

SOUTH ATLANTIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

FULL COUNCIL SESSION

**DoubleTree by Hilton Atlantic Beach Oceanfront
Atlantic Beach, North Carolina**

December 8, 2017

SUMMARY MINUTES

Council Members

Charlie Phillips
Anna Beckwith
Zack Bowen
Chris Conklin
Dr. Michelle Duval
Ben Hartig

Mark Brown
Mel Bell
Chester Brewer
Dr. Roy Crabtree
Tim Griner
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John Hadley
Roger Pugliese
Amber Von Harten

Observers/Participants

Tony DiLernia
Rick DeVictor
Dr. Marcel Reichert
Dr. Erik Williams
Dr. Jack McGovern
Dr. Bonnie Ponwith
Lieutenant Commander Trish Bennett
Dr. Mike Larkin
Charlie Bergmann

Jim Estes
Nik Mehta
Erika Burgess
Monica Smit-Brunello
Dale Diaz
Kathy Knowlton
Dr. Cisco Werner
Mary Wunderlich
Bill Kelly

Other observers and participants attached.

The Full Council Session of the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council convened at the DoubleTree by Hilton Atlantic Beach Oceanfront, Atlantic Beach, North Carolina, Friday morning, December 4, 2017, and was called to order by Chairman Charlie Phillips.

MR. PHILLIPS: I will call the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council to order. The first order of business is the Adoption of the Agenda. Are there any changes to the agenda or modifications? Seeing none, any objection to the agenda? Seeing none, the agenda is approved. Then we have Approval of the Minutes. Are there any changes to the minutes or modifications? Any objection to the minutes? The minutes are approved. We will do our voice recognition, and so, Zack, we'll start down there with you and go around the table.

MR. BOWEN: Good morning.

MR. HAYMANS: Doug Haymans, Georgia DNR.

MS. BURGESS: Erika Burgess, Florida FWC.

MR. ESTES: Jim Estes, Florida FWC.

MR. BREWER: Chester Brewer, Florida, recreational.

MR. HARTIG: Ben Hartig, Florida, commercial.

MR. WAUGH: Gregg Waugh, council staff.

MR. PHILLIPS: Charlie Phillips, Georgia, Chair.

MR. BROWN: Mark Brown, South Carolina, Vice Chair.

MR. DIAZ: Dale Diaz, Gulf Council.

MR. DILERNIA: Tony DiLernia, liaison, Mid-Atlantic Council.

DR. DUVAL: Michelle Duval, North Carolina Division of Marine Fisheries.

MS. BECKWITH: Anna Beckwith, North Carolina, recreational/charter.

MR. GRINER: Tim Griner, North Carolina, commercial.

DR. WERNER: Cisco Werner, NOAA Fisheries.

DR. PONWITH: Bonnie Ponwith, NOAA Fisheries.

MS. SMIT-BRUNELLO: Monica Smit-Brunello, NOAA General Counsel.

DR. CRABTREE: Roy Crabtree, NOAA Fisheries.

DR. MCGOVERN: Jack McGovern, NOAA Fisheries.

LCDR BENNETT: Lieutenant Commander Trish Bennett, U.S. Coast Guard.

MR. CONKLIN: Chris Conklin, South Carolina.

MR. PHILLIPS: Glad you could make it, Chris.

MR. BELL: Hey, Charlie, do you want me?

MR. PHILLIPS: Mel, I'm sorry. I didn't see your hand.

MR. BELL: That's okay. South Carolina DNR.

MR. PHILLIPS: Thanks, Mel. All right. First of all, we want to welcome Tony from the Mid-Atlantic and Dale from the Gulf. We are always glad to see our Coast Guard, to help keep us straight on how many people are on a headboat, and let's see who else we've got in here. Of course, we want to thank Michelle for our excellent social, and it was great to see Louis there. That was a good party. We should do that more often. Let's see my list. There's a long list of people that do a lot of good stuff here, and, Dr. Daniel, and I don't think he's in here, but do you want to pass along our thanks for the use of their facilities?

We have some certificates to hand out. This is for Nik Mehta, and this is in recognition of distinguished and dedicated service in the conservation and management of our nation's marine fishery resources and your work on golden tilefish and the elusive red snapper. Then we have Rick DeVictor, and we want to recognize you for your work on the golden tilefish interim rule, red snapper, and teaching us how to do a red grouper abbreviated framework.

MR. DEVICTOR: Thank you.

MR. PHILLIPS: Dr. McGovern, you also for golden tile, red snapper, and the red grouper abbreviated framework. As always, you're keeping us in between the ditches.

DR. MCGOVERN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

MR. PHILLIPS: The head cheese that keeps us straight, Dr. Roy Crabtree, golden tile, red snapper, and red grouper.

DR. CRABTREE: Is it worth more than twenty-dollars?

MR. PHILLIPS: We'll have to talk about that after the meeting. You are appreciated, in spite of how we treat you sometimes. Monica, especially Monica, and so red snapper, red grouper, and just really good advice.

MS. SMIT-BRUNELLO: We hope.

MR. PHILLIPS: We hope.

MS. SMIT-BRUNELLO: Thank you.

MR. PHILLIPS: Southeast Fisheries Science Center, to the Beaufort Team, and is Erik Williams back there? You can come get that. It's for golden tile, red snapper, and red grouper. Not that we ever give you all grief or anything, but we want you to know that we appreciate it. Not to be left out, the Southeast Fisheries Science Center Miami Team. Bonnie, we'll let you take that one. Again, not that we would ever give you all any grief about anything, but thank you. Not to be left out is our South Carolina DNR MARMAP Team, and we will send this back to Marcel and his team, and so we do appreciate their work.

We have got a list of people that are not here, NMFS people, and we have Adam Bailey, Jeff Pulver, Christina Package-Ward, Karla Gore, and Mary Vara. You know, Marcel tried to teach me some Dutch a while back, and, not only did I not do well in Dutch, but he also pointed out that my English wasn't so good, and so, if I screw something up, you know why. Mike Larkin, Tony Lamberte, Dave Records, Noah Silverman, Scott Sandorf, Alisha DiLeone, Frank Helies, Mary Wunderlich, and Joel Goodwin. For NOAA GC, it's Shep Grimes. Now we're going to go on into our Council Staff Reports.

MR. WAUGH: Thank you. There is a short report in the council tab and then, in the late materials folder, there is a report from the NRCC meeting that Charlie and I attended, and we'll go through that. This is an effort that Michelle started for us to figure out how to address these species as they continue to move north, and Michelle and I had some discussions with the Chair and the ED from the Mid-Atlantic Council, and Chris Moore, who is the Executive Director of the Mid-Atlantic Council, arranged for us to be invited to the NRCC meeting.

We attended, and we had a very interesting discussion, and the material that we sent to them is attached to this report, and I'm not going to go through that. It's the same snapper grouper material that you had at the last council meeting, and Christina put together information on the Coastal Migratory Pelagics FMP, showing the catches as they're starting to show up northwards.

I am going to focus in on the areas where we need to have some discussion from you all. The response to a request for coast-wide deepwater surveys, the Mid-Atlantic did fund a project to conduct a proof-of-concept survey, and that work has been completed, and, at the December meeting, the Mid-Atlantic Council will be receiving that final report.

We talked about, if this proof-of-concept works, how do we pursue getting funding, so that there is a coast-wide survey that would be able to pick up these species as they start to show up, and Dr. John Hare, the Northeast Science Director, talked about they recognize the importance for this work, but he stated that there's just no money in the budget to cover this, and he wasn't sure about how we could fund this into the future.

There was some discussion about exploring S-K monies and monies from the Science Center for marine fisheries and other groups, and that's where we're going to have to pursue, just like we're trying to get creative down here. We're going to have to get creative to get this done. We are going to pursue funding of some sort from one of those groups to try to a two to three-year pilot project to follow on behind this proof-of-concept, and so I assume we would support that and work with them to move forward, unless there is any objection to doing that.

Continuing, these are the specific points of concern that we raised with them, talking about how changes need to be made to ongoing data collection programs and how do we ensure that data are made available for stock assessments conducted in the Southeast? How do we gain some participation by Northeast assessment scientists in assessments conducted in the Southeast? Is there a potential for some assessments to be conducted by the Northeast assessment scientists, and how do we ensure recreational and commercial catches in the Mid-Atlantic and New England are reported in a timely manner for ACL monitoring by the Southeast Regional Office?

In terms of a response to that, Chris Moore asked what the plan was for the two centers to deal with these species, and Dr. John Hare said that the plans are in the works to have a center-to-center and a region-to-region workshop, and they also plan to involve the three councils and the commissions to figure out how to do this. In addition, the climate action plans call for some type of center-to-center discussions, and so there already has been some participation by Northeast assessment scientists in the blueline tile assessment, and so we're starting to see some of that change.

GARFO, the Northeast Region, agreed to look at how to get existing trip reports to address these species. They are working on -- Under the existing vessel trip report requirements, federally-permitted vessels, except for clam permits, in New England and the Mid-Atlantic must report all species harvested. The issue is they don't have species codes for some of our species as they show up, and so Chris Moore has talked with his staff, in getting them to work with us and GARFO to get our species that we're concerned about on the forms for fishermen, so that they can report those species in the VTR forms, and so work is ongoing in that.

There was general agreement that procedures need to be in place to ensure that all harvest is available for ACL tracking, and Dr. Hare talked about the need for stock ID added to the list of species, and we're doing that as we move forward, for instance with cobia, and Tom Nies provided information after the meeting on a way to do this, assuming the Southeast Fisheries Science Center is told about the upcoming assessment, and so there's a link provided there that talks about their process for doing benchmark and research track assessments and how they form the groups, and so there is a way that the Southeast can be involved in those Northeast assessments.

Then we got into the governance issue, and Charlie and I talked about how the process we've used in allowing the Mid-Atlantic to have voting seats on our Snapper Grouper Committee, and they have one voting seat on Snapper Grouper, and they have two voting seats on Coastal Migratory Pelagics. For Dolphin Wahoo, the Mid-Atlantic and New England Councils each have a seat.

There was some talk about various ways of approaching this, and we talked a little bit that the councils could petition the Secretary, or ask the Secretary to redo the designation. There is some concern that may put the two councils a little bit at loggerheads with each other, or the three councils. Recently, as Tony mentioned, the New England Council was interested in being more involved in some of the Mid-Atlantic fisheries, and they were put on the committees, and so I think Charlie wants to have some discussion here about how we approach this.

What we did talk about at the NRCC meeting is having the representatives to the Coordinating Council, our Chair, Vice Chair, and Executive Directors, and so we talked about having those three from each of the east coast councils get together in conjunction with the two CCC meetings and talk informally about how we approach this, and I will turn it over to Charlie to express his views,

and we need to get some guidance on how we want to approach that. Do we want to go with a cooperative approach like that, or do we want to pursue asking the Secretary to change some designations?

MR. PHILLIPS: Thank you, Gregg, and that was a very enlightening meeting. I think maybe one of the most awe-inspiring moments was when I heard them say that they were getting a benchmark and an update on the same species in the same year, and it was like, wow. The first question for Cisco later is not when can we get more assessments, but you have to put that in the middle somewhere, but it would be nice if we could kind of figure out a path forward that works for everybody that is cooperative, whether we do some -- If we go down the road like we've done on blueline tile or if we want to possibly just extend our range further north. Is that simpler, is it cheaper, and still have people on our committees, so that we've got input?

I think if we talk to all of our partners and we make those decisions ahead of time, it will be better decisions, versus, if we do not make a decision, a decision by default will be made for us, because we're going to have to deal with these species as they move north, and so maybe we can talk to our partners, maybe put it on the March agenda, so we can have a conversation of pros and cons and a best way to move forward with everything.

MR. BREWER: If we were to recommend changing designations, that's going to put more responsibility on this council, and I'm wondering if there is any way, if we go that way, that we could get a little bit more money to do a little bit more data gathering and assessments.

MR. PHILLIPS: Well, I think that would be part of the conversation. There is going to be pluses and minuses no matter what we do, and costs associated with it, and so I think we should just try to get out ahead of it a little bit, and I think they talked about seeing gray triggerfish in Rhode Island, and so it's coming, and we might as well plan for it, and, the earlier we plan for it, the better off we will all be, no matter what kind of management we go with.

DR. PONWITH: I like that you're talking about this, and I like that you're talking about it proactively, as opposed to waiting until it comes and nips at your heels or other places, because that is bad, to be caught flatfooted on these kinds of things, and I am just wondering -- It's been a while since we've had a SEDAR special topics, and this just seems like a really smart thing to put sort of in the queue for a SEDAR special topics and think about the implications of what we're learning from our stock ID workshops, which I think was an applaudable step forward that was catalyzed by this council to do stock ID workshops preceding new benchmark stock assessments for stocks that had never been assessed before, so we have a better grasp of what their true range and their stock structure is.

I am wondering if we could put together a workshop that looks at what we're learning from stock ID and how we're responding, both on the science and the management side, to what we're learning from stock ID workshops and how that and things like the climate vulnerability analyses and things can inform the way the council and councils should be resilient to things that we learned that were new, unanticipated, or predicted to happen and then start happening, because that might help us build guidance that can be used across several species and create those decisions or discussions in a framework style, so we can sort of a one approach that fits many species or many circumstances and can make that process a bit more efficient.

MR. PHILLIPS: Thank you, Bonnie.

MR. HARTIG: Thank you, Bonnie, and I really appreciate that. I think that's a great idea. The overarching thoughts that I had was what happens to MSY as these stocks move north, and, to me, some of these stocks, if you look, we're getting a northern movement, but we're still having the same kind of landings in the areas that we're fishing, and then others are moving north and coming back and maybe not that, and so, somehow through that process, get an idea of if we are seeing increases in MSY in some species and maybe not in others.

DR. DUVAL: I really like what Bonnie has suggested as well, and I think it would be good to -- As we have discussions on sort of the governance end of things, having a similar discussion on the science end of things, with the recognition that those decisions with regard to science impact the management and how to make those things harmonious, I guess, in terms of decisions on either end.

I just wanted to remind folks that, in the Snapper Grouper briefing materials from the September meeting, Myra had put together a nice comprehensive background paper on both commercial and recreational catches of species north of the snapper grouper jurisdiction, and I know, Charlie, that was part of the materials that you guys sent to the NRCC and discussed, and I just wanted to remind everyone else that that's where those things are, and it is kind of interesting to see how some of that harvest skips around to like southern New England, and it seems to kind of skip some of the Mid-Atlantic states a little bit, and then we have harvest here, and so it's not intuitive how those catches are increasing, but I agree that we need to get out ahead of it.

I think we had an opportunity in 2010, and the council chose not to take action at that time, and we've kind of paid for that the last couple of years, and so I think it behooves us to try to find some way forward that is acceptable to everybody.

MR. PHILLIPS: Thank you, Michelle, and I think there was some conversation at the table that part of the reason you didn't see say gray triggerfish landed in all the states is it just wasn't listed on their logbooks. There was nowhere to put it, and so that might have been part of it, and so I think they said they were going to make efforts to make sure all of those things would be listed, so that they could keep track of them and help us keep track of them. As always, we're looking forward to better data, landings data, and anybody else?

MR. WAUGH: We have got this CCC group that will have some discussions, and I think, Charlie, what you're suggesting is we discuss this again in March, during Executive Finance. One additional way that we can increase our level of interaction and communication on this, and we talked about this a little at the last meeting, and Tony gave a little historical background on how we used to send a Mid-Atlantic liaison. Then, once North Carolina was sitting on both councils, we stopped. At some point, we may want to revisit whether we start sending a liaison again to the Mid-Atlantic Council, and I don't know whether you want to give us any guidance on that now or wait until we talk about this further at the March meeting.

MR. PHILLIPS: My thoughts are that it probably wouldn't be a bad idea to go ahead and set out kind of a draft would it would look like and a draft what it would cost, and so at least, when we talk about it, we could say yes or no or maybe, and, since we've had some pretty intense budget

discussions this week, and I expect those to be continuing, that can just be part of that. Any other questions?

MR. DILERNIA: I would just like to say that, as you consider whether or not to send a liaison, we would very much welcome to have a liaison at our table, just as you have been so gracious to accept me here, and I know we would be very happy to have a representative of your council attend our meetings on a regular basis.

While I have the mic, just while we were discussing it, I was just making a list of species that you all manage that we're seeing more and more of in the Mid, and, just really quickly, it's mahi, cobia, Spanish mackerel, sheepshead, wreckfish, blueline tile, all the drums, and there's a lot of your critters that are showing up more and more in our waters. Thank you.

MR. PHILLIPS: Thanks, Tony, and I can't imagine why any council wouldn't want you to come visit them. You do a really good job. Anybody else? What else have we got, Gregg?

MR. WAUGH: Just other items of interest that I will call your attention to, and this is on page 4 of that document, but Dave Van Voorhees gave an MRIP update, and they feel very confident that they will have the new numbers, just using the mail survey only, by July 1 of 2018, and so those will be available.

We asked about when will then those numbers be used and translated into our current ACL currency, if you will, and that's something that the implementation team is supposed to handle, and so we would look, and we've talked some with Cisco already about the timing for that, but I think it's critical that we understand, as soon as possible, what the timing is, and so, if those numbers become available on July 1, then how long after that will it be before we get a comparison of recreational catch that we can compare to our ACLs? That is, I think, one critical component.

Then the other is when do we get the whole time series translated so that we can then start to use that as we look at allocations, because that method -- That's certainly how we do our allocations now, and so I don't know if we can get any further clarification on that now or just look for that in the future.

MR. BROWN: Gregg, did they say how many they are sending out? Do you know how many go out when they send those out?

MR. WAUGH: You mean the mail survey? Is that what you're asking? No, I don't. I presume it's -- I don't know. I don't know whether it's to all, and I don't know if Bonnie or someone from the agency can -- I don't know whether it's all or a sample.

DR. PONWITH: If you remember back in the reauthorization of the Act, there was an inclusion of starting a saltwater angler registry, and, the way it was written, it was that the feds would create the registry unless the states had a registry that met the federal requirements, and, in any case where the state already had a registry, that was used. Essentially, they're using that as a sample frame and sending surveys to a subset, a sample, of those individuals to be able to get the effort.

MR. BROWN: What states in our region already have the registry?

DR. PONWITH: My understanding is all of them.

MR. BELL: That's correct. I am not aware of any -- There is no states in our region that aren't exempt from the federal registry based on their own registry, and so, for us, Mark, that would be entire list of all saltwater anglers, or people with saltwater privileges, which, for us, would be about 475,000 or something.

MR. PHILLIPS: Thanks, Mel.

MR. HARTIG: Gregg, have they talked about how far back they're going to go? Are they going to go back to where the effort is comparable from the new survey to the old survey methodology? I have heard some of that discussed in the past, about how far they are going to go back.

MR. WAUGH: I don't know. I don't know if John Carmichael knows. He sits on some of the transition team, and I don't know if John or Bonnie know.

MR. CARMICHAEL: I am not fully aware of all the details, in terms of how they're doing that. The discussions we had is they were looking at the entire time series being revised based on this, and the peer review was held of this at the end of June, and, the last time we talked about it as a transition group, the agency was looking at the peer review comments and was working on a response, and then we'll have a meeting here soon, and we expect to have all of that information available, the peer review findings, and then what the agency response is to the findings and how they're addressing the recommendations of the peer review, in terms of doing the adjustment for the new survey versus the old survey.

I think I will add Mark's comment, because I was trying to recall how much detail we've been provided so far, just in terms of the nuts-and-bolts of the new mail survey, what percentage, and Mel mentioned 400,000 anglers, and I don't ever recall hearing a discussion of how many or what percentage of the anglers may be sampled by the mail survey with any particular time, whether it's with replacement across the year or whatever, and so I made some notes about questions to bring up some of that and just to see if we can't maybe find more of those kind of specific details to help answer those questions for you, but I think that's a very good question for you guys to get a sense of what's the intensity of this, and that would be helpful.

MR. PHILLIPS: Thanks, John.

DR. PONWITH: If you have a lot of questions, we can get those to the experts. We can get them to MRIP and deal with them as a set of bullets, or another thing that we could do is, if you have a lot of questions and thought it would be beneficial, to actually get an update presentation. We could put in a request for someone to come to the next meeting and give a presentation on here is a reminder of how we've shifted the effort survey from phone to mail and what it looks like now as mail and this is what the APAIS updates, the change to the APAIS program, look like, just a summary of those in high-level detail.

Then to talk about the numbers that are going to come out from the calibration. I mean, the good news is, the last time that I talked to MRIP, the calibration is spot-on time, in terms of an on-time delivery, but what those numbers are going to look like and what kind of work has to happen in the aftermath of that I think are legitimate questions, and so you pick the format. If you want to

pose questions in writing to them, I know they will get back to you. If you would prefer to have a dialogue, I know they would be open to sending -- They are always open to sending someone to the council and talk with you about it.

MR. PHILLIPS: Great. Thanks.

MR. BROWN: Bonnie, we had a -- I guess this may be the time to talk about it, but we had a situation this fall, or last spring, with Wave 2, with a huge spike in the amberjack for recreational, and that came off of two intercepts that were B1 intercepts, and so, whenever you get something like that and you get a big spike like that, and then you're going to do this mail survey, how does -- I mean, is all this taken into consideration for an output? I don't understand what we do with this picture after we get all this information.

DR. PONWITH: Dr. Werner is going to talk a little bit about the structure of the survey in his presentation, but the bottom line is that the mail survey is exclusively for effort, and so, when they do that survey, they don't ask what you caught. What they're getting at is effort, and the structure of the estimation process is use the mail survey to find out who went fishing and how frequently they went fishing, and you use the dockside intercepts to get catch per unit effort.

For those who went fishing, what did you get over how much time, and that catch per unit effort is multiplied by estimates of total effort, and that gives you estimates for total catch. If the catch per unit effort catches an unusual catch, if someone caught an Australian fish that was out of range, that is going to get expanded, or, if the catch per unit effort information misses what is a rare-event species, because they simply didn't see any boats that had that species on there, it's going to have a low number for those, and so that's going to be discussed in the workshops that we're having, starting within the agency, about what do we do for low-incident species, where you either catch them and over-expand them or miss them and under-expand them. Are there things that could be done within MRIP to be able to account for that, and what guidance can MRIP give to the councils to say, if you see PSEs above this amount, you shouldn't use those data for in-season management decisions?

MR. BROWN: The only reason I brought it up is, when I said B1, obviously that's not an observed, and so that's why I was mentioning that, between that and the mail-outs.

MR. PHILLIPS: Ben, and then we're going to try to move on.

MR. HARTIG: I understand, and I'm sorry, Mr. Chairman, but I do have a pretty important question, at least from my viewpoint. On July 1, we roll out the numbers, and then you have an implementation team that -- Are they doing the calibrations, or what are they doing, exactly?

To make this easier, somehow it has to go through our assessment process before we look at those numbers, because, if we don't, there is going to be productivity concerns, from an assessment standpoint. If you look at recreational landings through the entire time series, and if you have substantially increased, it seems to me that it points to the stock being more productive, just on face value. To me, you're going to have to look at the assessments before you actually start thinking about allocations and things of that nature.

MR. WAUGH: Well, I mean, we have assessments planned, but, when we set up our original allocations, and I'm not saying we have to do it like this in the future, but, when we did that, we used the landings time series and not the output from a stock assessment, in terms of the landings that were used in the stock assessment.

I think the implementation team is charged with overseeing the rollout of these numbers, and what we have to find out is, after July 1, what's the timing for -- Remember the Southeast Fisheries Science Center has access to more weight data, and so they do a revised weight estimate, and so we need to know when that's going to be done for the whole time series, so that then we can use it to evaluate our allocations, and we also need to know when those numbers will be converted into the old system that we have set up our ACLs on, and so those are two timelines that we need from the Southeast Fisheries Science Center in the very near future, so we can start planning that.

We have already got the assessments planned for when they're going to happen with that new data, and let me just mention too that we've got MRIP folks coming to our March council meeting, during the Data Committee, to give several presentations, and so we can compile these questions and feed that to them ahead of time. Does that answer your question, Ben?

MR. HARTIG: It does answer it, but I still have productivity concerns, and I will talk with the stock assessment people.

DR. CRABTREE: I just wanted to come back to Mark bringing up the greater amberjack. I have looked pretty carefully at those numbers, and, in addition to having those two intercepts that caught amberjack, there was a high effort number for that particular strata and time period. The telephone survey has become very inefficient, because people don't answer their phones anymore, and I think, when we switch to the mail survey, it should rectify some of that, and we should get more precise effort estimates, and my hope is then these effort estimates won't bounce around as much as they are now.

If that's the case, then it could smooth out some of these spikes, and I don't know if it will or not, but the spikes are -- There is the intercept piece of the spike, and there is the effort, and, right now, the effort estimates are really uncertain with the telephone survey, and I think that probably causes them to bounce around a lot, and I am hoping that some of that will be addressed next year when we switch over, and they were B1 fish, and my understanding is they were packed in ice and in the coolers, and they didn't want to take the time to pull them out, and so they told the interviewer that they had two amberjack, and so that's where they came from.

DR. PONWITH: Just very briefly, to the biomass issue, Mr. Hartig, you are exactly correct. We are going to get calibrated numbers for landings, and you use landings for management decisions. You also use landings as an input to a stock assessment, and so you're exactly right that we'll use those numbers in their new form to understand things like the time series of landings and the relationship between the commercial and the recreational from an allocation standpoint, but we also look at its implications to the status of the stock.

The way we will do that is two ways, through MRIP lites, where we drop the new landings information into the last stock assessment, if it's been done recent enough, and don't update any of the other indices, in the interest of time, and see what the behavior of the assessment is to that. Then the other thing that we do is, for stock assessments where the assessment is too old, where

that's imprudent, we will make sure that we incorporate those data in the next full assessment, whether that's an update, a benchmark, a standard, or a research track.

MR. PHILLIPS: That was a very constructive conversation, and thank you.

MR. WAUGH: Next, there was discussion about the development of status determination criteria, and I have asked Monica to look into this, because what was described there was that, if the assessment does not provide an overfishing level, a number of determinations up there have been rejected, where they've said it's unknown. We have said OFL is unknown if we don't get it from an assessment, but there was some new guidance provided there that caught all the councils off guard that, if an OFL is not provided through the assessment, that then the council can provide a proxy for the overfishing level, and so I've asked Monica to look into this, to see if that is indeed national guidance, and we will have something for you at the next meeting.

MS. SMIT-BRUNELLO: Right. Monica has been looking into it, and is trying to figure out exactly where that came from and if that is the position of NOAA General Counsel, and so Gregg is right that I will definitely have an answer for you by the next meeting.

MR. WAUGH: Thanks, Monica, and we talked about how fisheries monitoring, how it can be coordinated, how the monitoring activities can be coordinated, and everyone there is moving more towards ACCSP, that that should be fully explored as a way to coordinate data storage. They talked about the need for a unique trip identifier, and they don't have one in the Northeast yet either, and so they're working on that, and we're working on it as well.

Finally, in terms of priorities for assessments, just to say that -- Charlie mentioned that they get a lot more assessments, and, at times, they get a benchmark and an update in the same year, but their process is similar to ours. They talk at the meeting about which species are needed, and they do make some adjustments as needed, but their volume is certainly much greater than ours, and, Charlie, that was it, and I don't know if you want to add anything else.

MR. PHILLIPS: No, I think we've pretty much covered it, in between the discussions, but this is a learning curve, and we're going to do things different. We're going to do things more efficient, partially because we need to, and partially because we're going to have to. Our workload is just going to increase. The fisheries moving into other regions is not going to help our workload, but we're going to take care of it.

Next on the agenda is finally get around and introduce Dr. Werner. Cisco, it is great to have you here, and even though we're probably only going to have you for a short time down filling Bonnie's shoes, it's going to be really good. We enjoyed lunch yesterday, and we're looking forward to working with you.

DR. WERNER: Thank you very much, Mr. Chair, and I would like to thank the council for the opportunity to come here and speak to you. It's nice to be back also in North Carolina. I spent fifteen years in Chapel Hill, and, also, go Tar Heels, but anyway. There are no Dukies in here, are there? Anyway, I also spent a fair bit of time out here in Beaufort, working on the SABRE project, on menhaden and other things, and so it's a pleasure to be back. If I could, I would like to just make a few remarks, some of which were touched upon in the discussion that preceded my

presentation, and hopefully I can expand on it, or maybe clarify, or at least hopefully not muddle anything any more.

The topics I will cover are going to be pretty -- Some of them will be broad, in terms of what we're doing at a national level, if you will, but I will also try to touch upon some of the things that are of particular interest to the discussions here, and some of it you may have already heard, and so it's a review and a status report of where we are, whether it's stock assessments, stock assessment prioritizations, and these are documents that the council has reviewed, and thank you for the comments that you have provided, and the same with the ecosystem-based fisheries management, and I will touch a little bit on the status of MRIP as well.

As you know, the last stock assessment improvement plan was in 2001. It was Pamela Mace and others, and, since then, that bar, or the graph with the green and the blue line -- The green bars and the blue lines show that, since then, we have expanded, or had many more assessments completed, with additional support that we were able to justify through the planning process that we laid out, and so it's been about fifteen or sixteen years since that last stock assessment improvement plan, and now we're about to release another one. Again, I would like to thank the council and the SSC and everybody involved for helping us improve the drafts that we sent around earlier.

The next generation stock assessments include a number of things. They are more holistic and ecosystem linked. We understand the systems better, and we need to integrate some of that information into the assessments, and they also need to look at innovative approaches, whether it be methodological approaches or measurements or the ability to collect data and such. We also need to work on them being more timely, efficient, and effective.

I will just touch upon this a little bit, and this is expanded in the new SAIP, the new stock assessment improvement plan, and the idea here is that we want to establish a more efficient process, clearly separating areas that require research from those areas that we could go operational, and streamlining that operational process while still maintaining effective stock assessments with standardized approaches.

The idea here is this balancing of the four Ts that everybody -- I think you have had conversations and discussions about this, where we try to balance the throughput, the timeliness, the thoroughness, and the transparency, and this is not an easy juggle, and I know you're fully aware of this, and this is discussed in terms of how do we do these four things in the plan, and so we know that we want a high number of assessments, but the reality is that there are many more stocks under our purview than we can assess with current capacity, and so we need to have some objective prioritization, if you will, in terms of how we pick and choose and how we implement the assessments that we need to do.

The same with timeliness. We would like to have rapid development for advice, but the reality is that regional approaches to processing and presenting the data vary substantially, and so we, again, suggest approaches that could perhaps lead to standardized and right-sized data delivery and modeling efforts and on to -- If we wanted to go all the way to transparency, and we certainly want to document everything clearly and communicate it and make it accessible for everybody, but the reality is that sometimes these are complex -- These are complicated assessments, complicated approaches, and so the solution, again, as we discussed in the plan, is that there could be some

standardized and tiered reporting that we could do as we, again, streamline and make our process more efficient.

I think, again, my understanding is that certainly the SSC was -- It was discussed at your SSC of a key stock cycle, which looks at regularly-scheduled assessments of primary stocks, thereby enabling an increased output and streamlined reports of those key stocks, and also hopefully making the results more timely, and this was touched upon in earlier conversations, about how do we gain these efficiencies that should lead to increased output, and, again, this is something that we discussed, and we received input from all councils, in terms of how to proceed as we improve our stock assessment process.

Related to this, of course, is a prioritization, where, again, the SSCs and councils offered comments, in terms of how do you decide what the prioritization might be, and it's a combination of the status of the stock, does it need it, and the importance of the fishery, and do we have the assessment information to do it? Then its importance to the ecosystem and other things, and so each council, each region, developed or is developing tools to balance these needs and priorities and come up with a schedule or prioritization.

I will jump quickly to ecosystem-based fisheries management, a couple of statements on that, and I should say that stock assessment improvement plan, before I jump into this one, the SAIP is actually sitting in my inbox, in terms of the final review, and I think it will probably be going out certainly in early calendar 2018, and, again, I thank everybody for your help with it.

Jumping now to the EBFM, I think, again, it's something that, in some ways, is evident to all of us that we need to include broader ecosystem-level statements. We understand that we have multiple goals that we have to consider, and looking at an ecosystem or a broader approach facilitates that discussion, in terms of tradeoff of priorities and benefits, through a systematic approach.

We also know that -- All we have to do is look at our backyard, any backyard, and we know that things are changing, and there is challenges associated with that, and I will just use -- It was discussed earlier this morning about how we see, in this case, off our coast here, a migration, or at least shifts, of some species north.

I am going to use another example here actually from the North Pacific, and it's a pretty busy slide, but I will zig-zag my way down through it. If you start in the top-right, I think you're probably familiar with the warming conditions that were referred to as the warm blob in the North Pacific, which persisted for about three years, from about 2013, 2014, and 2015, and maybe even into 2016, with the El Nino. That top-right figure is just the sea surface temperature, showing how warm it was off the U.S. west coast and the Gulf of Alaska and such.

Then there was an assessment of Pacific cod in 2017, and this is -- I borrowed these notes from Steve Barbeaux, and, if you look at that graph that shows sort of the dots with the error bars on it, it's the assessments based on the bottom trawl survey and the estimates of Pacific cod, and so that's time in the bottom axis, and what it says is that, over the last thirty years or so, you can see the assessment, and what I am pointing out, in that ellipse in the bottom right, is the 2017 assessment, which is the lowest assessment that there was over that entire time horizon.

It dropped 71 percent from 2015, 83 percent from 2013, and it was deemed to be a pretty precise estimate, and so the question is what happened and why was it such a low value, and, if you look at the bottom-left, the wiggly lines on the bottom-left, it shows a time series of temperature at two locations, and what I circled in the ellipse was three years, each one of which, throughout the year, it was above-average temperatures at both locations, and so, normally, if you look anomalies, sometimes it's colder and sometimes it's warmer, et cetera, but this anomaly resulted in warmer temperatures sustained for the entire year, no matter when you looked at it.

The bottom line is the wording on the bottom-right, which says that the reason for that low value in the Pacific cod was related to the bio-energetics of the species. The warmer temperatures throughout the water column caused a higher metabolism in the fish, and so basically it was so hot that they were huffing and puffing, perhaps, a little bit more, and that required more energy then, and what happened is that there was not only the warmer temperatures that increase their metabolism, which then required more food, but there was the wrong food there also, because of associated with the warming conditions, and so, rather than having the lipid-rich food base at the bottom of the food web, zooplankton, it was lipid-poor zooplankton, and so, basically, you did not have the kind of food that you needed to offset the metabolic costs associated, or the higher metabolic costs, with these higher temperatures.

It's a nice example, because it kind of links everything from a physical disturbance that we saw, a change in the ecosystem that basically rippled all the way through from the bottom of the food web all the way to the recruitment of the Pacific cod, and, again, as I said, this is not unusual, and I think we're all beginning to understand how it is that we need to integrate that knowledge in the species that we look at.

Related to this is the climate science strategy, and just a quick update of where we are on that. Again, I would thank the council for your comments on the strategy. This was published in 2016, and, since then, there is these regional action plans, and so there was a national climate science strategy, but there is now an implementation at the regional level, and the little circles around the bigger one just talks about what the status is of say the Bering Sea, Pacific Islands, and Northeast and their plans.

I believe the Caribbean, which it says over here is in progress, is actually almost completed, if not out, and so I think that we have regional action plans for every region, and what that means is that, at a regional level, our teams -- When I say teams, it's Science Centers, it's Regional Offices, it's in collaboration with state agencies and such, and these are teams that are looking at what's changing, and the checkmarks are things that we have already accomplished, and the green circles are things that we're going to do this year.

We are maintaining, of course, monitoring of key fisheries and ecosystem conditions, and we continue to track the fish that we're interested in, and we're strengthening our ecosystem status reports. This is something that, again, depending on the region, it's at different stages of development, and so it's not just what is changing, but why and how will things change, and so we're completing a vulnerability analysis that looks at -- I think this was mentioned earlier today, and, again, the examples here of biogeographic shifts in the species off the coast here is an example of that, of how changing conditions could cause these shifts.

We're also then looking at improving the forecasts and then how to respond, whether through building capacity through management strategy evaluations, which is something that the National SSC Meeting, which is going to be in January in San Diego, is going to consider, is how councils will consider management strategy evaluation approaches. Also, we're considering future scenarios, and so a little bit here, and I'm going to thank Erik Williams and others for helping me with a couple of slides here, in terms of where we are with the implementation of ecosystem-related efforts here.

There is a development of an ecosystem status report for the South Atlantic region, which is looking at developing indicators and analyzing trends related to ecosystem components, and the idea is that this would be regularly updated and provided to the council. The council that I'm more familiar with, which is out on the west coast, the Pacific Council, we provided a yearly status report through the California Current Integrated Ecosystem Assessment, and I think we're kind of moving towards that, depending on the councils' desire for updates on these things, and so this is something that we could perhaps move, not just regionally, but at a national level.

Also, looking at aggregate species production modeling, which means looking at species complexes rather than individual complexes, and this is also something not just focused here, say for example on the snapper grouper complex, but also something that is happening at other regions, and, again, on the west coast, we're looking at the coastal pelagic species complex and looking at providing assessments of complexes rather than individuals.

Going to the other aspects of supporting the South Atlantic Council, there is ecosystem modeling developments using Ecopath and Ecosim and parameterized with surveys, survey data, and, of course, the surveys are going to be all important in how we do surveys, in order to support these broader ecosystem considerations, and that's something that we're having a pretty serious look at, and, ultimately, this feeding into the fishery ecosystem plan development and implementation.

Just a little bit here in terms of -- I just mentioned the fact that we need to do more, and I think we all understand that, but how do we do it is a tricky question. We know we need it, because, yes, we have policies and so on and so forth, but, also, we do need to increase certainty in a time, perhaps, of increasing uncertainty, and we need to better understand these systems, and so the approaches that we're taking are going to require thinking of how we do things differently.

Joint surveys, on the west coast, between the Northwest and Southwest, we're doing that, to try to cover similar distribution of species, and I think, on the east coast, conversations would naturally happen as well, in terms of sharing resources with the Northeast Center and the Southeast Center, and also new technologies, and so I put a slide there from the Monterey Bay Aquarium Research Institute, where there is sort of a conceptual model, or a conceptual sketch, where you begin to see a combination of should I say standard methodologies, but also augmented by gliders and measurements at the level of molecular measurements of eDNA, environmental DNA, and things like that that can provide us a more complete view of what it is that is in the water, and I have mentioned the joint surveys.

There is advantages of doing joint surveys. If we want to measure everything from birds to marine mammals to fish and look at all of them at once, as opposed to in separate surveys, it makes more sense if they co-occur to do that, and so there is clear advantages to doing it, but there is also challenges. There is different sampling strategies associated with what you're looking at. The

biology dictates different time scales and space scales, and so we've got to work through that as well as the issue of the science, the crew size of science on ships, and where do we put all these different people onboard.

Finally, I wanted to touch upon MRIP, and we had a really good conversation this morning on the council floor, and so I think this is perhaps just echoing some of the things that were said, and so we know we have a fishing effort survey, and that estimates the number of trips. Looking at the three little circles on the top, that would give you effort. Then if you look at say the Access Point Angler Intercept Survey, the APAIS, that gives you the catch rate, which gives you the estimated number of fish caught per trip, and so you know how many trips and the fish caught per trip, and you just multiply the two, and then you get the total catch. You get an estimate of the total fishing catch.

I will touch briefly on these points, on the fishing effort survey, which, as we've talked this morning, and it's the mail survey, the APAIS, timeline, outreach efforts, as well as the regional implementation plans. The transitioning to the FES, the mail survey estimates effort more accurately, and this is something that's been reviewed, and I think we're pretty solid on that. Of course, we have had to phase in the FES. We rely on having comparable time series of recreational catch statistics, which requires the calibration, and that calibration has been very methodical and deliberate to come up with numbers in the same currency, if you will, of the two.

The calibration model peer review workshop, and I think it was mentioned that took place in late June, and, so far, the findings have been positive. Regarding APAIS, MRIP implemented a new APAIS sampling design in 2013, and that has also addressed a number of issues concerning potential bias, and there is ways that we address that, and, again, calibration is needed to account for possible changes in design, and those, again, are deliberate and have moved forward. The historical data, when we complete these calibrations, will be updated. The historical catch data will be updated based on the calibration, and then, as I showed on the first slide of the MRIP section of the presentation, the APAIS, together with FES, then will provide the total catch.

A timeline, and so I'm going back three years. In 2015 to 2017, there was a benchmarking, as we went from the telephone survey to the mail survey. Then there was additional calibration of FES as well as APAIS. In 2018, and so this coming year, there will be the final calibration model peer review and the re-estimation of historical catch, using the APAIS and FES, and as was, again, mentioned, I think by Gregg, in mid-2018, there will be the calibrated catch and effort time series available for use in stock assessments, and so that's the timeline at that level, but now, over the next three years, and so from 2018, 2019, and 2020 -- As I said, the revised data, in 2018, will be made available and incorporated into stock assessments for some fisheries.

By July, both FES and APAIS models would produce the final calibrated effort and catch statistics. In 2019, the preliminary management changes could be made for certain stocks that have already been assessed and additional assessment conducted for stocks that were not completed in 2018. By 2020, the hope is then, or the target is that, based on new stock assessments, we could do it for a whole host of other species.

In terms of communications, which is, of course, essential to this, there is an effort to improve the stakeholder outreach. They are called these pilot listening tours, and we have that in quotes, to discuss this FES transition. The first two are next week, one in Plymouth, Massachusetts, and the

other one in Jupiter, Florida. This includes, of course, education and outreach materials as well as the regional engagement. Then, beyond this, also is, of course, a Hill engagement, which we have on a regular basis, as well as being able to communicate it more broadly through media outreach.

Here's a couple more slides on regional implementation plans. Again, for MRIP, this is a significant evolution in the course of MRIP, with each region taking sort of the lead role in which survey methods are most suitable for their science, stock assessment, and management needs, and MRIP will, in turn, use these plans to develop a national inventory of partner needs and associated costs as we try to figure out, again, how best to go forward nationally, but based on regional input.

For the Atlantic regional implementation plan, this was prepared with the ACCSP partners and accepted by MRIP, and certain priorities were identified, and I think this has probably been presented before, but the priorities of this implementation plan include improving the precision of the MRIP catches, comprehensive for-hire data collection and monitoring, improved recreational fishery discard release data, et cetera. Again, I think this is just pointing out the activities that are going within the Atlantic regional implementation plan.

Just one slide on rare-species events, and, again, it was touched upon this morning, and so we at Fisheries, at the Office of Science and Technology, in collaboration with the Southeast Center and the Northeast Center, we're developing a rare-species event project. Of course, it's what we all want. We want to improve the statistical precision of catch estimates for the fish stocks not commonly encountered, and therefore they are rare events in the shore-side surveys.

We want to look at and evaluate alternative approaches. The projects are done wholly within the regional partnership, and the timeline, of course, is to be worked out, again, with the councils, in terms of what would be an appropriate one, and we need to develop -- As part of this rare-event project, we're looking to develop decision rules regarding the suitability of estimates and when to use multiyear versus single-year estimates or even perhaps do not use guidance for highly-imprecise catch measurements, and so the issues that I think have been put on the table are the ones that we're looking at, and so I think, in summary, I quickly touched upon these four points, on the stock assessments and the stock assessment prioritization. The SAIP will be coming out, as I said, hopefully early in 2018.

I touched upon ecosystem-based management and how we're moving forward on that and also the timeline on MRIP, and, with that, I will take any questions, and, again, I thank the council for the opportunity to speak, and I'm sorry if I went too long, and so maybe there is little time for questions, but I'm open if --

MR. PHILLIPS: No, we will make time for questions.

DR. WERNER: Okay.

DR. DUVAL: Thanks, Cisco, for a great presentation. That was a lot of material to cover in sort of a short amount of time and in a short presentation. I did have a question about the use of eDNA as a means of estimating population size, and that sort of came across my inbox in some listserv or something, and are there other regions within the U.S. where that has been used successfully?

DR. WERNER: Thank you, Michelle. eDNA is environmental DNA, and it's a technique that is in various stages of development. On the one hand, presence/absence of species is relatively straightforward, and I say relatively straightforward. You can tell what was there. The matter of abundance is a little bit trickier. We're working on how to go from -- Basically, the way eDNA works is that you basically take a scoop of water and then you put it through the machines, whatever machines that you're using, and it somehow or another tells you what's there.

The abundance issue is a little bit trickier, and so, in the Northwest, and I will just start there, but, in the Northwest, they have some places where they can actually count the total number of fish going through a weir into a reservoir or something like that, and so, given such a controlled experiment, they're beginning to look and try to see if they can relate the amount and type of eDNA that's measured as the fish go through that one weir to the total amount that they know exactly in the reservoir.

There is other approaches that are being looked at in the Northeast, and these are more controlled experiments in laboratories, where, again, they have a number of fish in a tank, and they know how many is there, and you've got to look at the type of the DNA, the age of the DNA, how quickly it degrades or not, because, out in the field, of course, you measure something, and you want to make sure that you measured something that was recently there or not.

Lastly, and I'm going too long with this answer, but this is something that we're looking at not just here within Fisheries, but it's also in collaboration with international partners in Norway and Japan and other places, and the hope is that, in I would say five to ten years, that we might get somewhere where we can begin to look at things in a quantitative way, in terms of abundance.

MR. PHILLIPS: Who else?

MR. HARTIG: Thanks for that cod example. I had seen, in *National Fisherman*, a little blurb about the reductions that were necessary on that species, but the interesting thing is, at least from my observations of what you put up there, what happens after the warm blob goes away? You have catch levels based on what had happened during the warm blob and then possibly increases after that, when the warm blob goes away, to some degree. I mean, you showed temperatures over the entire timeframe possibly causing a problem, but I point at that because I think you all have assessments done much more frequently, and what's the interim between? Is it every year or every two years?

DR. WERNER: For Pacific cod?

MR. HARTIG: Yes.

DR. WERNER: I believe it's every two years.

MR. HARTIG: So you can address those -- I mean, you would look at when the warm blob goes away in two years and then have another assessment and see what happened. For us, it's not as simple as that, because sometimes ours is, on average, about five years, and so, in king mackerel, we had a similar situation, where we have seine waves going through the fishery, and we depend on pretty large recruitment spikes, and we fish for about eight years on that stock, and then another recruitment comes through.

The assessment last time was done at the very valley, but it went two more years when we hadn't seen, on average, good recruitment, and so you had seven years of really low recruitment, and so we had a lot of talk about regime shifts and things of that nature, and I just -- We pointed back that look at the seine waves. Yes, it's a little longer, and we need to have some way, when they were setting the catch level, some way to look at possible increase in recruitment, because the assessment was held in 2012, and we had seen some observations of increased recruitment, and so we asked them to look at that.

They actually set up some recruitment scenarios where, if we saw increased recruitment, we could address that by a higher catch level recommendation, and that's the first time we've been allowed to do that, and so, somehow in the process, especially for us, when it's longer between assessments and there is a big question about recruitment in the latest time series, some way to have a range of values instead of the point estimate for that stock. That's basically what I was getting to.

DR. WERNER: Thank you, and I don't know how it's bouncing back. I have asked the question to see if the changes in temperature are such that it's going back to what it was previously, but your point about needing to assess things in the face of such extreme or abrupt events I think is part of that prioritization, in terms of if you just had an assessment and you're going to wait another five years, if that's the cycle, but, all of a sudden, you see something come down pretty significant environmentally, and I think that that would be an argument that you would say that we've got to jump ahead in the queue, so to speak.

MR. PHILLIPS: Thank you. Any other questions?

MR. BOWEN: Bonnie mentioned the rare-encounter or rare-event species that we sometimes intercept, or you all sometimes intercept. What are the projects -- Can you elaborate on what we're going to do to better get data on those or what kind of projects you have going on for those now, or maybe upcoming?

DR. WERNER: Thanks for your question, and so what are we going to do with the rare events? As I mentioned in that slide real quick, and let me just jump back to it, but it's something that we're working on, and it was brought up at the CCC meeting last May as well, in terms of an important aspect that we need to take on, and we agree with it.

I think that the rare-event species -- You know, we need to modify some of the -- We can't use just the standard MRIP approaches to do rare events, and so I think this is part of the discussion, in terms of both the Northeast and the Southeast putting our heads together with councils and SSCs, to see how it is that we move forward, and I am looking at Bonnie and Roy, to see if there is something specific about the rare events to the South Atlantic that perhaps you can comment on, in terms of what's being done here, because I can speak to you at this higher level, but perhaps there might be more interest here.

DR. CRABTREE: We've talked about a number of things. One would be using some sort of running average over a period of time, using a geometric mean to try and smooth out some of the bouncing, but the other thing we've talked about is setting some limit on the CV, such that, if these numbers have really extraordinarily high CVs that -- At some point, you conclude that we don't

really have a meaningful catch estimate, and so we're not going to make a management action based on that.

I don't know where that cutoff is, but clearly you reach a point where the variance is so high on an estimate that it's just not telling you anything about what was caught, and I think there is general agreement that we ought not be making management decisions off of numbers that aren't informative, and then I think there are other things in our accountability measures that we can look at that make some of this a little bit easier, and so that's the short-term, but I think the long-term solution is to come up with some different way to stratify it and things that bring the CVs down. I am also hopeful that the switch to the new effort survey may bring the CVs down on some of these, but I don't know if that will happen or not, but it ought to generate more precise effort estimates, which would be helpful.

MR. HARTIG: We did get a letter from Dr. Van Voorhees at the beginning of this meeting in regard to estimates that we had requested for cobia, and they said that they couldn't do those specific estimates now, but they will address the entire rare species problem next year. They don't have a timeline yet, but they said they are going to do that, with a variety of methodologies, and so we should get some information from that.

DR. DUVAL: I know that -- I think I had mentioned to folks that the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission and Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council have been struggling with dealing with recreational harvest estimates for black sea bass and what have been considered to be spiky estimates, our outlier estimates, for -- What comes to mind is the New York charter mode, and so that technical committee and monitoring committee have had some meetings with Dr. John Foster of the MRIP staff with regard to exactly how the estimates are developed and different types of things that could be done to smooth those estimates and address those.

Unfortunately -- I had hoped we could have a little bit more conversation about that when Bob Beal was here earlier in the week, and we weren't able to get to a point where Bob could have provided us a little bit more detail on what's been discussed. I mean, I could dig into some other documents here and provide you with that, but I don't really think we have time for that right now.

Suffice it to say that it is an issue for black sea bass, which is not something that we really consider a rarely-intercepted species around here, and it has been pointed out, during those meetings, that the issues that we are having with our rarely-intercepted species down here and that they are much more severe than what is being considered as rarely-intercepted up there, and so hopefully there will be some options available for us down the road.

MR. PHILLIPS: Thanks, Michelle. Anything else? Are there any other questions? Cisco, it has been very good for you to be here, and we really appreciate the presentation, and we appreciate you answering questions. Needless to say, as you can see, we have lots, and thank you very much for being here.

DR. WERNER: Thank you and the council, and it's a pleasure to be here, and I will echo what Bonnie said. Any questions you have, let us know, and either we'll come to the council and make a dedicated presentation, or we will get back to you any which way we can, and so please call on us. Thank you again.

MR. PHILLIPS: We will try not overload you too bad.

DR. WERNER: It's quite all right. Thank you.

MR. PHILLIPS: We will start with our SERO Presentations, and then I think I will use the Chairman's prerogative, and Tony is trying to catch a plane, and so we're going to do the presentations, and then I'm going to slip Tony's liaison report in here. Rick, are you ready?

MR. DEVICTOR: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I think the plan here is that, at Full Council, NMFS SERO will go over landings, recreational and commercial landings, that weren't talked about during the committees. We went over snapper grouper and CMP species and also spiny lobster, and so what will happen here is I will briefly go over the dolphin wahoo commercial landings, and then Dr. Larkin is going to call in and go over the recreational dolphin wahoo.

This is Tab 13, and it's Attachment 2, and that shows landings through November 6. What's on the screen here is updated landings through November 27. Dolphin landings, the ACL is just over 1.5 million pounds. 671,237 pounds have been landed, and that's 58 percent of the ACL. If you recall, the last closure that happened with dolphin was June 30 of 2015.

Then wahoo, that ACL is 70,542, and the landings, as of November 27, is 66,680, and we are at 95 percent of the ACL for wahoo. That is pretty consistent with what happened last year. We were at 93 percent with wahoo, and I think we ended up with wahoo around 95 or 90 for the last couple of years. The last closure for wahoo was on December 19, 2012. That concludes my report, and, like I said, Dr. Larkin is going to go through recreational landings.

DR. LARKIN: This is a much shorter presentation than the other two. I guess, first of all, thank you for the acknowledgement earlier. I heard my name called. Anyway, this is just the dolphin and wahoo landings, recreational landings. These are summarized using MRIP, and so, for both dolphin and wahoo, the recreational landings are summarized with MRIP and not MRFSS, and so I excluded that from this presentation. They have already been converted over to MRIP.

The landings were updated through Wave 4, and the 2017 landings are preliminary, and they include the MRIP and available headboat landings as well. This is the 2016 landings there, and these too are the landings from New England to east Florida, but, in both cases in 2016, they were below the ACL. This is the preliminary 2017 landings, and you can see, again, in both cases, the current data we have for the 2017 year, they are below the ACL.

Then, this, I'm sure you're familiar with from the other two presentations, but, anyway, this is the breakdown by mode, charter/headboat, private, shore, and total. Then we have a similar presentation as before. The landings are the Y-axis on the left, and the effort is the Y-axis to the right, and then the year is down there on the X-axis, but you can see, in both cases, the landings are -- For all these years here, the landings have been below the ACL for dolphin.

For wahoo, the breakdown of landings by mode again, charter/headboat, private, and shore. Then, again, you can see, in the current year, the landings are below the ACL, back in 2016, and also what we've seen so far for 2017. Then the next slide, I believe, is questions, and so that's it, and I would be happy to take any questions.

MR. PHILLIPS: Thanks, Mike. We will take questions for you first, and then, since I forgot to ask for questions for Rick, if there is any questions for Rick, we'll do that. Are there questions for Mike?

MR. BROWN: Mike, did you ever get a confirmation back about that spike on the amberjack that we were talking about?

DR. LARKIN: Mark, I just talked to Tom Sminkey, and he looked into that, and he didn't find any errors or anything like that. He pursued it further, in terms of going back to the actual interviewer to find out some more details, and there is nothing erroneous, and so I think that's what you're getting at, Mark, and so no problems there, in terms of when he looked them up for those two specific intercepts that you were concerned about.

MR. PHILLIPS: Thanks, Mike.

MR. WAUGH: I think, in this case, it's not an error, but perhaps, in the future, we need to talk about how we're going to use these estimates, because it does seem peculiar that two fish that a fisherman claimed were in a cooler turned into 600,000 pounds and closed the fishery. I think this is one of the issues with MRIP, that they're not required to show those fish, and, as you know, jacks are difficult to identify, and so we have a situation here where someone claimed to have two amberjack in the cooler and that closed the fishery down. It seems, just procedurally, that's not how we want to run that.

DR. LARKIN: Gregg, if I could respond to that real quick, there was a spike of landings from that, which accounted for not all of the landings in that wave. There were eight intercepts, and so you're right that there were two that really caused the spike, which roughly came out to about 500,000 pounds, and it wasn't just that wave alone that caused it to exceed, but I know you're highlighting the point that those two intercepts kind of blew up the landings.

As Roy pointed out, it was really the effort that drove the bus there. They had high effort estimates, and so it was not really the catch, but it was the effort, and so there were certainly other intercepts. Since then, Waves 3 and 4, and we've had over 100 intercepts in greater amberjack in the South Atlantic, which also contributed to the landings, but I know you're pointing out the fact that there was two that resulted in that spike in landings.

MR. PHILLIPS: Thanks, Mike, and I guess the overall picture is that, until we get a better way to handle these things, we're going to still be having these questions and potential closures in the future that a lot of fishermen think may not be justified, and so we'll keep working on trying to get the right answer to the question. Any more questions for Mike? All right. Mike, thank you very much. How about any questions for Rick, before I let him go? I don't see any questions for Rick, and so we will move on. I think, with the council's indulgence, we will let Tony give his -- One more thing from Rick, and then we will get to Tony.

MR. DEVICTOR: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. This will be quick, I think. We're on the agenda to talk about the Status of Recreational and Commercial Quota Monitoring Tables on the SERO Website. Pretty simply, we keep these updated, as you know, on our website as landings come in for commercial forms. Trips landing between Sunday and Saturday must be sent to the Science

Center by midnight on Tuesday, and so the Science Center sends those to SERO around Monday morning, and then we put those up on our website pretty quickly.

Private recreational estimates of catch and effort participation are available approximately forty-five days following the end of a sampling wave, as you know, and, as we talked about, the Science Center recalculates the pounds and provides that to SERO, and they provide it to us about fifteen days after, at least, and then we put those on our website within three business days or less, and headboat is the same thing. We get those from the Science Center, and we try to post those within three business days or less.

I think last time you met in Charleston, you talked about, on our website, how we could improve the species where we have the split seasons, and we talked about that a bit for vermilion snapper and gray triggerfish and how we roll it over into the second season and use that to project any closures or trip limit step-downs, but I think now is a good time -- If you have any comments to us on how we can improve those tables, we will be happy to listen.

MR. PHILLIPS: Are there comments or thoughts?

MR. WAUGH: Rick, in terms of next year, given that we won't have -- That the new mail survey is the only survey that's running next year, I think it might be helpful to put out some sort of notice, or put it on the webpage, that those recreational numbers won't be showing up by wave until sometime after July 1, right? Then I just think people may have the expectation that they want to see Wave 1's data and Wave 2's data, but we won't have any of those estimates until after July 1, is my understanding.

DR. CRABTREE: I'm not sure. As far as I know, MRIP will be posting the numbers, the catch estimates, by wave, but they're just going to be based on the FES survey, and so they won't be directly comparable to past estimates, and then we're going to have to use some type of calibration to convert back and forth between FES and telephone surveys, and we don't get the final calibration numbers until I think July, but there may be some preliminary calibration numbers available, and we'll have to figure that out, but, as far as I know, MRIP is still going to be posting. Now, how they're going to deal with that disparity in the time series on the website, I don't know.

MR. WAUGH: In terms of the quota monitoring website that you all maintain, will you all be posting by wave data before we get the final calibrations in July, because I know we're going to get lots of questions about that when those data don't start showing up.

DR. CRABTREE: I think that is still yet to be determined.

MR. PHILLIPS: Thanks, Gregg. Anything else? Rick, who is going to do the Protected Resources Update?

MR. WAUGH: We've got someone online.

DR. COLLIER: Mary Wunderlich is going to do that for us, and that's going to be Tab 13, Attachment 4.

MR. PHILLIPS: I knew you had it covered, but I just didn't know how.

MS. WUNDERLICH: Good morning. I will be highlighting the main updates and the new items since the June meeting, when the document was last provided. Under the Endangered Species Act Listing Actions and Other Rulemaking, the proposed TED rule in the Gulf that had been mentioned previously has been deemed significant by OMB, and the final rule is currently under OMB review.

The Atlantic sturgeon critical habitat was designated in August, effective in September, for the five distinct population segments, and there is further details in the bullet, but the designations are only for the main stem of rivers, and no estuary or marine habitats were designated, and we also just wanted to note that the revised listing petition regulations from 2016 for a petition to list, delist, or reclassify a species, or for petitions to revise critical habitat, petitioners must provide notice to the state agencies in each state where the species that is the subject of the petition occurs. On October 12, SERO received its first petition since the new regulations went into effect to list Cuvier's beaked whales as an endangered or threatened DPS in the Gulf of Mexico, and so we just wanted to note that we encourage state directors to provide petitioners and NOAA Fisheries with information on the subject species.

For ESA Section 7-related actions, we're continuing to conduct the FMP consultations based on new species listings, and we recently completed an amendment to the 2015 CMP Biological Opinion based on the green sea turtle DPS listings and Nassau grouper. We are continuing to work on other Section 7 reinitiations as well.

Under the Marine Mammal Protection Act updates, we have had the North Atlantic right whale unusual mortality event, and, as of writing this -- I just checked the updates from November 27, and there has been seventeen confirmed dead stranded whales, twelve in Canada and five in the U.S., and more information is provided at the link there on the unusual mortality event. The most recent population estimate is also noted, at 458 whales, which has been continuing to decline since 2010. Also, for the mortality event, they are continuing to conduct the necropsies and investigate.

For the list of fisheries, it was proposed in October, and the comment period closed on November 13. The Marine Mammal Stock Assessment Reports, those were available in late June for final SARs, and there was no change on the last two items noted for the take reduction plans, but the Bottlenose Dolphin Take Reduction Plan Team met this week, and so that was all for our updates, and I just wanted to thank you for the opportunity to present and ask if you have any questions.

MR. PHILLIPS: Thank you very much. Are there any questions?

DR. DUVAL: Thank you, Mary, very much for that report. Just one quick question. We received a revised biological opinion for the snapper grouper fishery at the end of last year, prior to Regulatory Amendment 16 going into place, which was modifying the prohibition on the use of black sea bass pots, and that was all related to North Atlantic right whale concerns, and I know that the agency has reinitiated Section 7 consultation for fisheries covered by the New England and Mid-Atlantic Council FMPs, due to the decline in North Atlantic right whale abundance, and I was just curious if there was any such plan to do similar reinitiations for any of our fisheries down here. I mean, I would hope that the biological opinion that we just received last year for snapper grouper is still current, but just a question.

MS. WUNDERLICH: I think that would be under Sustainable Fisheries, whether or not they are going to reinstate. I can follow-up on that and get some information back through Chip, unless anyone there has anything else to add.

DR. CRABTREE: If I could, Charlie, we haven't made a -- We are looking at the information right now, but we haven't made a decision that we are reinitiating consultation at this time, but it's possible.

MR. PHILLIPS: Okay. Any other questions? Seeing none, thank you very much for the presentation.

MS. WUNDERLICH: Sure. Thank you, and thanks, Dr. Crabtree.

DR. COLLIER: There was a second attachment associated with this. It's Attachment 5, and it's going to be a presentation by Charlie Bergmann, and it's going to be looking at some sea turtle safe handling gear. We had these up behind the screen, but I have them moved over here, and you can see the big net that's currently required and then some new tools that he is going to be talking about today. As he talks about them, I will have them -- What I can pass around the room, I will. Then, the other one, I will demonstrate when Charlie tells me to demonstrate it. Charlie, if you are ready to go. While we get the audio worked out, I will hand around the sea turtle release gear.

MR. PHILLIPS: You know what, while he hands that out, you can do your state liaison report. Then, hopefully, by the time you get that done, we will have our technical difficulty fixed.

MR. DILERNIA: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. This is not the first time that I have been able to pull Charlie Bergmann's butt out of the fire. Charlie and I also go back about twenty-five years or so. He served on the Mid-Atlantic Council with me, and we often used to go to New England together as council members to do certain plans, and I used to call him my enforcer. If you saw Charlie in those days, before his surgery and all, you would understand. He looked like I look now. Anyway, I hope he's listening, because I wanted to give him a ration of whatever, with not being on time here.

Again, thank you very much for the opportunity to attend your council meeting. I have two Mid-Atlantic Council meetings that I would like to report on, our October meeting and our upcoming December meeting, which occurs next week. At our October meeting, which was October 10, 11, and 12, we reviewed the goals and objectives of our surf clam and ocean quahog, the goals and objectives of the surf clam and ocean quahog fishery, and I would remind folks that that's probably the first ITQ fishery in the U.S., and it operates still under an ITQ system, and it operates quite well, but it is a requirement that we review the goals and objectives on occasion, which we did.

We also reviewed the golden tilefish plan. Our golden tilefish plan is also an ITQ plan, and there is a requirement that ITQs be reviewed -- That the plan be reviewed on an occasional basis, and we reviewed that, and we found things just fine there with the golden tilefish plan.

We set our spiny dogfish specifications, and, actually, we reviewed them. In 2016, we set the specifications for 2017 and 2018, and we just revisited the 2018 specifications, to make sure that we still wanted them to go forward, and we did not change anything. We also did some work on our ecosystem approach to fisheries management and our risk assessment, and that's continuing

work by our committee, by the Ecosystem Management Committee, to develop risk assessment parameters, so that, when we begin to -- If we switch to more of an ecosystem-based fisheries management process, we can use the tools in our risk assessment toolbox, we'll say, in making decisions.

We started to do some work on a framework for our summer flounder, scup, and black sea bass commercial accountability measures, and that was framework meeting one. We approved the February 2018 federal waters fishery for recreational black sea bass, and we left it up to the individual states as to whether or not they wanted to participate. As of now, no state has chosen to participate in the 2018 February federal waters black sea bass fishery. New Jersey may. I think they're going to consider it this week and make a decision of whether or not they will be participating. I guess that was it for our October meeting.

Now, for our upcoming meeting, if I may, our December meeting is usually held as a joint meeting with the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission, and our December meeting is typically devoted primarily to recreational fisheries management, and, because we have joint management, we conduct joint management with the commission on summer flounder, scup, and black sea bass, we meet concurrently.

When you first look around the table, and you probably see about forty-five people sitting around the table for the meeting, you say to yourself, oh my Lord, how is this going to happen and how is this going to work, but it does work. It does work, and, after years of -- I think we've finally got it right, and it's something that I think works well, and I was critical of it in the beginning, as a council member, and I'm not ashamed to say that I was wrong, and I think that it works well now with our joint meeting with the commission and the council.

On Monday, we will be continuing our ecosystem approach to fisheries management risk assessment development. The committee will be working on that. Also on Monday, we'll be looking at some of the proposed Magnuson-Stevens Act reauthorization proposals, and we perhaps may be commenting on those proposed actions.

We're going to be receiving a tilefish survey report, project report, and we have a survey that's going on right now, basically looking at a deepwater survey, to find out what critters are where, and we're going to be getting a report on that. We will be looking at whether or not we want to - - On the next day, we'll be examining -- We have a request from some recreational fishermen and for-hire captains to close areas offshore off of some of the Massachusetts islands to squid fishing. The fishermen there, the recreational fishermen there, claim that the commercial squid fishing in that area removes the squid, which then takes away the forage base for the striped bass, and the striped bass aren't able to -- They are not successful as recreational fishermen, because the squid is not there to hold the striped bass.

We have a request to create some squid buffer zones, and the council will be looking at that and will be considering whether or not to create these squid buffer zones. It's a bit of a contentious issue, because the squid fishermen have been fishing in this area for quite a number of years, and now they're being faced with being pushed out of an area that they have traditionally fished.

We will then, on the second day, on Tuesday, we will go into a joint meeting with the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission, and we will make our recommendations on scup and summer

flounder on the second day. We will also be developing and working on our summer flounder amendment. There is work on the commercial aspects of the summer flounder fishery, and, again, that has to be done in conjunction with the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission, and so our committee will continue to do some work on that.

On Wednesday, we will look at the black sea bass recreational specifications, and we will also consider creating a letter of authorization fishery for Wave 1 for the black sea bass fishery. I have a bias on this, because I'm the author of this one, of this particular action, but, in this particular action, should it pass, it will require mandatory reporting on the part of -- Folks will have to apply for a letter of authorization to fish for black sea bass during Wave 1 in federal waters.

In order to receive the letter of authorization, they will have to agree to a call-in and a call-out, and they will have to agree to -- These are all recreational fishermen, and not just for-hire captains. They will have to agree to mandatory reporting, and that's why I found your workshop, I guess we'll call it, on mandatory reporting and recreational fishing so helpful earlier in the week. I think we're going to try to swipe some of your ideas to include in our plan, should this action go forward.

We are also considering eliminating the minimum size on black sea bass during Wave 1, to allow for the barotrauma issues, and instituting a zero discard policy, and we're interested in seeing how that will affect angler behavior, and so, again, this is -- We're going to do this via framework action, and there will also be a quota assigned to the period, and the agency will be authorized to close the fishery once they project the quota to be reached. This will be Framework 1, and we'll have to have a second framework action, should we agree on Framework 1 at the December meeting, and the second framework action would occur in either April or June.

We're going to be initiating a bluefish amendment, an amendment to the Bluefish Fishery Management Plan, and that's about it. It's going to be a very busy four days, and, again, I thank you for being here and being able to participate in your meeting, and, again, I'm really going to -- Some of the ideas that you did on recreational reporting, I know those will be very useful for us in our decision-making. Thank you, and I would be happy to take any questions, Mr. Chairman.

MR. PHILLIPS: Thank you, Tony. Are there any questions for Tony?

MR. BOWEN: Tony, just for clarification, you said if this action goes forward that it will be mandatory reporting for not just the for-hire sector, but the recreational sector as well?

MR. DILERNIA: Yes, because what's going to have to happen is you're going to have to apply for a letter of authorization to the agency to fish in the fishery, and, in order to do that, what we want to do is use this for data collection purposes also, and so you're going to have to call-out. You're going to have to call-in and call-out. If you're a private boat or a for-hire boat or whatever, you have to call-in and call-out, and you're going to be required to report your catch.

MR. BOWEN: I know we're thinking ahead, but what happens if they don't comply?

MR. DILERNIA: Well, that will be part of our discussion. If they don't call-in and they are found in federal waters with black sea bass by the Coast Guard, that will be an issue. That's why our Coast Guard representatives have to be there. They call-in, and the Coast Guard boards them and they have black sea bass, they're legal. Then they have to call-out. If they don't call-out, perhaps

we might put it into our plan that -- We're looking at doing this for three years. We may not renew your permit if you don't call-out.

If you don't report, we may not renew your permit. Those are some of the actions that I think you discussed here on Tuesday, and those are some of the things that I think our council will have to review. I like the idea, because we're going towards requiring the reporting of recreational catch and recreational participation, and I also like the idea because, as I mentioned at the Mid-Atlantic Council, twenty-five years ago, when we first started reporting, fishermen did not want to report. When we first had the first set of VTRs in the Northeast region, they held a bonfire in the parking lot of the Northeast Regional Headquarters and burned all their logbooks. That's how much they were in favor of reporting.

We have gotten to the point now where recreational fishermen are saying that let us go fishing and we will voluntarily report, and so that's a big move in mindset, and we have to take advantage of that. That's why I hope that we pass this framework action.

MR. BOWEN: I look forward to hearing the updates and seeing what comes of this. Thank you.

DR. DUVAL: Just to clarify, Tony, one of the important things about the required reporting is because none of the states north of North Carolina conduct Wave 1 MRIP sampling, and so there would be no catch monitoring of this fishery otherwise.

MR. DILERNIA: That's correct, and, quite frankly, that's been a bone of contention amongst the recreational fishermen. The Wave 1 deepwater black sea bass fishery developed in the late 1980s in response to a declining codfish fishery. We were traditionally fishing during Wave 1 for codfish. As codfish stocks declined, we pushed further offshore, and I was one of the first boats to do that, and we pushed further offshore, and we fished on black sea bass.

As we were fishing on black sea bass, we asked the agency, in those years, to do some kind of data collection. We want to establish a record of this occurring, and the agency said to us, well, the fishery is so small, and it's not that many boats, and it's not cost-effective to collect the data, and so we reluctantly agreed. Then, a few years ago, the agency said, hey, wait a minute. You guys are catching a lot of black sea bass off there in the deep, and we have to deduct it from the summer fishery, and we said, well, wait a minute, you just said we -- They closed the fishery, and it's been closed for a number of years, and we've been trying to find a way to reopen it.

I no longer have -- Just to make it very clear, I no longer have a federal waters black sea bass permit. My for-hire business, for years, has concentrated on the inshore waters, and so I personally would not benefit from this at all, but it's something that I would like to see returned to the Mid-Atlantic, because it was a fishery for over twenty years, before we were told that we made a mistake and we have to keep it closed now. Thank you.

MS. BECKWITH: Tony, you mentioned it's a fairly small fishery. Do you have a sense of how many participants are in it? I am also curious who is responsible for the call-in and call-out aspect of it? Is it the individual states, or is National Marine Fisheries Service providing that call-in and call-out option?

MR. DILERNIA: We are going off of the VTRs, and we have had vessel trip reports to the Mid-Atlantic for a number of years, and I'm very happy to have them. They are very, very -- Vessel trip reports are extremely useful, particularly for the for-hire fleet, because we can prove what we've been doing for years.

If you look at the VTRs, the vessel trip reports, up until only the last couple of years, there was about fifteen for-hire vessels that participated in this fishery. That number, in 2013, which is the last year that it occurred, doubled, and so we were up to about thirty boats. When we originally - - When discussion to reopen the fishery was initiated, about twelve months ago, the state representatives, representatives from the states of Virginia and Maryland, were reluctant to support a fishery that was dedicated only to the for-hire fleet, because they had recreational vessels that did participate in the fishery.

Originally, we were going to do this via an experimental fishery permit and just give permits out to the for-hire vessels, and the private recreational fishermen, correctly so, objected to that. They said, well, we want to participate in the fishery also, and so that's why we changed our technique, or our process, from an experimental fishery permit to a letter of authorization, so any vessel can apply for a letter of authorization.

One of the questions that I asked on Tuesday, when you had your presentation on recreational reporting, was how many of the vessels that have registered to report actually reported, and, if I remember correctly, it was only about 25 percent of the vessels that you had register to report participated in the fishery and reported, and I would not be surprised if the same thing happened in the Mid-Atlantic.

We may get a couple hundred boats applying for the permit, but, if anyone has fished up in that area of the world at that time of the year, it's pretty nasty weather. It's really nasty weather at times, and so sometimes you wish that your mother never met your dad on the way home, and so we may permit a lot of boats. How many boats actually participate in the fishery, that's something we'll find out, and, with the mandatory reporting, if we see a lot of boats are going out there and they're catching up the quota right away, then we're going to shut it down, and I have no problems doing that. The call-in and call-out is going to the permit holder.

MS. BECKWITH: Who is responsible for taking the call?

MR. DILERNIA: We don't -- The agency probably will be.

MR. PHILLIPS: Okay. I think that about covers it, and so, Tony, thank you. Chip, did you get Charlie online?

DR. COLLIER: Yes, and Charlie had a slight power issue, but he is back online now.

MR. PHILLIPS: Charlie is powered up, and so we'll go ahead and get through our turtle release gear.

DR. COLLIER: Charlie, can you hear me? I guess we just go to the next one, and I will work to get Charlie online again.

MR. PHILLIPS: Okay. Bonnie, go ahead. If Charlie comes up, we'll get him after you, and we'll flip a break in there, because it's about time.

DR. PONWITH: Fair enough. Thank you, everybody. Right now, I want to talk to you a little bit about the Southeast Bycatch Monitoring Update. The update of the latest National Bycatch Report lists thirty-seven species in the continental Southeast. We have observer programs for seven of those fisheries, and you see in this paragraph a long list of Gulf of Mexico and South Atlantic surveys, and I will go into the South Atlantic ones in more detail in a following slide.

We were also working on a vertical longline observer program in the South Atlantic in 2014, and we're doing a second year of coverage for that survey in 2018. We are talking about electronic logbooks as a way to improve the data that we have on bycatch information, and we have an electronic logbook in the Gulf of Mexico that we use for monitoring the effort in that fleet, and we also have folks from the Science Center and the Region working with ACCSP to look at for-hire logbooks in the region, as you know.

This slide shows the list of the fisheries that we have monitoring programs and what the recent coverage rates are, and you can see that the South Atlantic shrimp trawl is right around 1 percent. The shark bottom longline is somewhere between 1 and 4 percent. The Southeast gillnet is between 4 and 10 percent. Pelagic longline is 13 percent, and, the shark research fishery, there is 100 percent coverage on that.

This slide shows the time series of observed South Atlantic shrimp fishery coverage between 2008 to 2017, and, in 2017, these are preliminary data at this point, because we are still assessing that. Up to this point, we have about twenty trips covered, for a total of 148 sea days and just under 400 tows.

We have three pilot projects in the Southeast, and not all of them are being done in the Atlantic, but they all are germane to the full region, because I think that information is highly transportable from the Gulf to the South Atlantic. We're going to be doing a vertical longline fishery in the South Atlantic, a pilot project on bottom longline fishing in the Gulf of Mexico, and then both vertical and bottom longline fisheries in the Gulf, a third project.

We don't have operational electronic monitoring programs at this time in the region, with the exception of the electronic monitoring that we're doing in the Gulf of Mexico for that shrimp fleet, and I think, by this bullet, they were thinking more specifically of video, operational scale video, for bycatch monitoring. We have made significant progress in automating species ID and length capture in some Alaska fisheries with video, and we're watching that very closely and believe, again, that those algorithms and camera setups will have some applicability in the future in this region, and so, again, we're watching that very closely.

Some of the improvements that we have underway is we have contracted for a review of the commercial finfish fishery observer programs and their associated bycatch estimation methods, to be able to look at how we can improve the efficiency of the vessel selection, to make sure we're getting the highest level of precision we can for the coverage we have through those selection processes. Then, also, again, once we have the data in the can, how do we get the most out of those data with the algorithms we're using to generate those estimates?

We're looking for recommended estimation approaches, and, again, guidance for estimating bycatch of rarely-encountered species, which is a statistical phenomenon and not just in the MRIP, but also in your bycatch estimation process. We're also looking at developing an application for tablets, to facilitate electronic data entry and daily reporting for the observers when they're at sea, and that is the report. Let me see if there are any questions.

MR. PHILLIPS: Any questions for Bonnie?

DR. DUVAL: Thanks, Bonnie. It's great to see that there is a pilot project in the South Atlantic for the vertical line fishery. I am trying to recall, but is that the one that was funded by ACCSP? I think it had variable levels of coverage, just depending on what was available. I thought I recalled seeing that.

DR. PONWITH: I apologize, but I don't remember what funding pot that came from, but I can check and get back to you on that.

MR. PHILLIPS: Any other questions? All right. Seeing none.

DR. PONWITH: If not, we can spill right into progress on voluntary electronic logbook implementation for the commercial vessels, and, just as a background, we're working on developing those electronic logbooks, so we can shift to that, at the council's will, to a mandatory program, but the question came up of is there anything stopping you from being able to implement it on a voluntary basis while you work on the regulations to make electronic reporting mandatory, and our answer is, no, there is nothing stopping us from doing that.

We're gearing up so that we're ready to receive those data, and we have been working on this for some time, to receive those data, so that, if people want to voluntarily submit electronically, they could be absolved of their responsibility to turn in that paperwork, the paper logbook, and use that as the method. That is just the background behind this.

If you go to the first slide, you can see we've made some progress. The estimated time -- The specific question that Gregg asked in his email was what's the estimated time to having this ready to rock-and-roll, and the answer is three months, approximately three months. We have finalized the variables that we need, and we're working on the infrastructure changes at ACCSP on that side, and we'll be doing that between December and January.

We have some infrastructure changes that we need to make on our end, and those are also being worked on December through January. Modification to the applications on both sides, that is going to be December to January, and then modify the API for third-party logbook software delivery through the SAFIS system, that is happening in January through February, and so a little more detail in the next slide.

We have finalized the variables, and you can see all the things done here, and I won't walk through those individually, in the interest of time, but seeing the word "done" beside each of those is a very good thing, and so good progress made on that. The infrastructure changes that I was talking about, we need to set up the accounts in SAFIS management, and that work is in progress. We need to set up the ACCSP access to the SERO permit information, and that has been completed. We need to develop the tool within SAFIS to track the permits as they move from vessel to vessel,

and this is just crucial. That work is in progress, and, again, it gets back to that notion of a unique identifier. Then develop the Southeast tables to support the database application, and that work has been done. The work that is still on the table, again, we're looking at December to January.

If we go to the next slide, you can see the infrastructure changes that need to be worked on our side, and the no-fishing reports is nearing completion. We've almost got that done, and, again, you understand how crucial those are. That helps us to differentiate between someone who just forgot to report versus someone who just didn't go fishing, and so those no-fishing reports are crucial.

Developing the software to extract the electronic trips from SAFIS and move it seamlessly to the Southeast Fisheries Science Center, that work is in progress, and then the software to integrate the data with the paper, again so we don't have a situation where somebody reports on one electronically, voluntarily, to make sure that they then are forgiven the responsibility of reporting on paper, and that is really crucial. That work is, again, from December to January going to be completed.

The software changes, we are -- I will let you walk through those. Again, each of these are software changes that are going to happen at ACCSP through the time period between now and January, and, again, the software changes on the Southeast Fisheries Science Center are on the next slide. We have the no-fish reports done by December, and the portal to allow fishers to review their submissions and identify suspect data, data that they're uncomfortable with, that's December through February.

You see, on the next slide, all the checkmarks, the things that are done. One thing in progress on the required tasks there, the infrastructure changes that are in progress at ACCSP and the Southeast Fisheries Science Center, again, in summary, and so I'm excited about this, and I know fishermen are asking. Jack Cox didn't come up and say when can I push the electronic button, but he's been a strong motivator and a proponent of this, and we're eager to get this going.

There's excellent collaboration between the Center and the ACCSP, and the answer is that it will happen just around the corner, and I think we're close enough and sure enough at this point of the timing of this that I think it will be very important for the Center staff and the council staff to talk about what are the appropriate communication pathways to make the availability of that as an option available to the fleet, so that they are aware that that option is now at their fingertips.

MR. BROWN: Bonnie, does this encompass both the South Atlantic and the Gulf?

DR. PONWITH: I am going to say right now that this is geared to the South Atlantic. Ultimately -- I am just going to have to double-check to see what is happening in the Gulf. Typically, for the commercial, if we do it in one place, we want to do it all the way around, but let me double-check on the Gulf.

MR. BROWN: Okay, and is there anything in this logbook program to where it's going to have some sort of a location identifier, like we've got in the for-hire, the headboat?

DR. PONWITH: Yes, and so you can electronically include information about the location of the fishing, and remember that was one of the big problems in the logbooks before. There was one

spot, and how many times does a person sit in one spot for a whole trip? People were frustrated by that, and I think this is going to offer some flexibility to include more than just one spot and also the ability to give really fine-scale information, such as location by set or by trap drop or that kind of -- If we get into questions or into citizen science projects, where we want very refined information on discard mortality by location or by depth, it gives us that flexibility.

MR. BROWN: Thank you.

DR. DUVAL: Huge kudos to you and your staff, Bonnie, for all of the work on this. I think I really have appreciated these updates, and I think especially the detail associated with the updates, because I think it's important for us to understand that it's not a simple thing. There are multiple data handoffs that have to occur in order for all of this to work, and so we very much appreciate the continued attention to this.

Then, I guess, just in terms of rolling it out, we have, in North Carolina, a couple of like semi-annual reports, where this type of information would be great for dealers and fishermen to see. That's a means of getting that information out there, and so I guess stay in touch with your state agency liaisons as this moves forward. Thanks.

MR. GRINER: Bonnie, this is great news. I will go ahead and sign-up now. I am very much ready for a VTR bonfire. One question I do have though is will our past VTR data be uploaded into this system so that I will have access to all of my old trip information?

DR. PONWITH: I am going to want to say absolutely, because I could just see how crucial that would be, but I will ask, so I get a very specific answer to that from staff, whether the data -- We're making the paper and the e-reporting as seamless as possible, so you get credit for meeting your legal obligation, but the visibility of the data and whether that will be seamless, or whether we have to go into two systems, I will double-check, but my expectation is that it will be the one system, but I want to verify that.

MR. WAUGH: Bonnie, just to echo Michelle's congratulations. It's wonderful to see this come around, and we would be glad to work with you on the rollout, if you could just let us know who the contact person is in the Center. It looks, from your slides, that March 1 is the start date, because I know we'll get questions from fishermen after this meeting.

DR. PONWITH: The slides are showing that they're going to be closed out on most of these actions in February or earlier, and March 1 seems reasonable. I will circle back and tell them that it's a nice round number and can we commit to this, and, when I get absolute confirmation, then I will go ahead and confirm that with you and get you points of contact, so we can start working on the rollout materials to inform the state partners and the fleet.

MR. HARTIG: Bonnie, what will be the platform for us to report? Will it be a specific type of e-logbook that we have to buy from the Center, or are there going to be ways for us to do it at home on the computer, like for mackerel, on a daily trip? We make predominantly day trips where we are, and so, if you look at my logbooks from the past for mackerel, essentially the depths and everything are the same for the fishery for every year, and so, in order to get ease of reporting for at least mackerel species that we fish for on a daily basis, will there be something else we can use? That's what I'm getting at.

DR. PONWITH: I am going to have to go way back into my archives, because we intentionally gave a shorter, less comprehensive presentation that focused from today going forward, as opposed to the things we've checked off the list in the past. It was in one of those presentations that talked about whether it included a laptop app in addition to a web-based system that you could do from your desk once you got home, and my recollection is that I want to say that, yes, you can do either or, but I want to be careful about that and verify that.

I do know that their approach was, rather than picking one proprietary piece of software, they would create standards that multiple companies could meet, and, as long as they met those standards, you could buy the instrument from whomever you wished when you were buying a laptop or an iPad or something like that that had applications and software loaded to it, and that was the philosophy, and I think that's a good philosophy. It gives you some choice in what you like the best. I will double-check the web-based entry and get back to you on that.

MR. PHILLIPS: Thank you, Bonnie. Anything else? Just a note that we are running probably close to an hour behind schedule, and so did we get the MIA Charlie on the phone? We are going to get Charlie, and then we're going to take a quick break, and then we're going to keep going.

MR. BERGMANN: The genesis of this presentation is that we're required to get the best policies possible for removing fishing gear from protected species, and we have put out a new tech memo, and it's a little different from the previous ones. This would be Number 4, I believe, on the tech memos, and this tech memo was done and ready to go back in 2015. Unfortunately, it takes a little while to get it through the council system and get things moving for the fishermen.

We also have a couple of new pieces of gear to help the fishermen, and one of those items is a collapsible hoop net. What this does, it folds up and gives you ease of storage. It folds up into an area of about eighteen-inches-by-eighteen-inches-by-four-inches, and it's secured with wire ties. When you cut those wire ties, it springs open to a much larger net than what is currently required. It opens up to a thirty-six-inch diameter net, as opposed to the thirty-one-inch.

That net springs out, and then you have the ropes to work instead of a handle. It's a whole lot easier for the for-hire boats that have to have the net, as well as the small boats that are fishing in the snapper grouper or reef fish fisheries. Next to the tire, that was the number-one complaint, was the net and not having any place to store it. That, we feel, will accomplish that goal and help with getting the turtles onboard.

The other piece of equipment is a new type of a dehooker, and it's called the hookout dehooker, and it's a matter of grabbing the shank of the hook and pulling the trigger mechanism on it, and it rotates the hook out. Sometimes you have to get the shank of the hook a couple of times, but it's real quick, and the fishermen really enjoy it. Those are the two that we're trying to get right away back in here, in the list of usable gear. Currently, if it's not in the regulation, the folks with those white boats and the orange stripes will write them a ticket over it, and we don't want to see folks get those tickets. The summary settlement, currently, is, if they're missing any part of the gear, is a \$1,500 fine, and that's a settlement fine.

As far as this presentation, I can go through this fairly quickly. The next slide shows you the different practices that we have. Every day, we are looking for new technologies and new methods

to release sea turtles and billfish and sharks and marine mammals in a safe way that's not going to hurt the animal or the fishermen. We get a lot of information from fishermen, and we take that information and try it out in the lab setting. Then we'll put it on a couple of boats and have them try it out. If it meets all the rigors, then we'll have our little conference on it and deem it acceptable or not. To get the new equipment into the regulations, it takes anywhere from two to three years.

This just gives you the history of where we've come from. Back in 2004, we had a tech memo, and that was 524, and that was fairly straightforward. We had all these different pieces of equipment, regardless of the size boat, and then we had some additional biological opinions, and we came up with a new tech memo, Technical Memorandum 580, in 2008, and that was revised in 2010, and we're now trying to revise one from 2015.

The 524, like I said, was straightforward, and it was to establish protocols developed for the highly migratory pelagic longline fishery. Those protocols were brought forth to the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council and the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council. Again, this is just the rationale for doing the updated tech memo. It went through Reef Fish Amendment 18 and Snapper Grouper 13C.

This reinforces that we need fishers and scientists and gear people to work together to come up with these new technologies to make things easier and quicker and safer to remove the fishing gear. Now, as I said before, once you get these things approved through the Science Center and ready to go into management, it takes somewhere between two and three years before we can get it listed officially in the regulations.

The newer tech memo in 2010 added a couple of pieces of equipment, a new dehooker and a new small hoop net, and that came from some of the environmental groups on the net. It was used by a lot of these real small-boat fishers and the artisanal fishers in Latin America. It was incorporated and used in some of the survey work as well.

This is the collapsible hoop net that you just got to see and the dehooker. Like I said, these were approved in 2015. With the new tech memo that is coming, we place more emphasis on removing the fishing line than necessarily the hook. The fishing line is what poses the larger problem in post-release mortality. Again, we're putting more emphasis on getting all the line off of the animal.

Like I said earlier, we are required to update these protocols, and we always want folks to be using the best technology to release these animals safely, for both the animal and the fisher. We are seeing more and more animals offshore all the time, and, with the additional animals, there is going to be additional interaction. If we can all work together to get those gears released from the animals, then we'll have a higher survival rate. Again, this is basically what I just said. We have to update our careful release protocols. If we get new gear, we need to get those updated and in the regulations.

The development of the gear, and I keep saying this, our best partner is the fishing community, and so we have fishers ask about will something work, and we just say that we'll have to try it, but the hookout was proposed by a charter boat operator, and we tried it. We put it out on boats, and these boats would have observers on there, and so we have independent observation, and it worked really well. As of yet, it's an approved gear, but it's not in the regulations, and so, if they're relying

on that as their package of required gear, then they're subject to a ticket. That should be it. Are there any questions?

MR. PHILLIPS: Do we have any questions for Charlie?

MR. HARTIG: Thanks, Charlie. I appreciate that, and I appreciate your continued work with us up and down the coast when you come in to give your presentations on sea turtle release requirements. The one thing I would say though is, in working with scientists to try and develop some of this, if I've had two interactions in almost fifty years on the water, it's kind of hard to work with a scientist to get the right way to release a turtle when you've only had two interactions in forty-five years.

DR. DUVAL: Just really quick, I guess what's the ask? How do we incorporate -- Are we being asked to develop and implement an amendment to the Snapper Grouper FMP to incorporate the use of this new gear? I guess that's my question, if really more of an administrative nature. I mean, obviously, we want to make sure that everybody has got the latest-and-greatest onboard and that that's what we're requiring, but what is the administrative process from here on out? What is being requested?

MR. BERGMANN: The folks from SERO can answer that question.

MS. SMIT-BRUNELLO: As far as I know, we're figuring out how to do that, and I think probably the best way to do it is to do one more comprehensive amendment that would make changes to all the appropriate FMPs that are needed, and so Rick DeVictor might have more recent information, because I think Shep Grimes is working on this, but we'll bring something back to you when it's ready for you to look at, but we would need to make some changes to the FMP and the regulations and that sort of thing to effectuate these changes.

MR. DIAZ: Thank you, Charlie, for your presentation. Charlie visited our council, and I think he's been to see us twice in the last few meetings, but our council has reviewed our Amendment 49, which considers modifying sea turtle release gear protocols for the reef fish fishery, and we're trying to get where this is more automatic, where we don't have to do as much procedurally as we do now, where, once these things are approved and ready to go, it can be implemented without council action, but that's kind of a work-in-progress. In the meantime, we are developing a public hearing draft, and we're going to review that in January, and that's how we're moving forward. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you, Charlie.

MS. BECKWITH: I am glad Dale brought that up, because I was at one of the Gulf Council meetings where this was discussed and the idea of -- I believe HMS has sort of an automatic process where they list the type of equipment in an appendix, and the appendices are automatically updated, and I guess there is a point over to that appendix that is actually in the Federal Register and whatever is in that appendix, and so it is more of an automatic process. I don't know if we could do that by framework, but just another point.

I mean, every time I look through the turtle requirement regulations, I kind of giggle, because one of the requirements is a 130-page careful release protocols for sea turtle release with minimum injury, and it's a 130-page document. As we consider the requirements that are supposed to be on each of these boats, I think they go a lot further when the fishermen consider them sort of directly

useful, and, honestly, the expectation to have a 130-page document on the boat to reference is absolutely absurd, and it has got no business being a requirement.

MR. HARTIG: Just one short one, but maybe we look at adding this to our expedited framework, and I don't know if that's a possibility, but just as a quicker way to do it.

MR. BOWEN: Thanks, Charlie, and I appreciate the presentation. I was curious. I still have the spare tire that was required on the boat when this first came out, and I was wondering if I could trade my spare tire for this net that Chip has.

MR. PHILLIPS: Maybe there is some of these regulations that we might want to put in with some of the other stuff in our two-for-one. Maybe we could look at that. That's just a thought. All right. Let's take a quick ten-minute break. Again, we are an hour behind schedule. Then we'll get back and try to wind up.

(Whereupon, a recess was taken.)

MR. PHILLIPS: We need to get back to work. The next thing up is Gregg.

MR. WAUGH: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. For these lionfish reports, the two, the Keys Fisheries and Joe Glass, those are incomplete. The Region is working with them to get some more information, and so we don't really need to consider them in detail now. The one from the Florida Keys Commercial Fishermen's Association, we had prior recommended approval of that one, and they have made some minor adjustments to it, but it's nothing significant that we need to re-look at, and so I checked with Rick, and, as far as we're concerned, we're good with the guidance that we've already gotten, and we don't need to get into them unless anybody wants to. Certainly, if you have -- Go ahead, Charlie.

MR. PHILLIPS: My suggestion to Gregg is for the council to look over all of them, and, if you have any thoughts or questions, you can email Rick, and so they will be part of the record, and that may be the quickest way to take care of it. What else, Gregg? If anybody wants to see the Florida Keys Commercial Fishermen's Association, or if they have any quick comments, we can do that. Otherwise, we will proceed as we stated. Bill, did you say that you wanted to talk, or you're okay?

MR. KELLY: Mr. Chairman and council members, Bill Kelly with the Florida Keys Commercial Fishermen's Association. We have been at this project since 2010, and we entered into it formally in 2014, based on the record numbers of lionfish that we are capturing as bycatch in the spiny lobster fishery.

We have encountered significant delays in our application process here, and primarily -- Not primarily, but they are exclusively with the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary. We have reached out to them, and we have re-filed the applications, and we are now nine months into what would normally be a thirty to sixty-day review of that application, with the information put forward that our proposal is not scientific enough and that it is overly broad in assessing information and gathering too much information by agencies that are already changed, unofficially, with those responsibilities.

What we need, in this instance, is we need some assistance from the council here to enter into an interagency discussion with the National Marine Sanctuary and see if they can't move forward with this. For us to test in three different areas and not in the National Marine Sanctuary is absurd, because that is arguably the epicenter of the invasion, and it is the breeding ground that is populating both the Gulf of Mexico and the Atlantic seaboard, all the way up as far as Long Island, and that is now proven information.

We have put a million-dollars-worth of investors in this project on hold for four years, rather than get into their funding cycle and then not be able to deliver, and we certainly appreciate the support that we have received from both councils and their approval of our project, but we certainly need some assistance in interagency discussion with the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary, and we would certainly appreciate that, and I would be happy to answer any questions, if anyone has any. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

MR. ESTES: We are going to work with Bill, both in terms of funding, and we have some funding that we think that we can set aside to help this, and I understand his frustration, and our folks, with our Research Institute, are going to try to help work with Bill and work with the Sanctuary in trying to make this project move forward, and it sounds to me like, based on my discussions with John Hunt the other day, that we think that we can do this fairly quickly, faster than you thought. Thank you.

MR. PHILLIPS: Seeing no further questions, thank you.

MR. KELLY: Thank you.

MR. PHILLIPS: That brings us to Snapper Grouper.

DR. DUVAL: All right, Mr. Chairman. Thank you very much. The Draft Snapper Grouper Committee Reports is in the Reports Folder on the website. The committee met December 5 and 6, and we reviewed the status of commercial and recreational catches and received some clarification on how the Regional Office is clarifying rollovers from one split season to the next.

Also, we had a little bit of information with regard to lag between a fishery closing and potentially reopening again, and so Dr. Ponwith explained that, and we also requested another individual report on recreational landings for blueline tilefish, and then there had been a question about high scamp landings, which the South Carolina Department of Natural Resources is looking into.

We then received updates on the status of amendments under formal review, and we had our Snapper Grouper Advisory Panel Report from David Moss, who is our new AP Chair. Then we launched into Amendment 46, which deals with red snapper recreational reporting and powerhead regulations, and we received an update on the red snapper chevron trap index from Marcel Reichert, our SSC Chair, which included 2017 data. Then we launched into an overview presentation from staff, including two different timelines for amendment development and a recommendation to remove actions addressing red snapper from the amendment, since an ABC wouldn't be available until midway through next year. We made the following motions.

The first, Motion Number 1, was to remove Actions 1 through 8 and 12 from Amendment 46. On behalf of the committee, I so move. Is there any discussion? Any opposition? Seeing none, that motion stands approved.

The next motion was to remove Alternative 4 of Action 9 from Amendment 46. On behalf of the committee, I so move. Is there any discussion? Any opposition? Seeing none, that motion stands approved.

Motion Number 3 was to remove Sub-Alternative 2B under Action 9 from Amendment 46, and, on behalf of the committee, I so move. Is there any discussion? Is there any opposition? Seeing none, that motion stands approved.

Motion Number 4 was to add an alternative in Action 9 for a vessel permit. On behalf of the committee, I so move. Any discussion? Any opposition? Seeing none, that motion stands approved.

The next motion is something that we may want to consider, and that was to remove Action 10 from Amendment 46. At the end of this draft committee report, there is a revised version of Action 10, and this deals with modifying reporting requirements for private recreational fishermen, and I think the committee had moved to remove this action, based on the fact that we were looking at a recreational permit to better identify the universe of users.

However, we just want to remind folks that, right now, the council is engaged in a recreational reporting pilot project, and this is the iAngler app that we're working with the Snook & Gamefish Foundation on, and so we may want to consider a modified version of Action 10 that we could add, and so, instead of reconsidering this motion, what we would do is look for a motion from the committee to add this modified version of Action 10 to the amendment, and so Myra has scrolled up on the screen there for you what that would look like.

Previously, Action 10 included a number of -- It included a couple of alternatives and a number of sub-alternatives that would have required a certain percentage of recreational fishermen to report via some means, and I think another alternative would have required permitted private recreational fishermen to report via some means, and so that has been modified to these two alternatives, which would require private anglers to complete electronic logbooks, and so this is exactly what our pilot project is, working with both ACCSP and the Snook & Gamefish Foundation on, and so the council could specify a certain proportion of anglers that could be required to report through this app, and that could be something that would be rotating on a weekly basis. Then Alternative 3 is to promote voluntary electronic reporting by private recreational fishermen. We want to throw that back out for the committee to consider, and I think what we would be looking for is a motion to add newly-revised Action 10 back into Amendment 46.

MS. BECKWITH: I am not ready to make that motion yet, but I did want to add to the discussion that, if we are going to consider this, I am still interested in having some discussion -- If we're going to require some sort of required reporting, I still want a discussion on the vessel versus individual reporting level, and so, if we are going to modify this, I would just like a vessel option in there, and then we can sort of hash that out later on.

MR. BOWEN: Also, I was going to ask -- In that alternative, will there be sub-alternatives in there, as far as the percentage of vessels selected in Alternative 2, and I am trying to recall from memory, but --

DR. DUVAL: Yes, and so there was a draft council to select X percent of recreational anglers to report weekly, and so I think, if the committee does what Anna is also suggesting, by adding an alternative that would require a report by a vessel to report for all the anglers on the boat, it would be constructed similarly, to require a certain proportion of private vessels, I guess, and so is that okay?

MR. BOWEN: **Yes, ma'am, and, with that being said, I so move.**

DR. DUVAL: **So your motion is to add this revised Action 10 back into Amendment 46?**

MR. BOWEN: **Yes, ma'am, that's correct.**

DR. DUVAL: Okay. Is that a second, Jim? Okay. It's seconded by Jim. Is there further discussion?

MR. ESTES: I would just suggest that, when we get to that point of where we are looking at what percentage of the vessel or anglers that are reporting, that we think about precision, and so we'll need some input from our statistical folks to figure out what that is, and I am not comfortable going through here and just picking random numbers, and so I would like to make sure that we get some input from the statisticians.

DR. DUVAL: I think that's an excellent idea, and so, Myra, could we include some direction to staff to include an alternative similar to Alternative 2, but applies to vessels as opposed to recreational anglers? I think that would be good.

MR. HAYMANS: Madam Chair, I would just ask that, if staff could look into how rental vessels would be handled through this process, something to bring up in March. Florida has a large contingent of rental vessels.

DR. DUVAL: Yes, we can do that as well, and I just want to make sure that Myra captures that, and so we want to make sure that we explore rental vessels and then perhaps also add to that that we would like to have some consultation with statisticians regarding the proportion of either anglers or vessels that would be selected to provide a statistically-valid sample, as Jim was talking about. Percentage of either anglers or vessels to be selected for reporting. Is there any further discussion on this motion? Again, we're doing this to make sure that we still have the option to capitalize on the work that's underway right now with our pilot project with the Snook & Gamefish Foundation and ACCSP.

MR. BELL: This is logical, because we don't want to do anything to sort of stifle the R&D and the good work that's being done and the potential use of these tools in the future too, and so it makes sense to me.

DR. DUVAL: Thanks, Mel. **Is there any opposition to this motion? Seeing none, that motion stands approved.**

Then the next motion was Motion 5, which was to remove Action 10 from Amendment 46. On behalf of the committee, I so move. Any discussion? This is the motion that we had in the committee to actually remove the old version of Action 10, and so we need to complete that motion, because we just added a revised version of Action 10. On behalf of the committee, I so move. Is there any discussion? **Any opposition? Seeing none, that motion stands approved.**

Motion Number 6 was to add an alternative to Action 11, Alternative 4, to remove circle hook requirement from a)commercial and b)recreational fisheries. On behalf of the committee, I so move. Is there any discussion? **Is there any opposition? Two opposed. The motion passes with two opposed.**

The next motion was to add Sub-Alternative 4f to Action 11 to remove the requirement for circle hooks for federally-permitted vessels. That motion failed. Next, we moved into Vision Blueprint Regulatory Amendment 26, and this is our recreational amendment, and we made the following motions with regard to that.

Motion Number 7 was to approve the purpose and need statement as modified. On behalf of the committee, I so move. Is there any discussion? **Is there any opposition? Seeing none, that motion stands approved.**

Motion Number 8 was to remove Action 1 from consideration in Regulatory Amendment 26, and, on behalf of the committee, I so move. Is there any discussion? **Any opposition? Seeing none, that motion stands approved.**

Motion 9 was to remove Alternative 2 under Action 2 to the Considered but Rejected Appendix. On behalf of the committee, I so move. Is there any discussion? **Any opposition? Seeing none, that motion stands approved.**

Motion Number 10 was to move Alternative 4 under Action 2 to the Considered but Rejected Appendix. On behalf of the committee, I so move. Is there any discussion? **Is there any opposition? Seeing none, that motion stands approved.**

Motion Number 11 was to include an alternative under Action 2 that excludes the following species from the other shallow-water species aggregate: black sea bass, vermilion snapper, greater amberjack, red porgy, and hogfish. On behalf of the committee, I so move. Is there any discussion? **Is there any opposition? Seeing none, that motion stands approved.**

We did provide direction to staff to continue to exclude tomtate from the bag limit specification. This direction to staff also said, “and remove from other shallow-water species aggregate”, and it’s already -- I think Myra and I have discussed this, and it’s already in the aggregate. It’s already not subject to any bag limit specifications, and so I think, really, what we would want to do is just direction to continue to exclude tomtate from bag limit specifications. With the committee’s concurrence, I think we would remove that highlighted yellow language. I am seeing heads nod around the table that people are okay with that. Great. The other direction we provided was to exclude red snapper from the recreational aggregates.

Next, you see a draft motion here, and I know Anna had some discussion regarding, under Action 2, adding an alternative that would really specify for recreational aggregates. We had deepwater species, shallow-water groupers, shallow-water snappers that remain after you have moved some of those deeper-water snappers into the deepwater aggregate, and then all other shallow-water species with sub-alternatives for that other shallow-water species, to both include and exclude the same five species of fish that we already have individual bag limits for.

Really, what that does is you would have your deepwater species aggregate, as per existing Alternative 3, your shallow-water grouper aggregate, as per existing Alternative 3, and, really, the thing that we were struggling with was the ten snappers and how to deal with that, and so you would still maintain a snapper aggregate, but it just would only include something like four species now, because you have moved a few of those into the deepwater aggregate, and then all the other shallow-water species. That would allow you to maintain existing limits on snappers, I think, a little bit more easily. Anna, this was your idea, and so I would defer to you to make the motion and provide a little bit more explanation.

MS. BECKWITH: Thank you, Madam Chair. As I have struggled with this amendment and sort of the forward-looking vision, I think one of the most redeeming parts of this reorganization of aggregates is sort of that deepwater species or aggregate, because it's going to have a seasonality component to it, and the reorganization of our shallow-water groupers, because it has a seasonality component to it, and then, as we have been trying to sort of push everything else into this like third aggregate discussion, it gets so complicated, because we can't get to ten per species, because we want just ten snappers and so on and so forth.

I thought just keeping that snapper, shallow-water snapper, aggregate out there on its own is at least something that anglers are already familiar with and understand, and it would be one less star underneath the other grouper aggregates that additionally complicates it, and so I just wanted to throw that out for consideration.

My suggestion is -- I will make this motion, but what I actually suggest is to revise Alternative 5 into this format, because I think that, as I keep looking at Alternative 5, which is the deepwater species, and then all the other species in one aggregate, I am finding trouble thinking about how this is going to simplify management, when we're going to have a shallow-water grouper seasonal closure and then all the other caveats that would have to go with that, and so I don't see it being very understandable to the public, and so my suggestion would be sort of modifying Alternative 5 to this reorganization and taking that out to the public. **That's my motion, if I could get a second.**

DR. DUVAL: Is there a second to Anna's motion? Second by Jim. Is there discussion? I guess I would recommend perhaps just -- I think the summation of what you have described, Anna, would be the same whether you add this alternative and then just take Alternative 5 away. It really amounts to the same thing, and so it might just be cleaner, instead of revising Alternative 5, to just completely get rid of it, so that you're not having a bunch of struck-through language the next time the committee sees this.

MS. BECKWITH: That would be fine. Would that need to be a separate motion?

DR. DUVAL: There is another draft motion right underneath the one that you have just made. Is there other discussion?

MR. ESTES: As we talked the other day, this is difficult, because we have these, and I know we're trying to simplify it, and we kind of run into a wall sometimes when do that, but we also -- I am good with this, but then we also need to bring in the issue of bag limits for some of the species that we have different bag limits for, just like we talked to before.

DR. DUVAL: That's what it would do, is you would have, again, those sub-alternatives to both include and exclude those five species for which we already have bag limits.

MR. ESTES: I was referring to some of the other species, like triggerfish and things like that, that we talked about the other day. That's what I was referring to, and not the include and exclude species.

DR. DUVAL: Right, and so I think --

MS. BROUWER: That would be addressed under Action 5, and so we're coming to that.

DR. DUVAL: We're making our way down that way, yes. Any other discussion on this motion? **The motion reads, under Action 2, add an alternative to specify four recreational aggregates: deepwater species, shallow-water groupers, shallow-water snappers, and other shallow-water species, with sub-alternatives for the other shallow-water species aggregate to include and exclude black sea bass, red porgy, vermilion snapper, greater amberjack, and hogfish. Is there any opposition to this motion? Seeing none, that motion stands approved.**

Next is another draft motion for the committee's consideration that would remove Alternative 5 under Action 2 to the Considered but Rejected Appendix, for all the reasons that Anna outlined with regard to just having two species aggregates, particularly when the all other species includes the shallow-waters, and, given life history characteristics, et cetera, et cetera, it's highly unlikely we would walk down that road anyway, and so I would be looking for a motion from the committee.

MS. BECKWITH: **So moved.**

DR. DUVAL: **To move Alternative 5 under Action 2 to the Considered but Rejected Appendix.** It's seconded by Ben. Is there discussion on this? I think we've provided some good rationale for why we are doing this. **Is there any opposition to this motion? Seeing none, this motion stands approved.**

MS. BECKWITH: For the same reasons we've just discussed on Alternative 5 and just having the two -- I actually am going to throw this out there. **I move to remove Action 2, Alternative 6 to the Considered but Rejected Appendix.**

Again, for the same reasons, that having every species under one aggregate, with the different life history concerns and the different seasonality components to what we're moving towards with the deepwater aggregate and the shallow-water grouper aggregate, it doesn't seem very -- It doesn't seem like we are simplifying it for the public to understand if we have all of the species just put together in one aggregate.

DR. DUVAL: There is a motion by Anna to move Alternative 6 under Action 2 to the Considered but Rejected Appendix. Is there a second? It's seconded by Ben for discussion.

MR. BROWN: I disagree with that, Anna. I think that, if you've got them all together, then people already know what the limits, bag limits and size limits, are, and so I just don't think that's going to be a simplification.

MS. BECKWITH: I understand, Mark, and I've struggled with this one, and I have thought about having the action later, where we're just putting the twenty total limit on all the species and having to keep the seasonality component and having to keep the individual bag limits and having to deal with the snappers and the concerns from Florida and then having to add in the individual bag limits and sort of having all that within one aggregate and how I visually see that in the federal regulations and the piece of paper.

I think, for the people that already know what the limits are, maybe that's true, but, when I think about this, I am trying to make it in a way that it is easily accessible to people that don't already know the regulations, that are coming from Ohio or whatever to fish on the coast and are sort of struggling to understand these complications, and so, if you're going to have one aggregate and it's going to be so many bullet points underneath explaining that the deepwater species are closed during this time and shallow-water groupers are closed during this time and so on and so forth, and you can only keep ten snappers and this bag limit, and I think it doesn't -- I think it's not achieving our purpose. That is just my opinion, and that's why I'm putting it up for a motion, and whatever happens is fine.

MR. BROWN: That makes zero sense to me. I am listening to that, and I am thinking to myself that everybody that's in the industry right now already understands this, and most of their customers and stuff understand it, and so, if you start mixing things up, then we go back to the beginning again of trying to explain this.

DR. DUVAL: Anybody else?

MR. HARTIG: I seconded it for discussion, but I think it would be nice to hear what the public has to say about it, if it is more complicated or less complicated or works for them or not.

MR. PHILLIPS: I don't see anybody coming down from Ohio and going fishing without going with somebody that already knows what's going on, and I am inclined to agree with Mark.

DR. DUVAL: Anybody else? **Could I please see a show of hands of those in favor of the motion, one in favor; those opposed, ten opposed; any abstentions, no abstentions. The motion fails.**

The next motion was Motion Number 12, which was to move Alternative 2 under Sub-Action 4.1 to the Considered but Rejected Appendix. On behalf of the committee, I so move. Is there any discussion? Any opposition? Seeing none, that motion stands approved.

Motion 13 was to move Alternative 3 under Sub-Action 4.1 to the Considered but Rejected Appendix. On behalf of the committee, I so move. Is there any discussion? Is there any opposition? Seeing none, that motion stands approved.

Motion 14 was to move Alternative 4 under Sub-Action 4.1 to the Considered but Rejected Appendix. On behalf of the committee, I so move. Is there any discussion? Any opposition? Seeing none, that motion stands approved.

Motion Number 15 was to move Sub-Alternatives 2e and 2f under Sub-Action 4.2 to the Considered but Rejected Appendix. On behalf of the committee, I so move. Is there any discussion? Any opposition? Seeing none, that motion stands approved.

Motion Number 16 was to add a sub-alternative that would specify a one fish per person per day for red grouper within the aggregate. On behalf of the committee, I so move. Is there discussion?

MR. BROWN: **I would like to make an alternative motion for that to be one per boat per day.**

DR. DUVAL: There is a substitute motion by Mark to modify that to specify one fish per vessel per day. Is there a second to that motion? It's seconded by Charlie. Is there discussion?

MR. BOWEN: I am following along via webinar, and so I'm not in my briefing book, but -- I see red grouper now. I'm sorry. I see it now.

DR. DUVAL: Mark, do you want to provide some rationale for your substitute motion?

MR. BROWN: I am just going off of the assessment and knowing that it's overfished and overfishing is occurring. I know we're getting some reports of sprinkling of the red grouper up the coast and stuff, but some of it's been reports of small fish. I know out of Charleston, and South Carolina in general, we're just not seeing a whole lot of red grouper. With as much pressure as the fishery does take, I just think that, to be proactive and to make it a one per boat per day would be a lot more common sense.

DR. DUVAL: Any other discussion?

MR. HARTIG: My concern is for Florida, especially the southern part of Florida, which still has some relatively healthy red grouper fishing. This would impact them substantially. We're already considering a one fish bag limit, and I believe, somewhere, we talked about it at least, and I would like to see what that does to reducing recreational harvest before I would entertain this.

MS. BECKWITH: I agree with Ben. I don't mind considering this, but I don't want to get rid of the option to consider a one per person per day. I would like to see the analysis on that.

MR. BELL: I think what Mark and I were probably looking at is the situation up here, and I think the fishery up here is perhaps really different from the situation in Florida, south Florida, and so this one-size-fits-all approach all the way down, I could see where it wouldn't play well down there, but, if there were an option to -- Not trying to really complicate this, but if you could set a line and have it one way on one side and one way on the other, maybe, but, as it stands right now, I wouldn't try to push this on the whole region.

MR. HARTIG: One additional point is that there is something happening with red grouper right now, and I would be reticent to put this in with a possible positive outlook of what's going to happen for red grouper in the near future.

MR. BROWN: Can I add something to this motion? Can I add for South Carolina and North Carolina?

DR. DUVAL: I believe so. It hasn't been read, and I think it's that okay with the seconder.

MR. BROWN: I am understanding that Georgia would like it too, and so can we have it north of the Florida/Georgia state line?

DR. DUVAL: Mark, this is a substitute motion that you made, and so my suggestion would be to -- Let's vote this up or down, and then it sounds like what you really want to do is to add an alternative, rather than substitute the one per person per day. Let's vote this motion down, instead of trying to get into the weeds on adding a bunch of stuff. This is a substitute motion, and it would replace the motion that is already on the screen, Number 16, for a sub-alternative that specifies one fish per person per day, and you have heard around the table that people want to see that analysis, and so, instead of substituting it, my recommendation is let's vote this motion down. You can make another motion to add an alternative.

MR. BROWN: Okay.

DR. DUVAL: All right. **A show of hands of those in favor of the substitute motion, nobody supports it. The substitute motion fails.** Mark, would you like to make another motion to add an alternative that would specify one fish per vessel per day for red grouper and anything else of how you want to do it?

MR. BREWER: Michelle, you've got to finish up with 16.

DR. DUVAL: Thanks, Chester. Point of order. Awesome. **We're back to the main motion, which is to add a sub-alternative that would specify a one fish per person per day for red grouper within the aggregate.** Any other discussion on this motion? **Is there any opposition to this motion? Seeing none, that motion stands approved.** Now, Mark, you can make your motion.

MR. BROWN: **I would like to make a motion to add a sub-alternative for a one fish per boat per day north of the Florida/Georgia state line.**

DR. DUVAL: There is a motion by Mark. Is there a second? Second by Zack. Let's let Myra get it on the screen. This would address the concern that Mark has expressed that things are a little bit different up here, as opposed to down in Florida. **The motion reads to add a sub-alternative that would specify a one fish per vessel per day for red grouper in the EEZ north of the Georgia/Florida state line.** Any other discussion on this motion? **Is there any opposition to this motion? The motion passed with one opposed. Any abstentions? No. Okay.**

Next, we provided direction to work with NOAA GC to make the language consistent throughout the document regarding open versus closed months when specifying recreational seasons, and we

also provided direction to modify alternatives under Action 5 as follows and include a clarifying note that alternatives depend on selection of the preferred under Action 2 of the amendment. What this did was this removed that language that you see highlighted and struck out in yellow.

Motion 17 was to add an alternative, Alternative X, as you see on the screen, that specifies a twenty-fish daily maximum per person per day for the other shallow-water species aggregate. No more than ten fish can be snappers within the aggregate (lane, yellowtail, gray, and cubera snapper) and no more than ten fish of any individual non-snapper species. Retain the five-mutton snapper limit. On behalf of the committee, I so move. Is there any discussion? Any opposition? Seeing none, that motion stands approved.

We also provided guidance to retain the five-mutton limit throughout this action, given that we have rulemaking that is currently underway. Now we come to a draft motion for the committee's consideration, and that was referenced earlier, with regard to a bag limit on triggerfish, and so I would be looking to someone who is willing to make this draft motion.

MS. BECKWITH: Sure. **I move, under Action 5, include alternatives to specify a bag limit for gray triggerfish and/or a ten-fish maximum of any one species within the other shallow-water species aggregate.**

DR. DUVAL: Is there a second to that motion? Seconded by Jim. Is there discussion?

MR. BROWN: I will tell you that, at the Snapper Grouper AP meeting, there was a lot of controversy about this, a lot of discussion, especially here in North Carolina, to where sometimes that's all that they catch, is other species, like triggerfish and things like that, and that's their only fish that they have to target, and so I'm just a little concerned about putting a maximum on that if we had the twenty-fish overall. If they caught their bag limit of some of the other species that were maybe not as common and then they filled it up with triggerfish or something else, then that would maybe be a benefit.

DR. DUVAL: Just to speak to some of the comments from North Carolina, I think there is differing opinions within North Carolina from the industry, because, in my going back and reviewing when we took this amendment out to scoping in January, we received several comments in North Carolina, up in Hatteras and down this way, with regard to concern about the pressure on triggerfish and that folks felt like they wanted to see a lower limit on triggerfish, like maybe ten triggerfish, and something higher on b-liners, and so I just wanted to put that in there.

MR. BROWN: I am fine with that, but I just wanted to throw that out, just to let you know.

DR. DUVAL: Yes. Any other discussion on this motion? **Is there any opposition to this motion? Seeing none, that motion stands approved.**

Motion 18 was to add Alternative 3 to Action 6, as suggested by the IPT. On behalf of the committee, I so move. Any discussion? Any opposition? Seeing none, that motion stands approved.

MS. BECKWITH: I am not quite ready to make this as a motion, because I forgot to bring this up under committee for discussion, but I just wanted you guys to think about it, and maybe we can

talk about it in March, but I'm interested in adding an action that would prohibit retention of recreational bag limits on a commercial trip when the commercial season is closed. It was something that was brought up during visioning, and it somehow has gotten sort of -- It has never gotten in anywhere, but that is something that makes sense to me, and, of course, if a recreational bag limit is retained during a commercial trip, it's not going to be picked up through our surveys, and it also can encourage inappropriate sales of those fish when the commercial ACL has been met, and so I am interested in moving this forward, if there was someone else interested in moving this forward, but, otherwise, I am happy to sort of put you guys on notice that I will be bringing this back up in March for discussion.

DR. DUVAL: Myra, it seems like that might be something more appropriate to add to the commercial amendment, if you were going to do it, as opposed to the recreational amendment, but I want to get to Myra first.

MS. BROUWER: Just to remind you that, at this meeting, in order to keep on the timeline that you have approved, we need to have all the final actions that you're going to consider, and, also, I don't believe that that type of action can be done via the framework, and so it would have to be a plan amendment to accomplish that.

DR. DUVAL: Thank you for that guidance, Myra. Okay. Next, we moved into Vision Blueprint Regulatory Amendment 27. We received advice from the SSC with regard to the last three-year methodology instead of the SARIMA method. There was also interest in receiving a summary of pertinent commercial landings based on the commercial logbook grid, what we like to call heat maps, in order to provide more spatially-explicit resolution, and so, when we get to timing and tasks, we will see something like that in there, but we provided the following motions and guidance.

Motion Number 19 was to approve the purpose and need as modified, and, on behalf of the committee, I so move. Is there any discussion? **Any opposition? Seeing none, that motion stands approved.**

Motion 20 is to move Sub-Alternative 3c under Action 1 to the Considered but Rejected Appendix, and, on behalf of the committee, I so move. Is there any discussion? Any opposition? Seeing none, that motion stands approved.

There was direction to staff to accept the suggested edits to the actions and alternatives under Actions 1 through 6 and Action 8, and so we're just noting that. **Motion 21 was to add an alternative under Action 3 for a year-round season with trip limit sub-alternatives of 1,000 pounds and 800 pounds. This pertains to greater amberjack. On behalf of the committee, I so move. Is there any discussion? Any opposition? Seeing none, that motion stands approved.**

Motion 22 was to modify Alternatives 2 and 3 under Action 3 to remove the trip limit step-downs. On behalf of the committee, I so move. Is there any discussion? Any opposition? Seeing none, that motion stands approved.

Motion 23 was to add sub-alternatives to Alternatives 2 and 3 under Action 3 to consider a 1,000-pound trip limit in Season 1 and an 800-pound trip limit in Season 2. On behalf of the

committee, I so move. Is there any discussion? **Any opposition? Seeing none, that motion stands approved.**

There was direction to staff to add tables with the landings values presented in various figures throughout the document. Next, we have a draft motion to include the alternative recommended by the AP for greater amberjack, and I am going to turn to Tim for this one.

MR. GRINER: Thank you, Madam Chair. As I went back and started thinking more about this, the AP did weigh-in heavily on this, and the goal here was to try to keep some of these amberjack available for us up in North Carolina and South Carolina in the later part of the year, and I don't know how much competence level there really was going around the table in the methodology that came up with Table 5 to show those season lengths, but it is what it is, and it is what we got, and this alternative that the AP came up with was the only one that showed, in that chart, that this would not close in the fall.

Even though it was a lower trip limit, there is not one commercial fisherman up here that would not like to have 500 pounds of amberjack going into Christmas, even if it only lasted another month, but that chart clearly showed that it would not close, and so I think we need to keep it in there. The new alternatives of 1,000 and 800 may do the same thing, but I just want to keep this in here so we can look at it in the chart when we come back to this.

DR. DUVAL: Tim, are you making this motion?

MR. GRINER: **Yes, so moved.**

DR. DUVAL: Okay. Is there a second? Second by Chris. This would be the only alternative that would actually have a step-down for analysis.

MR. PHILLIPS: I am going to vote against the motion, for a couple of reasons. One, we have already heard about the complexity of all the step-downs in two seasons that the Region is doing. The other reason is that just what Tim said. If it's still open at the end of the season, we are leaving fish in the water, which the fishermen on the water could have caught and put that money in their bank accounts, and so it's a dance, and I understand that the dealers want fish, and the public wants fish. We want the season open as long as it can, but, if it doesn't close, then we've left money on the table, and so, because of the complexity and the extra work done, I am going to vote against it.

DR. CRABTREE: That is the point that I was going to make. If you set the trip limit -- If your goal is to set the trip limit low enough so the fishery doesn't close, then you're not catching the ACL, and that means it's a net economic loss to fishermen. They are better off to have the fishery close and catch the full ACL.

DR. DUVAL: I am thinking the point that Tim is trying to get to is that, yes, if the fishery closes, you have used all the ACL, and so that's money in people's pockets, but sometime that closure occurs before other people have a chance to get the fish, and so that was a point.

MR. GRINER: That's exactly the point. By having it open, you're still going to have the opportunity to reach the ACL. That's not to say that you won't reach the ACL, but you still have

the opportunity for the people that didn't have access to the fish to get to the ACL. That is kind of the way that I look at it.

MR. BELL: I think that's the point, is it really has to do with a distribution thing and availability for folks kind of up the coast, and that's what he is trying to address here, to save some fish for us, I think, and so it is an access thing within the context of the ACL.

DR. DUVAL: Okay. I am cutting off discussion. **Could I please see a show of hands of those in favor of the motion?**

MR. BELL: I will support it.

DR. DUVAL: **I see six hands in favor; those opposed, four opposed; any abstentions. The motion carries.**

Motion 24 was to add alternatives to Action 5 for commercial trip limits of 1,000, 850, and 700 pounds for each season with no trip limit reductions. On behalf of the committee, I so move. Is there any discussion? Any opposition? Seeing none, that motion stands approved.

The next motion was to move Alternatives 3 and 4 under Action 5 to the Considered but Rejected Appendix. That motion failed. **Next, we have Motion 25, where I think we just need to clarify something for staff, and Motion 25 was to remove Alternative 4 under Action 5 and modify Alternative 2 to remove the trip limit reduction.** If you are removing the trip limit reduction, in which season was it? My recollection was that the trip limit was to be removed in Season 2, but I think we need committee clarification on that. **On behalf of the committee, I am moving that motion.**

Does anybody have additional recollections? We are removing Alternative 4 under Action 5 and then modifying Alternative 2 to remove the trip limit reduction. My sense was that it was removing the trip limit reduction in Season 2. I am seeing heads nod around the table.

MR. BOWEN: I thought it was both seasons, but I have been wrong a lot this week.

DR. DUVAL: What is your pleasure, Season 2 or both seasons?

MR. BOWEN: I think we heard Dr. Crabtree, earlier in the week, discuss the administrative burden that it puts on when we have these reductions, and I am just one of you all, and so whatever you want to do, but I was wanting to remove it for both seasons, but I am not a commercial fisherman or a permit holder.

MR. HARTIG: I was looking for additional guidance from the people who actually catch vermilion, but we had that discussion, and I think I remember what I was saying, and that is that, since vermilion snapper is the fish that drives the snapper grouper complex, we might entertain leaving the season reductions in for both seasons, to extend the season as long as possible, and I think that's what I was talking about at that time, but I do remember talking about vermilion being the most important and that, in this instance, we may leave the step-downs in.

DR. DUVAL: But this motion is specifically to remove the trip limit reduction, and so I don't think that is what was intended.

MR. PHILLIPS: I think we had a lot of discussion about the complexity of what was going on down in Roy's office and how much work it was adding, species-by-species-by-species, and the uncertainty plus the fact that -- I think he stated that, often, they put out the step-down date and the closure date at the same time, and they might be a week apart, and the step-downs really didn't help us on an awful lot of species.

DR. DUVAL: I understand that, and I'm sorry to interrupt, Charlie, but we've got a lot of other stuff to get to, and so --

MR. PHILLIPS: Yes, and I think it was just taking the step-down out.

DR. DUVAL: I just wanted to let people know that my notes were to remove the step-down in Season 2 and eliminate Alternative 4. Is that okay with everybody? Can we just clarify that it was Season 2? Great. Any other discussion on this motion? **Is there any opposition to this motion? Seeing none, that motion stands approved.**

Motion 26 was to add Alternative 3 to Action 6, as suggested by the IPT, and, on behalf of the committee, I so move. Is there any discussion? **Is there any opposition? Seeing none, that motion stands approved.**

Next, there was direction to staff to rearrange Actions 6 and 7, if necessary, to capture the expected combined effects of specifying a minimum size limit for almaco jack, which is Action 7, and implementing a trip limit for the other jacks complex in Action 6 and bring this analysis to the council in March of 2018.

Motion 27 was to remove Alternatives 2, 3, and 4 from Action 8. On behalf of the committee, I so move. Is there any discussion? **Is there any opposition? Seeing none, that motion stands approved.** The intent was to be consistent with changes that were made to the same action in Regulatory Amendment 26.

After that, we discussed Amendment 38 for blueline tilefish. We received an overview of SEDAR 50 from the Southeast Fisheries Science Center staff, and we will receive more information, or at least an update, on determination of an ABC for the area north of Cape Hatteras, hopefully in March.

We then began a discussion of the for-hire moratorium amendment, and we did not approve this topic for public scoping, and we made several motions which were not approved, which you can see there. We need some guidance on what to prepare for the March 2018 meeting, and I think, just in my conversations with Myra, my recommendation would be to take the document that you saw in the briefing book for this meeting and walk this down to something like what we did for Amendment 43 and really translate those actions into more of questions that the public can then weigh-in on, so it's a much simpler document. If folks recall, this is exactly what we did for Amendment 43.

MR. BELL: Michelle, could that basically be in the form of taking what they have learned in all of this and sticking it into the form of like a white paper or something, just for us to look at in March, without it being in kind of the formal amendment process?

DR. DUVAL: What do you mean by a white paper? We have had a white paper in the past that we reviewed that led to the structure of the document that we started discussing two days ago, and so I think we're looking for guidance for staff for what kind of draft scoping document we would want to see in March, and so that's why we were making the suggestion to construct a document that was similar to what was taken out for scoping for Amendment 43, where we were really asking questions of the public to solicit their input.

MR. BELL: I think part of what I'm picking up on, just from the public and things, is, when it's tied to that official scoping process, there is the presumption that this is coming and this is something that we need to vigorously oppose, and so it's sort of taking the information, and maybe part of this also involves a little research, which is additional work, but including some things we might can learn about perception and laying out the options in a different format, but I think, as long as it's tied to that official process that we follow in scoping, that's what we're kind of running into some of the sort of more violent resistance, if you will.

DR. DUVAL: I think I understand what you're saying, and so revise the options paper to basically walk back what was included in the briefing materials for this meeting, walk that back to be more consistent with the type of approach that was taken in the options paper for Amendment 43, where you're really translating these more into questions to solicit, possibly solicit, public input and still have this as an options paper, and is that closer to what you're suggesting?

MR. BELL: Yes, ma'am. That keeps it more in the form of something that you can discuss. When we go to that official "scoping" word, then it becomes a lot more of something that people want to immediately speak against and not necessarily discuss.

DR. DUVAL: I understand.

MR. HARTIG: I certainly would like to see it done that way. I think, the comments that I read for this meeting, there was a lot of reference to those questions, which was great. Not all of them, but there were -- I think the majority of commenters mentioned the questions, and so think that's a good way to proceed.

DR. DUVAL: Am I getting concurrence from the committee that this is the way to proceed for March? Myra has guidance up on the screen. If that's okay with everyone, and I am seeing heads nod, then that's how we'll proceed.

Next, we discussed red grouper, and we reviewed an abbreviated framework and made the following motion, Number 28, to approve Snapper Grouper Abbreviated Framework 1 for formal secretarial review and deem the codified text as necessary and appropriate. Give staff editorial license to make any necessary editorial changes to the document and codified text and give the Council Chair authority to approve the revisions and re-deem the codified text. On behalf of the committee, I so move. This is a roll call vote, and so I will turn things over to Gregg.

MR. WAUGH: Mr. Hartig.

MR. HARTIG: Yes.

MR. WAUGH: Dr. Duval.

DR. DUVAL: Yes.

MR. WAUGH: Ms. Beckwith.

MS. BECKWITH: Yes.

MR. WAUGH: Mr. Bell.

MR. BELL: Yes.

MR. WAUGH: Mr. Bowen.

MR. BOWEN: Yes.

MR. WAUGH: Mr. Brewer.

MR. BREWER: Yes.

MR. WAUGH: Mr. Brown.

MR. BROWN: Yes.

MR. WAUGH: Mr. Conklin.

MR. CONKLIN: Sure.

MR. WAUGH: Mr. Griner.

MR. GRINER: Yes.

MR. WAUGH: Dr. Crabtree.

DR. CRABTREE: Yes.

MR. WAUGH: Mr. Haymans.

MR. HAYMANS: Yes.

MR. WAUGH: Mr. Estes.

MR. ESTES: Yes.

MR. WAUGH: Mr. Phillips.

MR. PHILLIPS: Yes.

MR. WAUGH: **It passes unanimously.**

DR. DUVAL: Thank you. We are almost there. The next item on our agenda was golden tilefish, and so we received the SSC's recommendations on catch levels for golden tilefish and their review of a revised assessment that they received at their October meeting, but did not find the revisions acceptable for management, and so we do have an interim rule to specify golden tilefish ACL for 2018 that is currently going through rulemaking and is expected to be effective by January 1 of next year.

We made the following motion, Number 29, to direct staff to prepare a draft framework document for the March 2018 meeting to adjust the golden tilefish ACL and consider modifications to the trip limits, and, on behalf of the committee, I so move. Is there any discussion?

MR. HARTIG: In talking to Roy last night, there was a suite of things we talked about of trying to slow down this fishery, and I don't know that we made the options that we had before into the trip limit additional to the trip limit, and it was like two weeks on and two weeks on and one week on and one week off, whatever we used before, and they're in the record. If we could add those as well, and we may not need any of them, but, if we don't put them in here, we can't use them, and so it would be appropriate, I think, to add those at this time.

DR. DUVAL: Absolutely, and that's exactly the kind of input we need, and so Myra is adding to our intent, which is to review for final review at the June 2018 meeting, guidance to add previously-considered alternatives to extend the season, and so we'll pull those into that document.

The wreckfish ITQ and yellowtail snapper, we will discuss these items at the March 2018 meeting. I think folks with the FWC are going to review -- The background document, the very last page of that, included a suite of different alternatives for consideration of a trip limit for yellowtail snapper, and so I think, if you guys can take a look at that and provide us some guidance, that would be great.

We had no other items brought up for discussion under Other Business. **We do have a draft timing and tasks motion, and so the first item there is to have a SERO analyst deliver a presentation to the SSC at their upcoming meeting on methodology used to conduct analyses for Vision Blueprint Regulatory Amendment 27. The second is to prepare heat maps depicting commercial landings of blueline tilefish, snowy grouper, and amberjack, based on commercial logbook grid, for March 2018 meeting. Number 3 is to conduct and complete analyses for the Vision Blueprint Amendments for March, and initiate development of framework amendment to revise the catch levels of golden tilefish.** I would be looking for someone to make that draft timing and tasks motion.

MS. BROUWER: **Sorry, but I have just added an Item 5, based on your recent guidance, to prepare a simplified options paper on the for-hire moratorium amendment.**

DR. DUVAL: Excellent, and then I saw Mr. Conklin with his hand raised to make that.

MR. CONKLIN: **I would be delighted to make that motion, Madam Chair.**

DR. DUVAL: Excellent. It's seconded by Ben. Is there discussion? Tim, I know you had asked me about the heat maps, and so I didn't know if you wanted to speak just a little bit to those species.

MR. GRINER: Thank you, Madam Chair. It was a recommendation from the SSC on the blueline, and I think this is going to be very important going forward, and I think these three species are a really good start, and especially to add the amberjack in there. I think, in order to make better decisions going forward that will allow for a more equitable distribution of these fish, I think these heat maps are going to become very, very important.

DR. DUVAL: Thank you, Tim. Any other discussion on timing and tasks?

MR. BREWER: It's not set forth here, but when would we be taking a look at the prepared or the simplified options paper on the for-hire moratorium? Would that be March or June?

DR. DUVAL: March.

MR. BREWER: Thank you.

DR. DUVAL: Any other discussion? **Is there any opposition to the timing and tasks? Seeing none, the timing and tasks are approved.** Is there any other business to come before the Snapper Grouper Committee?

MR. HARTIG: Just a question, Michelle. We had talked about possible MRIP smoothing under the ABC, and then we thought we might have some time to do it here, but we didn't, and so can we talk about that again in March?

DR. DUVAL: Yes, I would like to add a little time to the committee's agenda to talk about that in March, and then that might give me a little bit of time to catch up with ASMFC staff and see if we can maybe sort of get a bulleted synopsis of the types of techniques that they are considering. I am not sure that everybody is going to want to read through the whole technical committee meeting summary. It's pretty dry, but that would at least show the types of things that are under consideration elsewhere up the coast.

MR. HARTIG: Yes, and I know that, at least in the assessments, that it's been done before, and it would be nice to know how they did it in those assessments.

DR. DUVAL: Okay. We will add that as an agenda item for March, and I will work with Myra on what materials we might want to have in there for that. Is there any other business to come before the Snapper Grouper Committee? Seeing none, Mr. Chairman, that concludes my report.

MR. PHILLIPS: Thank you very much, and, Ben, I think that brings you up next and the Mackerel Committee.

MR. HARTIG: Thank you. The committee met and approved the minutes and the agenda. The first item of business was Status of Commercial Catches Versus ACLs, which we got from Rick. We next had an update on the ASMFC Interstate Plan for Cobia, and Bob Beal, Executive Director of the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission, briefed the committee on the status of the interstate management plan.

In November 2018, ASMFC approved management measures for Atlantic cobia in state waters. Recreational and commercial possession and size limits follow those set up in Coastal Migratory Pelagic Framework Amendment 4. State-by-state recreational harvest allocations are based on the federal ACL of 620,000 pounds. These allocations are soft harvest targets, with landings monitored every three years. Recreational harvest will be reduced by 1% for de minimis states. State implementation plans will be reviewed in January 2018, and the new plans will be implemented in April of that year.

The next item of business was Request for Recalculation of the 2015 and 2016 Recreational Landings for Cobia, and we got a letter back from Dr. Van Voorhees stating that those will be accomplished next year. They have planned to do that next year for cobia and for the rare-event species, and that will be done all at one time, and so we'll see when the timeline for that emerges from them.

Under Coastal Migratory Pelagics Amendment 31, Atlantic Cobia Management, council staff reviewed a decision document for Coastal Migratory Amendment 31, which contains one action with a range of alternatives for a complementary plan with ASMFC as well as removal of Atlantic cobia from the management unit. The following motions were approved.

The first motion was to accept the purpose and need as modified. On behalf of the committee, I so move. Is there any discussion? Is there any objection? Seeing none, that motion is approved.

The next motion was to accept the IPT's recommendation to move Alternative 5 to the Considered but Rejected Appendix. On behalf of the committee, I so move. Is there any discussion? Any objection? Seeing none, that motion is approved.

The committee did direct staff to accept the IPT's recommended wording changes for Alternatives 1 through Alternative 4 and include bullet points explaining the intent of Alternatives 3 and 4.

MR. BREWER: Happy Christmas, everybody.

MR. HARTIG: Same to you, Chester. Thank you. **Motion 3 was to section Alternative 2 as the preferred alternative. On behalf of the committee, I so move. Any discussion? Any objection? The motion passes with one objection.**

Motion Number 4 is to approve Coastal Migratory Pelagics Amendment 31 for public hearings. On behalf of the committee, I so move. Is there discussion? Is there objection? The motion passes with one objection.

The committee directed council staff to seek input during public hearings on when final action on CMP Amendment 31 should be taken relative to the cobia stock ID workshop and subsequent benchmark assessment.

The next item of business was Coastal Migratory Pelagic Framework Amendment 6, Atlantic King Mackerel Trip Limits. The new regulations for king mackerel established in Amendment 26 became effective on May 11, 2017, including updated commercial trip limits for the Atlantic Southern zone. Stakeholders and the AP and Sub-Panel have recommended that the council consider revising the trip limits to allow for a higher trip limit north of the Volusia/Brevard County line, which would mirror trip limits prior to Amendment 26.

In September 2017, council staff reviewed a document with options for alternatives to be included in a framework amendment addressing Atlantic king mackerel commercial trip limits. Council staff presented an updated options paper and the following motions were approved.

The first item under that action was to approve the suggested language for the purpose and need. On behalf of the committee, I so move. Is there any discussion? Is there any objection? Seeing none, that motion is approved.

Motion Number 6 is to accept the recommended wording for Alternatives 1 through 4. On behalf of the committee, I so move. Is there discussion? Any objection? Seeing none, that motion is approved.

Motion Number 7 was to approve Coastal Migratory Pelagics Amendment 6 for scoping at the March 2018 meeting. On behalf of the committee, I so move. Is there any discussion? Is there any objection? Seeing none, that motion is approved.

Under Other Business, the committee discussed Atlantic king mackerel tournament sales, which are currently counted against the commercial ACL. States were requested to bring information on Atlantic king mackerel tournament landings over the last three years to the March 2018 meeting for discussion.

The last discussion we had was on how we -- I will read it, and then I won't get confused. Commercial landings for Atlantic king mackerel and Atlantic Spanish mackerel, in addition to commercial and recreational landings of Atlantic cobia are tracked as reported. At the June 2017 meeting, the Science Center provided information that the landings can be tracked with the council-preferred units.

The committee specified that the preference is for Spanish mackerel to be tracked in whole weight, and king mackerel should be tracked in gutted weight. Conversations between Gulf Council staff and South Atlantic staff indicate the Gulf Council may prefer king mackerel to be tracked in whole weight. I think what will happen was we'll have further discussions with the Gulf, and we'll come back and look at this one more time and finalize exactly how we'll do that between the Gulf and the South Atlantic, since they are the same species.

The next item is the timing and tasks, and that is to adopt the following timing and tasks: Prepare Coastal Migratory Pelagics Amendment 31 for web-based public hearings and for the March council meeting; hold public hearing webinars for Coastal Migratory Pelagics

Amendment 31; prepare Coastal Migratory Pelagics Framework Amendment 6 for scoping at the March 2018 council meeting, and if someone would be willing to make that motion.

MR. CONKLIN: **So moved.**

MR. HARTIG: Motion by Chris, and it's seconded by Michelle. Is there further discussion on the timing and tasks motion? **Is there any objection to that? Seeing none, that motion is approved.** I believe, Mr. Chairman that completes that report.

MR. PHILLIPS: Yes, sir. Thank you very much, and we will roll into the Spiny Lobster Committee.

MR. HARTIG: Thank you, Charlie, and I will be doing that as well. After we approved the agenda and the minutes, the first item of business was the Status of Commercial and Recreational Catches Versus ACLs.

The next item was Spiny Lobster Amendment 13. Staff presented an options paper for Spiny Lobster Amendment 13 which contains actions that would update federal regulations to align with State of Florida bully-net regulations and update the protocol and procedure for enhanced cooperative management.

The committee reviewed a table of inconsistent regulations between the State of Florida and the Code of Federal Regulations. Items that could be updated in the codified text next time spiny lobster is revised and items that would require council action were discussed. The committee also reviewed motions made by the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council at their October 2017 meeting. The following motions were approved at the committee level.

The first motion was to accept the IPT's recommended wording for the purpose and need. On behalf of the committee, I so move. Is there any discussion? Any objection? Seeing none, that motion is approved.

The next motion was to accept the IPT's recommended wording for Action 1, Alternatives 1 through 2. On behalf of the committee, I so move. Is there any discussion? Any objection? Seeing none, that motion is approved.

Motion 3 is modify Action 2, Alternative 2 to combine both the protocol and the procedure into one document. On behalf of the committee, I so move. Is there any discussion? Is there any objection? Seeing none, that motion is approved.

Motion 4 is to incorporate bag limits, degradable panels in traps, and definition of artificial habitats into Spiny Lobster Amendment 13, and, on behalf of the committee, I so move. Is there any discussion? Is there any objection? Without objection, that motion is approved. There was direction to staff to ensure that technical edits to the CFR, as noted by the FWC, are made to the CFR.

Then the next motion, Number 5, was to approve Spiny Lobster Amendment 13 for scoping. On behalf of the committee, I so move. Is there any discussion? Any objection? Seeing none, that motion is approved.

That brings us to the timing and tasks motion, which was revise language of the enhanced cooperative management protocol and procedure to reflect how the State of Florida currently promulgates regulations; combine the enhanced cooperative management protocol and procedure into one document for Action 2, Alternative 2; work with Gulf Council staff to incorporate the following in Spiny Lobster Amendment 13: bag limits, degradable panels, and the definition of artificial habitats; conduct scoping webinars for Spiny Lobster Amendment 13, and if someone would like to make that motion.

DR. DUVAL: **So moved.**

MR. HARTIG: Motion by Michelle and second by Jim. Is there any discussion on that motion? **Is there any objection to that motion? Seeing none, that motion is approved.** If there isn't any other business before this committee, that concludes my report, Chairman Phillips.

MR. PHILLIPS: Thank you, Chairman Ben. All right. We're going to go back to Michelle, and we're going to do our ABC Control Rule.

DR. DUVAL: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We met as a committee of the whole to review the ABC control rule on December 4, and John Carmichael provided a presentation on the latest developments in the control rule modification actions, including recommendations from the November 6 webinar meeting.

Primary points of discussion included the additional descriptive information on the overall control rule concept, risk tolerance criteria and levels, carryover provisions, and accountability measures. We had a number of key points and recommendations, based on the discussion at this meeting, which included -- I am not going to go through all of these, but performance of past phase-in actions, assessment status and age of an assessment, reviewing ACCSP PSE workshop for guidance on recreational uncertainty, clarification that carryover adjustments would only be for a year, alternatives to the carryover action to remove a requirement for a past regulatory closure, consideration of PSE levels to the options for reliability of recreational catch estimates.

We also discussed a monitoring committee approach, which is used by the Mid-Atlantic Council for evaluating recreational catch estimates and the need to apply the accountability measures and recommend that the council consider addressing accountability measures through a framework action, and we had no motions, Mr. Chairman, and so, unless there is anything else, that concludes my report.

MR. HARTIG: I just want to make sure that John -- On that first item, if you can move to the very top of the page, evaluate the performance of phase-in actions for snowy grouper and black sea bass, that we look at everything that was discussed, including updating projections for those species, because I don't think those projections were updated, and I think the stocks continued to rebuild without updated projections. I can't remember if that was true or not, but I don't remember at that time that we did that, and so that would -- Just everything that we talked about as far as having impacts on that to be evaluated based on those two species. MSST, of course, that was one, that halfway between measure.

DR. DUVAL: I think I understand what you're saying, Ben, in that we did not apply the step-wise approach that John has outlined for this document, and so it would have been interesting to apply that step-wise approach and then have a re-evaluation of the projections after the phase-in had occurred, and that's what you're referring to. Okay. Anything else? If not, Mr. Chairman, that concludes my report.

MR. PHILLIPS: Very well done. Next up, we're going to have the recreational and Chip.

DR. COLLIER: During the recreational workshop, we had presentations from six different people, and we had a recreational workshop panel, where they discussed several different reporting methods. There is a brief description for each of the presentations, and that essentially concludes my report. There were no motions made during this reporting workshop.

MR. PHILLIPS: The next report is the SEDAR Report, which is me. The SEDAR Committee met, and we considered the appointments. We met during closed session for the appointments for the greater amberjack and red porgy standard assessments and the cobia stock ID. We had the SSC report by John Carmichael, who commented on SEDAR topics on behalf of SSC Chair Marcel Reichert, on SSC suggestions for the stock assessment scheduling and terms of reference, and those are reflected in the documents.

Terms of reference and schedule approvals, the committee approved the schedules and terms of reference for the greater amberjack and red porgy standard assessments. In-person workshops, as planned for red porgy and suggested for greater amberjack, were supported to allow for greater review of the impacts of the MRIP data revisions on the assessment models and estimates.

SEDAR Steering Committee, the committee received an update on the SEDAR Steering Committee held September 26, 2017, and reviewed the assessment priorities through 2022. The Steering Committee will consider the 2019 South Atlantic Fishery Management Council priorities at its spring 2018 meeting. Although the SSC recommended conducting snowy grouper through the update approach, it will be requested as a standard, due to the same concerns regarding MRIP data revisions raised for other stocks as well as the age of the assessment. The current terminal year is 2012.

Motion 1 is to move to appoint panelists as listed to the SEDAR 59 assessment of greater amberjack. You see the list of people here, and it was approved by the committee, and, on behalf of the committee, I so move. Is there any discussion? Any opposition? Seeing none, the motion passes.

Motion 2 is to move to appoint Chris Conklin as the council representative to SEDAR 59. It was approved by the committee, and, on behalf of the committee, I so move. Is there any discussion? Is there any opposition? The motion passes.

Motion 3 is to move to appoint panelists as listed in the red porgy table to the SEDAR 60 assessment of red porgy. On behalf of the committee, I so move. Is there discussion? Is there any opposition? The motion passes, and you see the names of all the people here.

Motion 4 is move to appoint the data providers and technical experts for the cobia stock ID workshop as listed in the table. On behalf of the committee, I so move. Any discussion? Any opposition? Seeing none, the motion passes.

Motion 5 is to move to appoint the SSC representatives for the cobia stock ID process, as listed in the table, and, on behalf of the committee, I so move. Is there any discussion? Is there any opposition? Seeing none, the motion passes.

Motion 6 is move to appoint Bill Gorham to the cobia stock ID workshop and peer review. On behalf of the committee, I so move. Is there any discussion? Is there any opposition? Seeing none, the motion passes.

Motion 7 is move to appoint Ira Laks to the cobia stock ID workshop and peer review. On behalf of the committee, I so move. Is there any discussion? Is there any opposition? Seeing none, the motion passes.

Motion 8 is move to appoint Anna Beckwith to the cobia stock ID workshop and peer review. On behalf of the committee, I so move. Is there any discussion? Any opposition? Seeing none, the motion passes. Here are the names of the people for the cobia stock ID process, Motions 4 through 8.

Motion 9 is move to approve the schedule and terms of reference for the greater amberjack and red porgy. On behalf of the committee, I so move. Is there discussion? Is there any opposition? Seeing none, the motion passes. That concludes my report to myself. Then we've got Data Collection.

MR. BROWN: Here is a summary of the Data Committee Report. Rick DeVictor did a presentation on the electronic logbook implementation, the for-hire reporting amendment, and the proposed rule is undergoing internal review. The provisions are moving ahead faster than implementation of the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council amendment. He also provided overview of the for-hire SEFHIER process. The committee also requested that Nick Farmer provide a progress report on SEFHIER at the March 2018 meeting.

The data collection pilot project was presented by Mike Errigo, and the project development and electronic reporting app meets the needs of the South Atlantic Council electronic for-hire reporting and the electronic form for dockside sampling. Progress was also made on linking electronic measuring boards to the reporting application.

The charter outreach, Kathleen Howington, who is with the South Atlantic Council, also did the charter reporting outreach overview on the training webinars, in-person sessions that have been convened in South Carolina and Georgia, and the training on that will continue in Florida and North Carolina in the coming months, and a help desk will be developed. No motions were made at this committee meeting.

MR. PHILLIPS: Thank you, Mark. Then we come up with Habitat and Ecosystem.

MR. HAYMANS: Thank you, Mr. Chair. The Habitat Protection and Ecosystem-Based Management Committee met on December 4 in Atlantic Beach, North Carolina. In addition to

approving the minutes from the September 2017 meeting, they reviewed the advisory panel summary. They received a report from staff on Fishery Ecosystem Plan II implementation.

The council staff provided an overview, and, based on revisions provided at the November AP meeting, given the short turnaround time between the panel meeting and the council meeting and the desire to build on and refine input provided by the panel, the staff will work to consolidate input from council members to further refine the FEP II implementation plan and possible actions the council, or council in cooperation with state and regional partners, will initiate or complete over the next two years. The comprehensive FEP II implementation plan and summary roadmap will be completed for final approval during the March 2018 meeting.

Finally, we received presentations on the FEP II dashboard and tools, and Ms. Mallory Martin presented a presentation on the South Atlantic Landscape Conservation Cooperative and the Southeast Conservation Adaptive Strategy. There are three items under the timing and tasks. You have them presented both on the screen and in front of you, and I would appreciate a motion to accept those timing and tasks.

MR. CONKLIN: **So moved.**

MR. HAYMANS: Chris makes the motion. Is there a second? Michelle. Is there any additional discussion? **Seeing none, is there any opposition? Seeing none, the timing and tasks are adopted.** Mr. Chairman, that concludes my report.

MR. PHILLIPS: Thank you very much for a concise and quick report, and we will move on down to I&E and Captain Mark Brown.

MR. BROWN: The I&E Committee met and approved the minutes for the 2016 meeting, and then we got a report from Scott Baker, Chairman of the I&E AP. He presented the advisory panel report on mobile app transition, Fishermen's Forum, the MyFishCount recreational reporting outreach project, red snapper 2017 season, Citizen Science Program, and the Marine Resources Education Program.

Under Other Business, we had an MREP update from Kim. The council received an update from staff for the MREP schedule in 2018. Then, for the Fishermen's Forum, council staff showed the council the online Fishermen's Forum and asked for direction on potential topics. Council members directed staff to include questions relevant to the fishery performance reports and specific questions regarding trip limits and annual specs at the end of fishing seasons. That is the end of my report.

MR. PHILLIPS: Thank you. Since you're on a roll, let's go do Citizen Science.

MR. BROWN: The Citizen Science Committee met on December 4. The committee considered an AP appointment policy to allow appointments to the Citizen Science AP Pool as needed in between council meetings and as additional expertise is needed on the Action Teams. **The committee made the motion to add the Citizen Science AP Pool to the AP appointment policy in the SOPPs. On behalf of the committee, I so move.** Is there any discussion? **Is there any opposition? Seeing none, the motion stands approved.**

Staff provided a summary of progress for each of the five Citizen Science Action Teams. The Data Management A-Team continues to work on identifying data management resources and minimum data standard policies. The Volunteers A-Team continues to work on developing recommendations for engaging potential volunteers in the council's program and developing a project training plan.

The Projects/Topics Management A-Team continues to work -- Excuse me. The Communications/Outreach/Education A-Team continues to work on identifying appropriate communication approaches for the program or projects and how to share project results and how to promote the program and recruit volunteers. The Finance and Infrastructure A-Team continues to develop a recommendation for rebuilding program partnerships and ways to support the program and projects.

Last, the committee received a presentation from Rick Bonney with the Cornell University Lab of Ornithology about pilot projects they are developing in partnership with the council and other partners to initiate the first citizen science project dealing with scamp grouper discards. The project will also focus on evaluating how the program development efforts of the Action Teams can support successful citizen science projects. No other business came before the committee, and this concludes the committee report.

MR. PHILLIPS: Thank you, Captain Mark. Chris and SOPPs.

MR. CONKLIN: The SOPPs Committee met yesterday, December 7, 2017, which was also Pearl Harbor Day. We reviewed the policies for inclusion in the SOPPs and the handbook. There were three motions.

Motion Number 1 was, if an AP meets in person, members participating remotely can vote. It was approved by the committee, and, on behalf of the committee, I so move. Is there any discussion? Any objection? Seeing none, the motion carries.

Motion 2 was to approve the changes to the administrative handbook. On behalf of the committee, I so move. Is there any discussion? Any opposition? Seeing none, the motion carries.

We had a timing and tasks motion to adopt the following timing and tasks: 1) distribute Word version of the revised handbook and the SOPPs to the SOPPs Committee after the December 2017 meeting; 2) revise the handbook for the March 2018 meeting and include any suggestions from the SOPPs Committee; 3) revise the SOPPs, as needed, for the March 2018 meeting and include any suggestions from the SOPPs Committee; 4) work with NOAA General Counsel to clarify how state representatives can participate on interdisciplinary plan development teams as outlined in the handbook. On behalf of the committee, I so move. Is there any discussion?

MR. WAUGH: Someone needs to make that motion.

MR. CONKLIN: Okay. Thank you.

MR. HARTIG: **I will make that motion, Mr. Chairman.**

MR. CONKLIN: We have a second by Jim. Is there any discussion? **Any opposition? Seeing none, the motion stands approved.** Mr. Chair, that concludes my report.

MR. PHILLIPS: Very well. That brings us back to our last report of Executive Finance. The committee met, and we approved the minutes from the September 2017 meeting and agenda. Gregg presented an update on the finalization of the CCC working paper. NMFS requested the councils provide the working paper to the Secretary, and this was done November 15, 2017. H.R. 200 is still expected to be the vehicle for reauthorization, and the council has developed comments, as reflected in Attachment 1h.

Budget Status and Outlook, we had a good bit of talk about that, and even in September. Mike Collins presented a status of the 2017 budget to date. Given that the council is in year-three of a five-year grant and the amount of money available to carry over from one year to the next is gradually decreasing, such that in 2019 there won't be anything left, and so the staff is developing options to reduce costs. Gregg Waugh presented options for consideration, including recommendations from the Personnel Committee, and the projected savings are \$104,221. Staff will develop a draft budget for March and, if needed, include additional options to save money. Just as another note, Mark and I will be meeting with Gregg sometime in the next couple of months, and we will be fine-tuning this, as this is going to be a work-in-progress.

The Committee discussed the Draft Council Member Policy, and some concern was expressed about council members not being able to attend, but the committee agreed, by consensus, to use this policy during 2018 and directed staff to prepare the draft 2018 budget using this policy. The committee agreed to defer any changes to SSC and APs and agreed with the SOPPs Committee recommendation to allow AP members to vote via webinar, and they agreed with the 10 percent reduction to travel for other meetings, and they agreed to hold one round of public hearings via webinar and, if needed, use listening stations.

Council Follow-up and Priorities, Brian reviewed the priorities approved at the September council meeting and presented some suggested changes to staff tasking. The committee discussed priorities and provided the following guidance to staff for the top four priorities: commercial visioning, recreational visioning, Snapper Grouper Amendment 46, CMP 31 cobia management transfer. Additionally, the council is expecting to take final action on the Red Grouper Abbreviated Framework.

In March 2018, the council is also expecting to discuss the for-hire permit moratorium options paper, wreckfish ITQ review, and modifications of recreational AMs. The staff will still be working on yellowtail snapper and considering how to evaluate combining ACLs, since we do have a letter from the Gulf of Mexico stating they are willing to work with us on this, and we have the ABC control rule amendment.

Council Meeting Materials, I think that was going to be in the timing and tasks. Other Business, we reviewed the report from the Council Coordination Committee call on October 27. The committee provided one additional item for the February CCC meeting of outlier EFP requests.

The committee accepted the process outlined, by consensus, and provided the following suggestions for regulations to be evaluated for removal: dolphin wahoo operator cards, operator

cards for for-hire fishermen, remove powerheads in South Carolina, and remove circle hooks. I am sure that there will be others.

Then we have the timing and tasks, which the committee can read, and is there anything that the committee would like to add to the timing and tasks, or give me a motion, if someone will, to adopt the following timing and tasks.

MR. HAYMANS: **So moved.**

MR. PHILLIPS: Motion by Doug and seconded by Jim. Any discussion? **Any opposition to the timing and tasks as presented? Seeing none, the motion passes.** I will turn the meeting back over to myself.

Gregg, do we have some Other Business or our calendar? If not, then Dale from the Gulf had to go get on his travel, and he has filed his report, and it will be online in the briefing book. We have already got the Mid-Atlantic from Tony, and so I think we'll just start at the end with the Coast Guard.

LCDR BENNETT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am going to provide this on behalf of the 7th District, and so I will make it as brief as possible. From the time period of the 1st of August to the 31st of October, District 7, and so the Florida, South Carolina, Georgia area, conducted 102 boardings, and I am going to say actually 203 boardings, and my apologies. There were no violations at that point and nothing significant to report for any violations.

For marine protected species support, meetings were held between Sector Charleston and NOAA right whale representatives to discuss enforcement and a mandatory ship reporting system and seasonal management area speed restrictions. For the fourth quarter of Fiscal Year 2017 for commercial fishing vessel safety efforts, there were 129 dockside exams, with sixty-four decals issued, and two commercial fishing vessel safety terminations, I think two of which were on the same -- They were responses to two vessels that were disabled within a couple of weeks of each other.

For the State of North Carolina, which is my purview, one of our cutters issued a notice of violation to a recreational vessel for overage of recreational bag limit for king mackerel. The vessel, which only had I think four people onboard, had thirty-one king mackerel, and so a significant overage. That is pretty much it from an enforcement standpoint, and I would also like to point that the NOAA HMS AP recently put out the ruling that, if you have that HMS charter/party permit, you have to get a for-sale endorsement if you intend to sell your catch. If you have that sale endorsement on that permit, we will treat you as a commercial fishing vessel, and so you need that safety equipment. That's all.

MR. PHILLIPS: Thank you very much. Roy, how about your office?

DR. CRABTREE: Just one thing. We are working on a proposed rule that would remove the requirement that we mail a renewal application to vessel owners whose permits are expiring, so that it would give us the flexibility to notify permit holders electronically and then allow them to apply for renewal electronically. We are doing this in order to increase efficiency and save money, and this will probably be put into one of your proposed rules that come along one of these days.

MR. PHILLIPS: Thank you very much. Any question or discussion about that?

MR. GRINER: Roy, how fast do you think that could get done?

DR. CRABTREE: I don't know.

MS. BECKWITH: I don't remember putting email addresses in the permit application, and so how are you guys going to be contacting folks electronically?

DR. CRABTREE: I think we already contact a lot of them electronically, but we'll have to have email addresses, obviously.

MR. PHILLIPS: Anything else?

MR. HARTIG: This goes to Trish's report, but that was quite a few boardings with only one problem, and that's pretty outstanding from our fishermen not to have those kinds of violations for what you check.

LCDR BENNETT: There was one that just recently happened off of Sector Charleston. It wasn't within that date range, and it was a commercial fishing vessel that was cited with multiple prohibited species that were filleted, and I think snowy grouper was one of them, and they were dumping them as the Coast Guard came alongside. That just happened about a week-and-a-half ago.

MR. PHILLIPS: Bonnie, give us some better news.

DR. PONWITH: Just a short report to say thank you. It's been a great decade, and thanks to North Carolina and the council for the wonderful sendoff, and good luck to you, because it's not always fun work, but it's always important work.

MR. PHILLIPS: We appreciate everything you have done, and I want to be one of the first to know when you find that ivorybill woodpecker. Michelle.

DR. DUVAL: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I think of interest to the council, and we really didn't have time for this under Mackerel Cobia, but I was just going to report on some statistics on our voluntary cobia reporting this year. Our commission had passed a motion in February to require that anglers report cobia harvest through our citation weigh stations, and so this is a voluntary program where you get a good citation for size of a particular fish.

The determination from our legal counsel was that, because this was a voluntary program, we could not require people to do that. These tackle shops participate in this voluntarily, and so, for that catch reporting, we allowed people multiple ways, both online and via paper, to report, and so we had forty-eight cobia harvested reported through our online reporting tool between the end of April and July 15, with most of those occurring in May. The average length and weight was forty-seven inches and forty-six pounds, respectively, and ninety-six cobia were reported released.

We had sixty-four paper catch cards that were returned to the division, and, similar to the online harvest, most of that was actually for citation-earning fish, and so fish greater than forty inches, and are mostly from the month of May. We did receive a total of 487 cobia citations that were submitted to the citation program this year, and, of those, 261 were for fish weighed by the tackle shops, and only fifteen were for release citations.

The feedback from the weigh stations is that this catch reporting program was not well received. They felt like it was a burden, and it was pointed out that they are a volunteer program, and most tackle shop owners felt that they were being forced to comply with our commission's request, and so, this year, the commission left things broader and just directed the division to develop a mandatory cobia reporting methodology, and so a number of our staff were here at the Tuesday recreational reporting session, and so we're looking forward to taking home some of those lessons learned.

The only other thing I will say is that we've also been tagging cobia, our staff, and so we tagged seventy-three cobia this season, including three fish with acoustic transmitters, which were on the trip that I was on, and so I would like to think of myself as the cobia good-luck charm for acoustic transmitters. That is it, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

MR. PHILLIPS: I don't think anybody could argue that you're a good-luck charm. Mel, are you online?

MR. BELL: Yes, sir. I will abbreviate my six-page report, just in the interest of getting you all to the parking lot. A couple of things of interest. Our electronic reporting system for the State of South Carolina for for-hire vessels is moving along. That is our vessel program, and Amy Dukes is running that. It seems to be working. It's a voluntary thing at this point, and, while I know we can't officially be on the IPT related to implementation of the federal system, we stand by in willing to help in any way we can with that, in terms of our experiences over the years of running programs.

Of interest to you all would be the fact that, on the Charleston Deep Marine Protected Area artificial reef, we actually made another addition, actually while I was in the hospital, I think, and we increased the amount of material out there by about 50 percent, and that was done primarily through donations from outside. It's been a very successful reef as a Type II MPA, because the folks that are fishing out there are doing quite well for billfish, and they are very happy with that part of the reef.

The big challenge we've got right now is that, while all of our materials are indeed inside the MPA boundaries and the permit boundaries, law enforcement is the issue. We know we've got some illegal activities going on out there. There is some reluctance, perhaps, on the part of individuals to report on people, because they are docked at the same marinas with some of these folks, but it's a challenge, obviously, for Coast Guard and law enforcement, but, if we can have a presence out there to some degree, that would be helpful. We are looking forward to continued monitoring on that site, with the help of NOAA and their research vessels.

One other thing of interest is there was some discussion about changing ranges, perhaps, of different species, and one of the things that wasn't mentioned is we're seeing some interesting things related to white shrimp moving perhaps up the coast a little bit. I know, last year, Virginia

had some interesting white shrimp landings, and I think, this year, North Carolina's white shrimp landings might have been a little higher from normal, from what I'm hearing, or at least our guys were going up there, to some degree. As things move around with changing conditions, also shrimp, we do have a shrimp plan, and that's something that we might want to look at eventually.

Also, black gill kind of became a little bit more prevalent this year, perhaps, according to some of our shrimpers, and that's something that I know Georgia has been dealing with as well, and that could have a lot to do with changing water temperatures, perhaps, or whatever, but so those three things, and that's it. I look forward to seeing you guys face-to-face in March. Thank you.

MR. PHILLIPS: Thanks, Mel. Michelle nodded that her season was good, and I actually had people selling North Carolina shrimp down in Georgia, after our season had kind of played out some, and so we will go to Jim for Florida.

MR. ESTES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Before I give my report, I would like to thank all of you, staff and council members, for making me feel welcome and ignoring my many blunders, and I would especially like to thank Erika for sitting next to me, although I have a shoe-sized bruise on my shin, but she's been very helpful.

We are having some probably pretty big changes happening at our agency. Our Executive Director, Nick Wiley, is going to retire from the agency, and he's taking a job with Ducks Unlimited. He has spent almost thirty years there with our agency, and they have announced a replacement, and that is Eric Sutton, who is our current Assistant Executive Director, who has been an Assistant Executive Director I think since 2013.

Our commission is also changing. Our Chairman Yablonski is moving to Montana, and he will no longer be Chairman, and they announced that Bo Rivard, who is an attorney from Panama City, will become our Chairman at this meeting. All that is happening at their commission meeting that's happening this week, and that's why Jessica couldn't be here, and we had two new commissioners, and we expect to have more commissioners next time, the next meeting that we have in February, and so lots of changes possibly for us, and hopefully we'll continue to do good marine fisheries conservation though. Thank you.

MR. PHILLIPS: Thank you, and it's been a pleasure to have you here with us. Doug.

MR. HAYMANS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Aside from the obvious leadership changes at the Coastal Resources Division, I have two items to report. The first one is I asked Mike to throw this on the screen, and I realize now that it probably wasn't worth it, because I can't read a thing that's on it, but we continue our artificial reef development program.

The lower-right side, off the coast of Cumberland, if you know the Georgia coast, there is the SFC Reef, which we have neglected since 2004, and I don't know how we neglected that reef for so long, but, just this past week, we were able to put a nice load of concrete rubble on it, and that's about sixty feet of water, and, recognizing Dr. Crabtree's comments from a meeting or so ago, there's a lot more opportunity for anglers to go out and catch red snapper, because they do seem to congregate in sixty feet of water in Georgia.

Tagging into Mel and Charlie's comments, shrimping in Georgia, catches through August were 74.7 percent above normal. Then came Hurricane Irma, and our research vessel was down for two months. When we came back in November, we were 81.7 percent below the long-term, and the size of the shrimp is 38 percent smaller than normal, and so we've got to get a handle on what's going on there.

If we compare that to our commercial catches, with roughly 70 percent reporting through October, we are 55 percent below the normal in September and 70 percent below normal in October, and so fall shrimping in Georgia has been in the toilet. That's just disturbing that they're below the historical averages. They are very cyclic, but anyway, and so that's sort of where shrimping is. Then the last thing is I will see you in March. If you have any menu ideas that you would like to see, aside from oysters and clams, let me know, but we will see you in March.

MR. PHILLIPS: All right. Very good. Any other business to come before the council? Seeing none, Gregg.

MR. WAUGH: In terms of upcoming meetings, we start off January 8 and 9 with scoping webinars for Spiny Lobster Amendment 13. The following week, we've got the National SSC, the 16th through the 20th. Then we've got Cobia CMP Amendment 31 public hearings with listening stations the 22nd through the 24th. The CCC meeting is the 26th through the 28th of February, and then we'll be in Jekyll Island the week of March 5, and so a busy start to the year.

MR. PHILLIPS: No rest for the weary. That pretty much takes care of everything, and we're only twenty-five minutes over, which I am really surprised that you all did such a good job bringing us even close to ending on time, and I am like Jim. Thank you all for your indulgence with me as I'm struggling through this. Thank you, and we are adjourned.

(Whereupon, the meeting adjourned on December 8, 2017.)

Certified By: _____ Date: _____

Transcribed By:
Amanda Thomas
December 15, 2017

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FULL COUNCIL - ROLL CALL VOTE

Date: December 8, 2017

Meeting Location: Atlantic Beach

Issue: ^{ABBREVIATED} SG FRAMEWORK AM 1 (RED GROUPER)

APPROVED FOR FORMAL REVIEW

	YES	NO	ABSTAIN
MR. HARTIG	✓		
DR. DUVAL	✓		
MS. BECKWITH	✓		
MR. BELL	✓		
MR. BOWEN	✓		
MR. BREWER	✓		
MR. BROWN	✓		
MR. CONKLIN	✓		
MR. GRINER	✓		
DR. CRABTREE	✓		
MR. HAYMANS/MS. KNOWLTON	✓		
MS. MCCAWLEY/MR. ESTES	✓		
MR. PHILLIPS	✓		

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Friday Sign-In 12/8/17

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Lora	Clarke						NGO		
Dean	Foster						NGO		
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Chris	Batsavage							Other	State Marine
david	bush							Other	NCFA
Alan	Bianchi							Other	NC Division of Marine Fisheries