would be asked to do in December, if it's critical, based on a timing standpoint, or if there's other ways that we could address that that wouldn't require us to deal with the MSE during the council meeting.

MS. MURPHEY: I'll hand it to John, if you've got any ideas.

MR. HADLEY: Well, I see Chip is coming to the table as well, and that's a question we can work with the Southeast Fisheries Science Center staff on that. You know, I would -- I don't have a great answer for exactly which items would need to be clarified by the MSE team in December, but I think we could work with their staff to clarify that, and see if -- You know, we don't want to derail the timeline, but, you know, what needs to come back to the council, and when, and, you know, there could be some clarification.

DR. COLLIER: I will also say that the -- I'm not thoroughly involved with this MSE, like I am the other one, but getting your input early in the process is very important in making sure that it's getting analyzed the way that you want it to get analyzed is important in the beginning. Setting up the model, and making sure it's going to evaluate the scenarios that you think are important, and we don't want it to come to the end and be like, oh, we wish we had that one more scenario, and so it's important to have the discussion in the beginning, but, like John said, maybe there's opportunities to get your input in different ways, as opposed to at a council meeting.

MR. STRELCHECK: To that, point, I mean, you heard my comments earlier today, and I think that's more of the struggle I'm having, is what's the ask, and how does the council engage effectively, making sure that if it's going to be brought to the council, the MSE experts are getting the input that they need from us in a very clear, defined way, and they're providing us questions in a way that gives them that feedback.

MS. MURPHEY: So can I add to this conversation a little bit? I think this MSE -- I was really excited to see the dolphin MSE going, but it's just been delayed and delayed, and I've kind of got concerns about that delay, and how it's impacting us moving forward with anything to move forward with dolphin.

I know, back in, I guess, last year, we had actually made a motion that, if it had not been finished that we would move forward, but I think the conversation was like give us more time, and, you know, give them more time to move it, because I think they lost people and everything, but I guess I want to kind of open it up to the group, if they had thoughts on the timing of the MSE, versus timing and concerns of what's going on with dolphin.

I know we just heard a little bit, you know, from those three papers, concerns of large dolphin, you know, abundance, and it's been fine, but it starting to go down, right, and so, anyway, just to open that up to the group. Any thoughts on if we should -- I know we've also got all sorts of priorities,

but I'm just wondering if we should go ahead and do something with dolphin, and so if anybody has any comments on that, I would appreciate it. Jessica.

MS. MCCAWLEY: I mean, yes, and we had been saying that we thought that there were, you know, concerns, and I felt like those research papers kind of reiterated what we had been seeing in Florida, and so those concerns remain for me, and then, when I saw the timeline on the MSE, yes, I was concerned about that as well.

I'm just not sure how to resolve this, based on our other priorities, et cetera, and so, yes, I would like to do something sooner, but, I mean, we're also jam-packed, and I just don't know how to work it in. Does it take the place of the MSE, or do they happen simultaneously, or does the -- Like Andy is saying, does the MSE really need to come that many times, to that many council meetings? I just have a lot more questions on how to fit all this in, but, sure I would love to do something sooner, but, kind of where it fits in the overall priority list, I'm just not 100 percent sure.

MS. MURPHEY: Thanks, Jessica. I've got Tom.

MR. ROLLER: I agree with you, Jessica and Trish, that, you know, obviously, these papers have shown this periodic decline, particularly of big species, and we do need to take action, and, like Jessica said, I don't know how to do that within this timeframe, because the issue we had is, when we look at this fishery, we just utilize them so different regionally, and we just could not get through those issues, just because of -- You know, there was concern around the table, but how we do that was why we invested so much time in this MSE process, right? I know we do want to act, but I just don't see how we can do that, and we might not be able to do that without the MSE process.

MS. MURPHEY: I mean, that's why I asked you guys, because I didn't know either. I didn't know, you know, how to reconcile this, but, Tom.

MR. ROLLER: I just don't want to get stuck in the same arguments we had previous to us going through this MSE process.

MS. MURPHEY: Jimmy.

MR. HULL: Just one question, and so, if you look at Item 15, red snapper state management, and you go over to the December 2025 meeting time, there's no time devoted to that. However, it seems like it's going to be a big topic at this upcoming meeting.

MR. CARMICHAEL: Yes, and I think that, you know, we -- There is some discussion of it that's planned, as we mentioned, the discussion of the EFPs and what the states are doing, and so that's kind of a precursor to that, and so it is relative to that topic, but we're not necessarily going to have say the scoping information, and the intent for you to maybe approve it for scoping, which is what we're showing here for March. We could make that December block and line, with that row, yellow, and maybe say it's information leading up to this amendment, and that would cover the time of those EFPs and stuff, if that -- If, you know, you felt like that were a better representation.

MR. HULL: Well, just thinking about it, mostly the states are going to be presenting to us at that time, and then we've got to go from there, and so okay. I get it.

MS. MURPHEY: Did I see -- Dewey.

MR. HEMILRIGHT: I probably should know this, but, with the dolphin MSE, what I don't want is to simultaneously work on one thing, and then work on something else, when it's the same species, within a short time period. I don't understand the MSE with dolphin, because I don't conceptually see it unless I look at a map and something is plugged in there, and I don't know at what meeting that's going to come up, to where we can see the ingredients on a chart, because, until then, everybody is sitting -- Or I know I am, but is sitting here like how is this going to work, and how long is that going to take to show me that, or something?

Is it going to be two or three years down the road from that, and maybe there needs to be something done sooner, but, at that same time, I don't want that, all of a sudden, you know, we look at the amendment, whatever the amendment was that we looked at, that we put on hold, and then to see the -- I don't want the same species within like two years or something doing, and, you know, that's what we had before.

I think the council took action, and then, right after they took action, they initiated something else, and it's like there needs to be some -- Not smarter thinking, but just our time is limited, and so my question was when will we -- You probably already said it, but when will we see something back of kind of how the sausage is made, for a map up there of something, even if it's in a draft form, so that folks can get an idea?

Something else, you know, is, with this MSE, when you look at it, we might be understanding a little more once we see something, but the public is another venue, and, I mean, there's -- The public ain't -- Unless they're a lot smarter than I am, and they probably are, but it's just something we need to see a visual.

MS. MURPHEY: Do you have anything to say, John?

MR. HADLEY: Just addressing what Dewey just said, that's something we can work with the dolphin MSE team, to make sure that comes back to the council. I don't have a solid answer right now for you on the timing, but, you know, noted that that's the kind of information that the council needs to see.

MR. HEMILRIGHT: I think that would be very helpful for everybody, and also including the public and the APs to see, because I think a lot of people have angst of seeing what it produces, and, you know, once it's showing something, it's going to take time for people to digest that, and they're probably going to have comments on what they like and don't like.

MS. MURPHEY: Jessica.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Just a little bit more on dolphin. We were over here looking up when was -- When did we take action, and so June of 2021 was when we took action on dolphin before, and so -- Then I don't know how long the MSE is going to take, you know, and how many years out, and so I just want to throw that date in people's mind.

MS. MURPHEY: Yes, and that's a good point. I guess, at this point, from what I'm hearing around the table, we all have some concerns, but we're not sure what the solution of it is yet, and so I guess, if we can think about it, and go from there, and that's the only thing I can suggest at this point, and I'll let Chip speak.

DR. COLLIER: So just -- Dewey really sparked something in my brain, and that is, when you guys are trying to make decisions, that decision tool that Dominique had put together, is that something that you would be envisioning to be useful for the management strategy evaluation, because you can tweak different things here and there, and then you can see the results? If we know what your objectives are, we can have those out to the side, to make sure they pop up, and you can see how the changes do things, and I'm just trying to make sure we're getting you the right visuals, in order to communicate the results.

MS. MURPHEY: I think that would be great, but I see Charlie with his hand up.

MR. PHILLIPS: Thank you, Madam Chair, and, Chip, to that point, the decision tool is a tool, and it's going to have some precision bars around it, and so we really -- When we're using that tool, we need to know is this number ten, or can it be anything from seven to thirteen, so that -- I've seen the council, in the past, especially when we first started using them, they would say, okay, we need to get to ten, and they were going to move those buttons around until they hit ten, because ten was the number, in spite of a list of caveats at the bottom that were, you know, half a page long, and so we need to understand that this decision tool is not ironclad. It is estimation, and so we can still use our common sense, and judgment, and input from the public, on making the decisions.

MS. MURPHEY: Good point, I have Clay, and then we'll move on.

DR. PORCH: Thank you, and I appreciate the council's dilemma, and MSEs often move at a slow pace, as people try and catch up with them and understand exactly what they're doing. From what I understand, we probably could roll out some results that would help you understand, you know, what the potential implications are, and how it would work, by March or so, but, to that point, John Walter has raised his hand, if we could let him make an intervention.

MS. MURPHEY: Okay. John. I think John is working on getting you unmuted.

DR. WALTER: Can you hear me?

MS. MURPHEY: Yes, sir.

DR. WALTER: All right. Good morning, everyone. Yes, and I totally get Dewey's point about that we would like to see results to be able to -- For it to become real, and that's 100 percent true. Right now, we don't have results and so it really isn't real, and I think that, once we have those results for dolphin, it will become real, and it will become much clearer what we're trying to do, which is exactly the intent of the council from here, to provide much simpler management advice, in a more rapid and efficient timeframe.

The challenge being, to get to there, we were using a process that we haven't done before, and I think Carolyn said it well, that allowing some grace here, as we develop a process that is new, that

will eventually provide us with a path that is much more efficient, and much faster, and should be more transparent, because, basically, what we're trying to do is develop this empirical management procedure where, when the index goes up, the catch goes up, and vice versa, so that it's straightforward and understandable to people, but it takes some time to get there, because it is a process of simulation testing that management procedure to show that it works, and here it's showing, and not telling, which is I think the critical aspect of it.

I understand the presentation was challenging, I think, for people to digest, two or three days ago, and I understand that completely, and that's what -- Essentially, we only really needed sign-off on a couple of the things, which was the structure of the operating models, the reference grid, and then the management objectives, which we think we've gotten.

We're going to take those back to the now the drawing board, and some of the reconfiguring that we needed to do to the models to be able to get to that point, where we can show something to the council, and we're going to really be leaning on our working group to be able to vet those before it gets to the council, so it's finally distilled by time it gets to you.

The reason -- So I think where we are, in terms of when we'll be able to get to that -- I don't think we can commit to that in December, and there's a limited time between then. I don't think we'll have it distilled enough, and I think probably March is a better timeframe for getting to that, and then my last comment is on the concerns about it taking three council meetings to get to final action.

This is really us wanting to make it parallel to the decision process at the council, where there are really three bites until you get to final action, on any kind of management action, and, by the time it gets that final action, it will be really well distilled into the no action alternative, and then probably two or three different management procedures, of which the council will have full understanding of the tradeoffs of each of those decisions, which is essentially the council decision process for any management action, but bear with us.

It is a process to get to that, and it's a new one, because we haven't done this before. In terms of the conservation concerns for dolphinfish, we understand that, and we're seeing the same things on those papers. We see the same thing, and we're concerned as well, but bear with the time that it takes here. In terms of advising on the Amendment 3, we think that probably we can also do that advising, using the MSE, and hopefully we can get something more concrete by March, and, if that can be fit into the schedule, that might be the most effective time. Thanks.

MS. MURPHEY: All right. Thank you, John, and so, anyway, I just kind of wanted to -- John.

MR. CARMICHAEL: So sounds to me like we can simply remove dolphin MSE feedback from December, and plan on it coming back again in March, and I think that, regarding you all's bottom line, whether something is considered to be part of the amendment or part of MS discussions is kind of irrelevant, and it's taking time out of your schedule, and so I don't think that, you know, the MSE plans need to worry too much about your amendment that comes once we have the MSE information plan. We, as staff, can knit them together just fine.

I think the MSE planning needs to focus on getting an MSE product to you guys, that then you can use to evaluate your management alternatives and such, and so we can work all that out, and just

save you some time, and not talk about this in December, but have it come back in in March, as is as is shown here, and, again, it's another one of those things, whether we're up there under the amendment or down here below, and it's taking time out of your schedule, and that's really the important thing.

MS. MURPHEY: All right. Well, I just kind of wanted to air that concern, and so thank you all for the discussion. Anything else on the workplan, John?

MR. HADLEY: Christina is going to come up and discuss a couple of mackerel items, but just some clarification on a few of the mackerel-related measures, as they relate to the workplan.

MS. MURPHEY: Before you start, Amy had a question, real quick. Thanks.

MS. DUKES: Thank you, Madam Chair, and I'm also looking at projections for future meetings. Can I be reminded of when the sunset of the SMZs actually -- When the ten years comes to a close?

MS. MURPHEY: July of 2027.

MS. DUKES: So then I'm a little concerned about the timing of the sunset amendment, if it's not going to have final action until December of 2027. It says 2027 in this workplan. Am I looking at the wrong line? I don't like that timeline.

MS. MURPHEY: We'll get Chip back up here.

DR. COLLIER: Depending on what the action might be -- No matter what, this could be done through a framework, and that was the accepted process through Amendment 36, and so it could go a little bit faster than maybe what's shown here, if there's removal or just maintaining the current SMZs, the way they are, but I would recommend, if you want to add additional SMZs or anything like that, that would be done through a separate process. Closing areas is very sensitive, and people -- I think it could be done fast if it's maintaining the current areas, and I think that would go through fairly quickly as a framework-able action. We can start in June, if you would prefer.

MR. CARMICHAEL: Okay, and so we will take the sunset of SMZs, make it a framework, and start it in June of 2026.

MS. MURPHEY: Is everybody good with that? I see heads shaking, and I've got Charlie.

MR. PHILLIPS: I'm sorry, Madam Chair. Just questions and questions. If something was brought up, the fishermen, public, us, and we decided we wanted to do something like rotating SMZ openings and closures, or something like that, I'm thinking that probably would not fit in a framework, and so tell me how that might work, if that was even something that we were discussing.

MS. MURPHEY: I guess Chip.

DR. COLLIER: Yes, and, I mean, we would have to analyze all that, and figure out exactly what you want to do with the rotating, whether it's, you know, it's closed during certain times of the year or you're actually rotating years, and that will take some details to dive into, but, once again, if you're trying to do something like that, I think it would be best done in a separate process, in order to really focus in on the details of what you want.

MS. MURPHEY: All right. Thanks. I'm going to go ahead and turn it back over to Christina.

MS. WIEGAND: So this should hopefully be really quick, and I'm just looking for sort of a clarification on some of the direction to staff we had in June. There's two different elements going on with mackerel. There's the Spanish mackerel stock assessment, and then there is the port meetings response, and so, the Spanish mackerel stock assessment, there was direction to staff to see if that could be moved up.

We were able to get it moved up, and you talked, at this meeting, about the statement of work, and then there was the port meetings response, and there were two different timelines identified for the port meetings response. One would be not to address any of the meetings feedback until there was an updated Spanish mackerel stock assessment, and so, based on the current timeline, which is always subject to change, you would be looking at starting to talk about that probably at the beginning of 2028.

Then there was also other direction to staff to start talking about the port meetings actions specifically, whether they were sort of regulatory, deregulatory, or neutral, at the March meeting, after you had had the FES update in December, and so sort of two different timelines, but it would be helpful to get clarification on what the council's intent is, moving forward, so that, when we're doing things like thinking about AP meetings, for example, for 2026, we know whether the Mackerel AP would need to meet, and we have also gotten some questions from fishermen in the Mid-Atlantic about what may or may not be going on in regards to mackerel, and so just some clarification from the council would be helpful when responding to those questions.

MS. MURPHEY: Dewey.

MR. HEMILRIGHT: I think that it's important for the stock assessment part, but, in the meantime, there's probably some homework that can be done before we get to the stock assessment part, because, the way I look at it, if you get to the stock assessment part, and there's fish to be given, we figure out a way how to get them fast to folks, and, if there's something that doesn't have a good outcome, we take our time, but, in the meantime, there's things that need to be probably looked at, with that port meeting agenda, or what was the outcome of that, and maybe some things could be answered before the stock assessment, or something like that, and so maybe a little homework needs to be -- I mean, a presentation or something beforehand, to see how much is long-term or short-term or regulatory and all that, and that's just my thoughts.

MS. MURPHEY: Thank you, Dewey. Jessica.

MS. MCCAWLEY: Dewey and I might be saying the same thing, and I still think we should wait until after that Spanish mackerel stock assessment, but I think it's a great idea to have staff, you know, be working on it in the background, and be ready maybe when we're getting close to when the stock assessment is going to be completed, you know, kind of bringing material, like here's the

things from the port meetings, and here's long-term and short-term action, and so maybe it starts coming back like two meetings or so before the stock assessment is completed, or something like that.

I agree with Dewey that I want us to be ready to go as soon as that stock assessment is ready, but I don't know that we need to spend a lot of time like in the next handful of meetings discussing it. We're already jam-packed, and I think staff could work on it in the background, and get something ready to go, maybe a couple council meetings before the assessment is ready.

MS. MURPHEY: Thank you, Jessica. Tom.

MR. ROLLER: I like this conversation, and where it's going. Thank you for that, Jessica. I think that's really kind of the direction we need to go, and I would remind that our advisors, in general, were very much okay with the way things are now, right, and so, in the sense like if we have to make changes, it didn't seem to be -- You know, particularly as, you know, the states are directing on some of these transfers and stuff. Fishermen were generally okay, and so I'm okay with that, but I would -- I like the idea of moving a little bit quicker and, as we get closer to the assessment, we do that background work.

MR. CARMICHAEL: So then what I'm hearing is you guys would like to start getting yourselves reacquainted with the mackerel situation a little in advance of the assessment, so we're ready to roll when we get that, and it could be a meeting or two before, probably before the SSC reviews that, and maybe the meeting before they would meet and talk about it, because, the next meeting after that, you would get it, and we can sort of see where that fits in when we get a better handle on when the assessment gets done sometime in 2027.

We get this up here on the planned workload, and that starts encumbering those 2027 resources, and then you make it clear that that's what you want to look at, and those don't get consumed by something else that pops up.

MS. MURPHEY: Is everybody good with that? Does that help you, Christina?

MS. WIEGAND: Yes. Thank you. That's very helpful, and I appreciate mackerel being added back to the workplan.

MS. MURPHEY: All right. Thank you, Christina. Go ahead, John.

MR. HADLEY: So I had one more item, very quickly, and I just wanted to clarify, with the yellowtail snapper and mutton snapper amendment, and, you know, I mentioned that that likely would need to be extended. Just to give you -- To provide a little bit of information, you're probably looking at approval either at the June meeting or September meeting of next year, and so that's going to have one or two kind of -- Bump out one or two meetings, and just a heads-up, and so we'll update the workplan accordingly to reflect that.

MS. MURPHEY: Thank you, John. Anything else for John and the workplan? Okay. Thank you, John, and I guess we've got a plan until the next meeting, and then I've got John is going to handle upcoming meetings, like we don't have any.

MR. CARMICHAEL: In the interest, as we said, of efficiency, there's the report, and you see it. It gives you an overview of what's coming up. If you ever have any questions, call us, and, if you want the details of them, it's all on the council website.

MS. MURPHEY: Any questions for John on meetings? Okay. All right. Any other business of this council, or this meeting? Andy.

MR. STRELCHECK: My compliments to the council for the choice of the hotel, compared to our previous hotel.

MS. MURPHEY: All right. Thank you, Andy. Any other business? All right. I will call the September South Atlantic Fishery Management Council meeting closed. Thank you, everyone.

(Whereupon, the meeting adjourned on September 19, 2025.)

- - -

Certified By: _____ Date: _____

Transcribed By
Amanda Thomas
October 28, 2025

First	Last	Suffix	Position	Affiliation
Trish	Murphey		Chair	NC Division of Marine Fisheries
			Vice-Chair	Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission
Jessica	McCawley		Chair	Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission
Robert	Beal			GA DNR Coastal Resources Division
Carolyn	Belcher			
Gary	Borland			SC DNR Marine Resources Division
Amy	Dukes			
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
	Warner-			
Deirdre	Kramer			Office of Marine Conservation OES / OMC
TBD	TBD			U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Representative

Sonny Gwinn
 Chris Schieble
 Rick DeVictor
 Dr. Walter Buble
 Dr. Clay Poreh
 Monica Smit-Brunello
 Kathy Knowlton
 Dr. Walter

SOUTH ATLANTIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL
COUNCIL STAFF

Executive Director

✓ John Carmichael
john.carmichael@safmc.net
843-302-8435

Deputy Director - Science

✓ Dr. Chip Collier
chip.collier@safmc.net
843-302-8444

Deputy Director - Management

✓ Myra Brouwer
myra.brouwer@safmc.net
843-302-8436

Citizen Science Program Manager

✓ Julia Byrd
julia.byrd@safmc.net
843-302-8439

BFP Outreach Specialist

✓ Ashley Oliver Ashley.Oliver@safmc.net
843-225-8135

Admin. Secretary/Travel Coordinator

✓ Rachael Silvas
Rachael.silvas@safmc.net
843-571-4370

Fishery Scientist II

✓ Dr. Mike Schmidtke
mike.schmidtke@safmc.net
843-302-8433

Quantitative Fishery Scientist

✓ Dr. Judd Curtis
Judd.curtis@safmc.net
843-302-8441

Communication and Digital Media Specialist

✓ Nicholas Smillie
Nick.Smillie@safmc.net
843-302-8443

Fishery Economist & FMP Coordinator

✓ John Hadley
john.hadley@safmc.net
843-302-8432

Staff Accountant

well Suzanna Thomas
suzanna.thomas@safmc.net
843-571-4368

Habitat and Ecosystem Scientist

✓ Kathleen Howington
kathleen.howington@safmc.net
843-725-7580

Fishery Social Scientist

✓ Christina Wiegand christina.wiegand@safmc.net
843-302-8437

Fishery Scientist I

✓ Allie Iberle
Allie.iberle@safmc.net
843-225-8135

Citizen Science Project Manager

Meg Withers
Meg.withers@safmc.net
843-725-7577

Public Information Officer

✓ Kim Iverson kim.iverson@safmc.net
843-224-7258

SEDAR**SEDAR Program Manager**

Dr. Julie Neer
Julie.neer@safmc.net
843-302-8438

Administrative Officer

well Kelly Klasnick kelly.klasnick@safmc.net
843-763-1050

SEDAR Coordinator

Emily Ott Emily.Ott@safmc.net
937-479-6171

September 2025

Attendee Report: Council Meeting

Report Generated:

09/22/2025 07:19 AM EDT

Webinar ID

302-385-691

Actual Start Date/Time

09/19/2025 07:14 AM EDT

Staff Details

Attended

Yes

Interest Rating

Not applicable for staff

Attendee Details

Last Name

Addis

Aukeman

Barbieri

Barile

Barrows

Batsavage

Bernier

Bianchi

Blough

Bonura

Boots

Borland

Bradshaw

Brantley

Bruger

Buntin

Bunting

Burky Lechwar

Byrd

Carrigan

Cermak

Charydczak

Coleman

Curtis

DeVictor

Degan

DiJohnson

Dukes

Farrell

Foss

First Name

Dustin

trip

Luiz

Peter

Katline

Chris

Quinn

Alan

Heather

Vincent

Benjamin

Gary

Christopher

William

Catherine

Jesse

Matthew

Heather

Julia

Abby

Bridget

Jenna

Heather

Judd

Rick

Jacqui

Alex

Amy

Delaney

Kristin

Gloeckner	David
Gore	Karla
Griner	Tim
Guyas	Martha
HEMILRIGHT	DEWEY
Hadley	John
Hart	Hannah
Helmey	Judy
Hildreth	Delaine
Hilton	Kurt
Hudson	Joseph
Hull	Jimmy
Iberle	Allie
Ingram	Jamal
Iverson	Kim
Klasnick	01Kelly
Klibansky	Lara
Knowlton	Kathy
Lazarre	Dominique
Leavel	Lillie Callaway
Levy	Mara
M Dobbs	Jeffrey
Mackesey	Brendan
Marhefka	00Kerry
Meehan	Sean
Mehta	Nikhil
Muffley	Brandon
Murphey	Trish
Neer	Julie
O'Donnell	Kelli
Oliver	Ashley
Perkinson	Matt
Phillips	Charlie
Ramsay	Chloe
Records	David
Reynolds	Kris
Robbins	Megan
Rock	Jason
Saurman	Emma
Schmidtke	Michael
Seeley	Matthew
Seward	McLean
Silvas	Rachael
Simmons	Carrie

Smillie	Nick
Smit-Brunello	Monica
Spanik	Kevin
Spottswood	00Robert
Spurgin	Kali
Stephen	Jessica
Stephens	Haley
Stephenson	Sarah
Sweetman	CJ
Tuckey	Troy
Walsh	Mick
Walter	John
Wamer	David
White	Geoff
Willis	Michelle
Wilms	Olivia
Withers	Meg
Zapf	Daniel
colby	barrett
collier	chip
marinko	Jeff
moss	david
oden	jeff
peters	sophonda
poholek	ariel
roller	tom
sandorf	scott
sinkus	Wiley
spottswood	00Robert
thomas	suz
vara	mary
Aines	Alex
Alexander	Sheila
Alexander	Nathan
Angers	Jeff
Anker	Shari
Bailey	Adam
Bajema	Jordan
Baker	Scott
Barger	Jeff
Beal	Bob
Bell	Mel
Black	Karlisa
Bogdan	Jennifer

Brouwer	Myra
Brown	Hunter
Bruning	Jake
Brunson	Jeff
Carruthers	Tom
Cerny-Chipman	Elizabeth
Clinton	Haley
Clinton	Haley
Cody	Richard
Corbett	Ellie
Cox	Jack
Crosson	Scott
Crowe	Stacie
Dancy	Kiley
Darden	Tanya
Davis	Conor
Delaney	Glenn
Diagne	Assane
Dingle	Julie
Dover	Miles
Downes	Athena
Dunn	Russell
Dyar	Ben
Dyar	Ben
Ealahan	Maranda
Emory	Meaghan
Enright	Nicole
Evans	Joseph
Fields-Rivera	Kayla
Finch	Margaret
Flowers	Henry
Floyd	Brad
Foor	Brandon
Franco	Dawn
Froeschke	John
Gannon	Megan
Gentner	BRAD
Gentry	Lauren
Gialanella	Tiffany
Gomez	Josalyn
Gooding	Elizabeth
Gravitz	michael
Gravitz	Michael
Gray	Alisha

Griffin	Aimee
Hallas	Sara
Harmon	Jake
Harrell	Ryan
Hatcher	Dale
Haymans	Doug
Helies	Frank
Herrick	Daniel
Hiers	Homer
Hollensead	Lisa
Hooten	Jackson
Hordyk	Adrian
Horton	Chris
Huber	Jeanette
Huber	Jeanette
Juliano	Jocelyn
Kalinowsky	Chris
Karnauskas	Mandy
Kellison	Todd
Keppler	Blaik
Kolmos	Kevin
LEWIS	SAVANNAH
Larkin	Michael
Leach	Scott
Lind	M
Lloyd	Shannon
Locke	Charles
Lopez-Mercer	Maria
Lorenzen	Kai
Martin	Drew
Masi	Michelle
McClair	Genine
McCoy	Sherylanne
McGill	Maria
McManus	Brian
McWaters	Mark
Merck	Nicole
Merrifield	Jeanna
Merrifield	Mike
Meyers	S
Mikalian	Amanda
Moir	James
Monk	Melissa
Nejjari	Amber

Newman	Thomas
Ott	Emily
Owens	Marina
Package-Ward	Christina
Peterson	Cassidy
Puglise	Kimberly
Reding	Brandon
Reed	John
Reynolds	Kris
Rindone	Ryan
Rivera Garcia	Liajay
Rudershausen	P
Rule	Erica
SCHLICK	CJ
Salmeron	Selena
Salmon	Brandi
Sedberry	George
Smart	Tracey
Smith	Leah
Smith	John
Solinger	Laura
Somereve	Jake
Spratt	Paige
Stemle	Adam
Thompson	Laurilee
Tidball	Victoria
Turley	Brendan
Vecchio	Julie
Waldo	Jennifer
Walia	Matt
Walsh	Jason
Warren	Camilla
Whitmer	Morgan
Wiegand	Christina
Wilber	Pace
Williams	Erik
Wilms	Sean
gwin	sonny
lee	Jennifer
o	o
riley	Rick
stone	pat
vincent	matthew
zales	bob